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CHINA'S
RESPONSE
TO THE **W**EST



a documentary survey
1839-1923

with
E-tu Zen Sun
Chaoying Fang
and others

Ssu-yü Teng

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Cambridge, Massachusetts,
and London, England

PREFACE TO THE 1979 EDITION

Since a quarter of a century ago when *China's Response to the West* was first published, the historical literature concerning its subject matter has increased several times over. To the extensive publication of documentary collections and monographs in Peking, Shanghai, and Taipei, including a notable series of studies from the Modern History Institute of Academia Sinica, there has been added a flood of scholarly work in Japanese and an equally large flow of publication in Western languages, especially in English. The bibliography of this subject has been completely transformed.

Yet the subject itself, including China's need to acquire Western technology in order to meet urgent problems, has not passed into the dustbin of history but has taken on a new vitality. Once again we need historical perspective, for today's programs for modernization in the People's Republic echo in many ways the movement for self-strengthening of a hundred years ago. For such a comparison this volume is still the most representative collection of documents and commentary on the seminal era from 1839 to 1923. The persons and documents here dealt with are still of major significance.

Partly this is because China's great social revolution of recent decades came to center stage only after 1923. In more skeptical terms, these documents have not yet become outdated by the establishment of a wholly new canon of documentation based on a radically new view of the period up to 1923. For example, the history of folk religious cults, of peasant protest, of the emancipation of women, of modern vernacular literature, of Chinese law, or of the Chinese experience overseas is just beginning to be exhumed from the record and newly appraised by pioneer researches. One could put together another entire volume dealing with this new growth of historical subject matter. But such additions, while bringing the broad picture of modern China more up to date in its overall proportions, would not make the present materials invalid or irrelevant.

As astute critics have pointed out, the concept of China's response to the West implies a theoretical acceptance of the sociobiological idea of stimulus (or challenge) and response popularized by Arnold Toynbee among others in his twelve-volume *A Study of History* (1934-1961); and such an approach seems to undervalue China's indigenous tradition and creativity — as if the Chinese people were passive recipients of a foreign impact and became active in revolutionary changes only because of it. We would agree that the stimulus/response concept has its limitations, not least because stimulus and challenge are vague and ambivalent terms which may mean either a stimulus subjectively felt or a consciously perceived challenge or even changed circumstances which historians in retrospect view as having been stimulating or challenging.

Those who read beyond the title of *China's Response to the West* will note, however, that we concluded at the beginning that "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" (p. 5). In constructing the book, we therefore began with "Some elements in the Chinese intellectual tradition" as its first topic.

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This volume ends with the preliminary acceptance of Marxism-Leninism as of 1923. But foreign influences—Soviet, Japanese, American, and others—have continued to affect Chinese history. The historian's task of unscrambling has grown with time. Chinese perceptions of the outer world and what to do about it must still be studied, but they are still only one strand in the great Chinese revolution of modern times.

Researchers among the Chinese sources in this field need a considerable apparatus of scholarly reference notes, guidance on sources, bibliographical listings of publications and a glossary of Chinese characters for names and terms used in the text. All this apparatus was supplied in a companion volume entitled *Research Guide for "China's Response to the West"* (Harvard University Press, 1954, 84 pages).

If this book is of use today, it is because it was put together by a wide-ranging collaborative effort not only between the two principal authors but also between them and Chao-ying Fang, E-tu Zen Sun, and some thirty others mentioned in the Acknowledgments, who altogether represented most of the sinological scholarship available at the time in a rather small and still homogeneous field. A first, very bulky draft was circulated in 1950, representing the support of the Institute of Pacific Relations, which had not yet been destroyed in the McCarthyite furor of the early 1950s, and of the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation, which had already pioneered for twenty years in the promotion of Chinese studies in America. This reprinting of the 1961 edition may be taken therefore as a tribute to the foresight of William L. Holland of the I.P.R., David H. Stevens of the Foundation, and Mortimer Graves of the American Council of Learned Societies. The one of us born nearer at hand may also point out that this book is evidence of the broad indebtedness of American sinology to scholars of Chinese origin.

S. Y. T.
J. K. F.

March 1979

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William L. Holland, Secretary General of the Institute of Pacific Relations, originally inspired this volume. Its completion has been aided by grants from the Institute and from the Humanities Division, Rockefeller Foundation. From its inception this has been a joint enterprise among a number of specialists in Chinese studies, whose contributions in varying degree have been so numerous and pervasive that detailed acknowledgment would require a statement more complex than a holding company's income tax return. We have been aided most tangibly in the process of production by Chaoying Fang and E-tu Zen Sun, whose contributions have principally concerned the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, respectively. They are co-authors, though not to be held responsible for the final product. Knight Biggerstaff, E. R. Hughes, K. C. Liu, Earl Swisher, C. Martin Wilbur, and Mary C. Wright have contributed either manuscript materials or copious comments on the first draft, which was circulated in September 1950. For less extensive though similarly appreciated criticism and suggestions we are indebted among others to Banno Masataka, Theodore de Bary, Frank L. Bennis, Eugene P. Boardman, Derk Bodde, Conrad Brandt, Ch'en Shou-yi, Kaïming Chiu, Martha Davidson, Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, William Hung, Marius Jansen, Joseph R. Levenson, Ralph Powell, Benjamin Schwartz, Kuan-wai So, Stanley Spector, T. H. Tsien, Hellmut Wilhelm, Karl A. Wittfogel, Arthur F. Wright, Lien-sheng Yang, and Zunvair Yue. In particular we wish to thank Dr. Hu Shih for helpful criticism of Chapter XXVI. We are immensely indebted to Ai-li Chin for expert help on the Bibliography and Glossary, to Rosamond Chapman for editorial assistance, and to Margaret Teng for preparing the index. For the mechanics of this work, see the companion volume.

Note: The companion volume, entitled *A Research Guide for "China's Response to the West,"* has been published separately so that this main volume may be more easily available to interested readers. The *Research Guide* contains the brief reference notes corresponding to the numbers in the text, together with extensive discussions of Sources, a full Bibliography of Western, Chinese, and Japanese works, and a Glossary of Chinese terms. All of this data, however, is prepared only for sinological specialists. Though such specialists are in our view an important national asset, they are unfortunately rather few in number, and the materials which we have compiled especially to assist their research are therefore published separately.

S. Y. T.
J. K. F.

September 1953

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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 bedeviled 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 nationalistically 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: ¹ °

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."²

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.³

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."⁴

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.⁵

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.⁶ 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.⁷

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.⁸

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."⁹

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."¹⁰

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 1644.¹¹

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 *Ta-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.¹²

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.¹³

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.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

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.¹⁶

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: ¹⁷

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.¹⁸

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 Sambiasi 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.¹⁹

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? ²⁰ 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.²¹

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.²²

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.²³

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.²⁴ 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*; ²⁵ and the formula for computing the circumference of a circle had been figured out and handed down by Tzu Ch'ung-chih (429-500).²⁶ 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*.²⁷

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).²⁸ 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,²⁹ 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.³⁰ 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.³¹ 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.³² 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 1850.³³

The Chinese level of mechanical technology, as summarized in the work, *T'ien-kung kai-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.³⁴

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.³⁵

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.³⁶

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.⁸⁷

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.⁸⁸ 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.⁸⁹ 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.⁴⁰ 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:⁴¹

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.⁴²

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,⁴³ 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-hsü in 1839 also state *pro forma* that Macartney performed the kotow, although we know he did not.⁴⁴

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.⁴⁵ 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

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.¹

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,² 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. I. LIN TSE-HSÜ'S MORAL ADVICE TO QUEEN VICTORIA, 1839³

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 chests⁴ 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 woollens, 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 foodstuffs, 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 rule 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 rule, 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 ponds⁶ 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.⁶ 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,⁷ 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, 1842⁸

[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."⁹ 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 1841.¹⁰ 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 1852.¹¹

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.¹²

Lin's practical proposals to translate Western books, to build shipyards and arsenals, ships and guns, to hire foreign technical instructors and train selected Chinese personnel, and to alter the military examinations, all forecast the main line of China's development. The great question is, why was all this delayed for almost exactly twenty years?

DOC. 3. WEI YUAN'S STATEMENT OF A POLICY FOR MARITIME DEFENSE, 1842¹³

Plans for Maritime Defense. Section a, discussion of defensive strategy, first part

Ever since the barbarian incident, the strategy which has been contrived in the generals' tents and which has been carried out in the field has been, if not war, then peace; if not peace, then war. No one has yet devoted himself to the discussion of defensive measures. . .

There are two policies for self-defense. First, to defend the open ocean is not as good as to defend the seaports, and to defend the seaports is not as good as to defend the inland rivers. Second, the transferring of distant troops from other provinces is inferior to the training of local troops, and the transferring of water forces is inferior to the training of local marines. There are two methods of attacking the barbarians, namely, to stimulate countries unfriendly to the barbarians to make an attack on them, and to learn the superior skills of the barbarians in order to control them. There are two methods of making peace with the barbarians, namely, to let the various trading nations conduct their trade so as to maintain peace with the barbarians, and to support the first treaty of the Opium War so as to maintain international trade. Now let us first speak of defense. . .

He who intends to control the enemy must cause the enemy to lose his basis of superiority. Does the superiority of barbarian ships lie in warfare in the open sea or in the inland rivers? There are only two measures we can use to resist the enemy: one is to attack them with cannon and the other is to attack them with fire. . . If our cannon merely hit the side of a ship, a ship in the open ocean, easily maneuvered on deep water, it simply shudders and withdraws; it will neither be broken [p. 2] nor sunk. We must hit the mast and the bridge before it is rendered unnavigable, yet immediately a steamboat will tow it to another harbor to repair it overnight. Only when we hit the ammunition hold will there be an explosion causing it to turn over or sink. There is no such thing as to have someone swim to the bottom of the ship to bore a hole and make it sink. This is the first difficulty. If we have fire ships put out to sea to burn the barbarian warship, the hull material is so solid and thick that even if it is burned it will not catch fire. It is necessary to use fire arrows or rockets to burn the sails, ropes, oil, fuel and munitions, and attack the rudder and bridge of the ship. Yet, on the top of the mast of a barbarian ship there is always a barbarian soldier with a telescope looking into the distance. Before our fire ships reach them, they will long since have cut their anchors and escaped. This is the second difficulty.

[The author goes on to say that it is better to attack foreign ships in inland rivers where Chinese guns can hit them and where they will be unable

to maneuver in the more shallow and narrow waters; where iron chains and sunken boats can hinder their movement and fire ships can be sent from all directions to burn them. In this situation, it is argued, the guns of the foreign ships cannot hit the Chinese soldiers, who will lie behind thick walls.]

[P. 3b] The phrase "enticing the enemy to enter the inland rivers" means that soldiers, guns and mines are sown on land and in the water as if making a pit to wait for tigers, or setting a net to wait for fish. We must make sure that we have control over their fate before we let them enter our strategic area. It does not mean that we should open the door and invite the bandits in as guests. . .

[P. 13] The Japanese barbarians [who raided China in the sixteenth century] were strong in land fighting and weak in water warfare, because the pirates who came were all desperadoes from poor islands, who had no means to build large ships and big guns, but relied upon sheer courage to cross the ocean, and depended upon their swords and spears to invade China. Therefore, whenever they went ashore it was impossible to resist them. But when the Japanese ships met the junks of Fukien and Kwangtung, then they were like rice on a grindstone. If the Japanese ships met big cannons and firearms, they would be like goats chased by wolves. . . In general, the strength of the Japanese was on the land. To attack them on the open ocean was to assail their weak point. The strength of the British barbarians is on the ocean. Wait for them in the inland rivers. Wait for them on the shore and they will lose their strength. Unfortunately, the Ming people, in warding off the Japanese, did not know how to oppose them on the ocean, and nowadays those who are guarding against the British do not lay ambushes in the interior. Thus, the really effective ideas in the world must necessarily be contrary to the opinion of the multitude of mediocre minds. . .

Plans for maritime defense. Section c, discussion of offensive strategy

[P. 36] The inland defense having been consolidated, let us now discuss the external offensive. Yo Fei [1103-1141] says that to use a government force to attack pirates is difficult; to use pirates to attack pirates is easy. . . What is the method for using sea barbarians to fight against sea barbarians?

To plan barbarian affairs it is necessary to know first the barbarians' conditions. To understand the barbarians' conditions it is necessary first to know the barbarians' geographical situations. Now let us first explain their circumstances.

The enemy countries of which the British barbarians are afraid are three: Russia, France, and America. The vassal states of our country of which the British are afraid are four: the Gurkhas [i.e., Nepal], Burma, Siam, and Annam. The methods for attacking England are, first, from the land; and second, from the ocean. The method of attacking her from the land lies in India. The countries which are close to India are Russia and the Gurkhas. The Russian capital and the English capital are separated by a few countries and not connected by land routes. But by water, one route is by the Mediterranean sea and the other one by the Baltic sea, where a force that sails from Russia in the morning could reach England in the evening. In 1691 the King of England [sic] used warships to attack Russia by the Mediter-

ranean sea but failed and returned home. Thereafter, the two countries had no intercourse and their military struggle was concentrated in India.

India is on the southwest of the Onion Range, and adjacent to our further Tibet, the Gurkhas, and Burma. From the homeland of the British barbarians, India is several myriad *li*. The British barbarians used warships and occupied the three parts of India, in the east, the south, and center. The Russian troops then, from the space between the Yellow Sea and the Caspian Sea, attacked and subdued the various nomadic tribes and made connection with the two western and central parts of India. They were only separated by the Himalayas. Each side was guarded by heavy garrisons of troops. From Bengal to Malwa in East India and from Bombay to Madras in South India opium is prevalent. The British barbarians annually collect from opium taxes more than ten million (taels) silver, and the Russians are jealous. When the British barbarians mobilized Indian [p. 37] troops and warships to invade China, they were greatly afraid that Russia might take advantage of their weakness to invade Hindustan (Author's note: in central India). There was also a rumor that Russian messengers had started a trip from Petersburg to China (Author's note: Petersburg is her eastern capital), and the British were scared of the two ox horns [i.e., pincers]. . . Therefore, the British barbarians' fear of Russia lies not in her national capital but in India. This is one opportunity which might be used.

The Gurkhas are in the western part of further Tibet and are close to eastern India. When in the middle of the Ch'ien-lung period our troops invaded the Gurkha barbarians, the British barbarians' warships in India also took that opportunity to attack their eastern boundary. So after the stoppage of commerce with the British barbarians last year, the Gurkha barbarians immediately informed our Imperial Resident in Tibet that they were willing to send troops to attack India. At that time, if the Gurkhas had been permitted to cause trouble on their east and Russia to invade on the west, then India might have been collapsed and the enemy vessels would have had anxiety over their internal garrisons. This is a second opportunity which might have been used. Thus, when there were opportunities which might have been taken, they were not utilized; this is not because the outer barbarians cannot be used, but because we need personnel who are capable of making arrangements with them.

There is no better method of attacking England by sea than to use France and America. France is very close to the English barbarians, being separated only by an arm of the sea. America and the English barbarians, on the other hand, are separated by a great ocean. Beginning from the period at the end of the Ming and the beginning of this dynasty, France colonized the northeast territory of America. Cities and towns were built, markets and ports were opened. The British barbarians suddenly attacked and seized them. Thereupon the French barbarians and the English barbarians became bitter enemies. Later on the British barbarians levied numerous and heavy taxes which caused the thirteen parts of America to start a righteous revolt to drive them out. At the same time the Americans asked France to help them. Several hundred warships of the three countries, and several hundreds of thousands of soldiers and seamen were kept on duty for several years.

The Americans cut the British supply lines. The British soldiers were in hunger and distress, and the British ceded territory and asked for peace. The Americans then entirely recovered the twenty-seven parts of their original land [p. 38], and the British barbarians only retained the four parts in the northeast corner [i.e., Canada]. They did not dare invade the United States any more.

Even the land of India was also opened by Holland and France, but was taken over by the British barbarians. . . This is the condition of the various countries.

As for commerce at Canton, the British barbarians are the most fierce and arrogant while France and America are the most amicable and obedient. After the stopping of trade, the British barbarians even used warships to prevent other countries trading with us. The various countries were all resentful and said that if the British barbarians did not withdraw their troops for a lengthy period, they would each be obliged to go home and send ships of war to dispute the issue with them. Last year [1840] after the General for Rebellion Pacification⁴⁴ had mobilized his troops, the barbarian headman among the Americans at Canton at once came to mediate. Thereupon, Elliot submitted a document saying that he was only asking that he might carry on trade as usual. He dared not make demands even regarding the cost of the burned opium and the status of Hongkong. This is the third opportunity which might have been used.

Unfortunately, when the peace negotiations had not yet been settled, our troops suddenly attacked the barbarian factories and unexpectedly injured several Americans by mistake. Thereupon, the American headman no longer made any effort to mediate. But France, after the British barbarians for the second time had broken the truce, in the winter sent a military officer with a ship of war to Canton. . . [The author then describes how, through suspicion and bureaucratic delay, China failed to take advantage of an alleged French offer to mediate with the British.]

The situation today is this: if there is a discussion about getting and using Western warships, then someone is sure to say that he fears borrowing aid from the outer barbarians would show our weakness. Yet when suddenly our weakness has been several times more fully exposed than this would have involved, they have been glad to do it without shrinking. If there is a discussion about building ships, making weapons, and learning the superior techniques of the barbarians, they say it is too expensive. But when suddenly the cost is ten times more than this, they again say it is a matter of exigency to meet an emergency and is not regrettable. If there is a discussion about the translation of barbarian books and prying into barbarian affairs, they are sure to say it would cause trouble. (Note: during the reign of Chia-ch'ing there was someone in Kwangtung who intended to publish a book giving transliterations of Chinese and barbarian characters, which would be very convenient for Chinese translating their characters. Yet it was forbidden by the Kwangtung authorities.) When suddenly something has happened, then they ask, "What is the distance between the English capital and the Russian capital?" Or, "Via what route can the English barbarians communicate with the Mohammedan tribes? . . ."

Regarding these countries, with which we have had trade relations for two hundred years, we indeed know neither their locations nor their inter-relations of friendship or enmity. Can it even yet be said that we are paying attention to frontier affairs? In the Han Dynasty, the Western Regions were utilized to attack the Hsiung-hu [Huns]. In the T'ang Dynasty, Turfan was utilized to attack India and the Uighurs were utilized to attack Turfan. Emperor K'ang-hsi used the sailing ships of Holland to attack Formosa and he also allied with the Russians to exert pressure on Djungaria. From ancient times those who tried to control the outer barbarians only prevented their alliance with our enemies to plan against us, but did not prevent their alliance with us to attack our enemies; they only prevented the leaking of Chinese intelligence to the outside, but we have not heard that they prohibited the conditions of foreign countries being revealed to China. Thus, he who wishes to control the outer barbarians must [p. 40] begin by understanding their circumstances, and he who wishes to understand their circumstances must begin by establishing a bureau for the translation of barbarian books. He who wishes to train men of ability in frontier affairs must begin by using the governors general and governors who pay attention to frontier affairs. . .

Before the peace settlement, it behooves us to use barbarians against barbarians. After the peace, it is proper for us to learn their superior techniques in order to control them. The superior techniques of the barbarians are three: (1) warships, (2) firearms, and (3) methods of maintaining and training soldiers. Let us give an account of the past events of this dynasty.

At the beginning of the K'ang-hsi period, the sailing ships of Holland were sent to suppress Formosa. The European Nan-huai-jen [Ferdinand Verbiest] was ordered to make cannon to suppress the rebellion of the three feudatories;¹⁵ and Europeans were selected and appointed to the Imperial Board of Astronomy to be officers in charge of the calendar. Today the British barbarians not only have occupied Hongkong and accumulated a great deal of wealth as well as a proud face among the other barbarians, but also have opened the ports and cut down the various charges so as to grant favor to other barbarians. Rather than let the British barbarians be good to them, in order to enlarge their following, would it not be better for us ourselves to be good to them, in order to get them under our control like fingers on the arm? . . . [This was the reasoning behind China's acceptance of the most-favored-nation clause and her extension to the other Western nations of the treaty privileges given the British in 1842-43.]

[Wei Yuan then describes Western shipbuilding.] The materials in their shipyards are piled up like hills and craftsmen congregate there like a cloud. [P. 41] Within twenty or thirty days a large warship can be completed. They can instantly spread the sails and adjust the tiller with a few shouted orders. Their craftsmen compete with each other in their talents and abilities. In construction they compete for speed and in navigation also. Construction goes on all year long, the fire illuminates the sky, and the noise shakes the earth. Thus, while the British ships and guns are regarded in China as due to extraordinary skill, in the various countries of Europe they are considered as quite ordinary. In Canton international trade has been carried on for

two hundred years. At first the products of their strange skills and clever craftsmanship were received, and then their heterodox religions and poisonous opium. But in regard to their conduct of war and the effectiveness of their weapons, we are learning not a single one of their superior skills. That is, we are only willing to receive the harm and not . . . the benefit of foreign intercourse.

Let us establish a shipyard and an arsenal at two spots, Chuenpi and Taikoktow¹⁶ outside of the Bogue in Kwangtung, and select one or two persons from among the foreign headmen who have come from France and America, respectively, to bring Western craftsmen to Canton to take charge of building ships and making arms. In addition, we should invite Western helmsmen to take charge of teaching the methods of navigating ships and of using cannon, following the precedent of the barbarian officials in the Imperial Board of Astronomy. We should select clever artisans and good soldiers from Fukien and Kwangtung to learn from them, the craftsmen to learn the casting of cannon and building of ships, and the good soldiers to learn their methods of navigation and attack. . . In Kwangtung there should be ten thousand soldiers; in Fukien, ten thousand; in Chekiang, six thousand; and in Kiangsu, four thousand. In assigning soldiers to the ships we must rely on selection and training. [P. 42] Eight out of ten should be taken from among the fishermen and smugglers along the sea coast. Two out of ten should be taken from the old encampments of the water forces. All the padded rations and extra rations of the water force should be . . . used for the recruiting and maintenance of good soldiers. We must make the water forces of China able to navigate large (lit., "storied") ships overseas, and able to fight against foreign barbarians on the high seas. . .

While Chinese officials like Lin and Wei Yuan were reacting to the British invasion by formulating theories of statecraft, another type of reaction became manifest among the Cantonese populace. In 1841, after British forces had fought their way up the river to the great walled metropolis, exacted a "ransom,"¹⁷ and then withdrawn, there began an anti-foreign movement which seems to have been one of the first stirrings of modern Chinese nationalism. From this time on, in a succession of "incidents" recorded in British blue-books, hostile placards were posted denouncing the presence and activities of foreigners, and those who ventured too far into the countryside were occasionally stoned or beaten and in some cases even killed. The background of this anti-Western feeling around Canton has not yet been thoroughly studied. It is plain, however, that members of the scholar-gentry class, with official backing from the imperial government, gave the popular movement leadership and encouragement if not actual inspiration, much as was later to be the case in North China in 1900. The resulting "Canton city question" (focused on the issue of admitting Westerners within the city walls, as distinct from the Thirteen Factories outside the walls) remained a diplomatic storm center until the Anglo-French occupation of Canton in the second war of 1858-1860. To indicate the violent spirit of this Cantonese proto-nationalism, we quote part of the famous denunciation posted by the villagers of San-yuan-li after the British had withdrawn their forces in 1841. The villagers, who had suffered economically from the war, maintained an armed resistance and claimed to have repulsed the British. This "Placard of the patriotic people of Kwangtung denouncing the English barbarians" was in vigorous and often vulgar terms, though obviously not the composition of a mere peasant.

DOC. 4. CANTONESE DENUNCIATION OF THE BRITISH, 1841¹⁸

The thoroughly loyal and patriotic people of the whole province of Kwangtung instruct the rebellious barbarian dogs and sheep for their information. We note that you English barbarians have formed the habits and developed the nature of wolves, plundering and seizing things by force [p. 16]. . . In trade relations, you come to our country merely to covet profit. What knowledge do you have? Your seeking profit resembles the animal's greed for food. You are ignorant of our laws and institutions, ignorant of right principles. . . You have no gratitude for the great favor of our Celestial Court; on the contrary you treat us like enemies and do us harm. You use opium to injure our common people, cheating us of our silver and cash [p. 17]. . . Although you have penetrated our inland rivers and enticed fellows who renounce their fathers and their ruler to become Chinese traitors and stir up trouble among us, you are only using money to buy up their services — what good points have you? . . . Except for your ships being solid, your gunfire fierce, and your rockets powerful, what other abilities have you? . . .

[P. 19] We patriots have received the favor of the Celestial Dynasty in nourishing us for two centuries. Today, if we do not exterminate you English barbarians, we will not be human beings. You have killed and injured our common people in many villages, and seriously hurt the universal harmony. You also completely destroyed the coffins in several places, and you disastrously damaged the Buddhist statues in several monasteries. This is properly a time when Heaven is angered and mankind is resentful; even the ghosts and spirits will not tolerate you beasts. . .

[P. 20b] Our hatred is already at white heat. If we do not completely exterminate you pigs and dogs, we will not be manly Chinese able to support the sky on our heads and stand firmly on the earth. Once we have said this, we will never go back on it, even if frustrated ten thousand times. We are definitely going to kill you, cut your heads off and burn you to death! Even though you ask people to admonish us, we will not obey. We must strip off your skins and eat your flesh, and then you will know how tough (*li-hai*) we are. . . We ought really to use refined expressions. But since you beasts do not understand written characters, therefore we use rough, vulgar words to instruct you in simple terms. . .

This type of inflammatory anti-foreignism remained endemic at Canton until after 1858 and embarrassed the officials on both sides who sought to develop peaceful Sino-Western relations.

CHAPTER IV. THE POLICY OF CONCILIATION

The alternative to Commissioner Lin's policy of coerecing the barbarians was to conciliate them. This required the use of negotiation instead of force, but it was still within the Chinese traditional pattern of relations with the barbarians. It did not involve any borrowing from the West or reform of Chinese ways. The

militant defiance of the Opium War period gave way to the conciliatory policy under which the first treaties were signed: with Britain at Nanking in 1842, and with the Americans and French in 1844. On the basis of the treaties the first treaty ports were opened for foreign residence and trade under the protection of foreign consuls and gunboats — at Shanghai as well as Canton, Amoy, Foochow, and Ningpo. Yet this new order of Sino-Western relations, having been obtained by force, was grudgingly conceded. The treaties represented a defeat of the Ch'ing regime, even though they were euphemistically referred to as means of "pacifying" the barbarians or "bringing them under control" through the imperial "compassion for strangers coming from afar."

As has long been noted, the policy of conciliation or appeasement was carried out mainly by Manchus — notably by Ch'i-shan in 1840-41 and by the imperial clansman Ch'i-ying from 1842 to 1848 — whereas the policy of non-appeasement was represented mainly by Chinese such as Lin Tse-hsü in 1839-40 and Yeh Ming-ch'en at Canton from 1848 to 1858. The Manchu element in the Ch'ing government of China appears at this time to have been concerned for the welfare of the dynasty more than for that of China as a whole. At least they were more willing than the Chinese officials to buy off the barbarians by concessions which would preserve the dynasty even though sacrificing a certain amount of Chinese cultural pride and economic interest. Whether or not this generalization can stand, it seems evident that the negotiators of the first treaties, under the pressure of *force majeure*, were relatively heedless of the long-term economic repercussions of the treaty settlement. They confined their attention mainly to the immediate problem of mollifying the invaders and keeping them from further warlike acts. For this purpose, Ch'i-ying in particular exerted himself over a period of several years to establish and maintain an intimate personal relationship with the foreign envoys: Sir Henry Pottinger (1789-1856) who negotiated for the British, the American Caleb Cushing (1800-1879), and the Frenchman Th. de Lagrené.¹ Ch'i-ying's obvious intent was to achieve a sort of personal ascendancy by which to influence the course of the barbarians' policies and actions in China. He also tried to use the United States and France against England.

Since this personal contact with the invaders put any Ch'ing official in mortal danger of denunciation as a traitor or dupe of the foreigners (on a theory of "guilt by association") Ch'i-ying was obliged constantly to excuse and defend himself on this score in his memorials to the throne. His two-faced position between the emperor and the barbarians is well illustrated in the following document — the famous memorial which he wrote after he had negotiated the early British, American, and French treaties. It was later found by the British among the archives of the Canton governor-general, Yeh Ming-ch'en, at the time when that obstinate xenophobe was captured in 1858 during the Anglo-French war with China. Thomas Wade translated it and took it to Tientsin, where the aged Ch'i-ying, then in his seventy-second year, had suddenly appeared as a treaty negotiator. His appointment, however, incurred the jealousy of the imperial negotiators already on the spot and was rejected by the British and French envoys. Confronted in 1858 with this memorial of fourteen years before, Ch'i-ying lost countenance, withdrew from the negotiations, and was graciously permitted by the emperor to strangle himself with a silken bowstring.²

DOC. 5. CH'I-YING'S METHOD FOR HANDLING THE BARBARIANS, 1844³

Ch'i-ying presents a supplementary memorial: with further reference to the management of the barbarian affairs of the various countries, his receptions of or interviews with the barbarian envoys and his controlling them

as the circumstances allowed — your slave has already from time to time presented memorials and reports. . . He is mindful that the English barbarians were finally brought to the point of reconciliation in August 1842, and the American and French barbarians have also followed in their footsteps in the summer and autumn of the present year. Throughout this period of three years the barbarian situation has undergone deceptive changes in many respects and has not produced a unified development. The methods by which to conciliate the barbarians and get them under control similarly could not but shift about and change their form. Certainly we have to curb them by sincerity, but it has been even more necessary to control them by skillful methods. There are times when it is possible to have them follow our directions but not let them understand the reasons. Sometimes we expose everything so that they will not be suspicious, whereupon we can dissipate their rebellious restlessness. Sometimes we have given them receptions and entertainment, after which they have had a feeling of appreciation. And at still other times we have shown trust in them in a broad-minded way and deemed it unnecessary to go deeply into minute discussions with them, whereupon we have been able to get their help in the business at hand.

This is because the barbarians are born and grow up outside the frontiers of China, so that there are many things in the institutional system of the Celestial Dynasty with which they are not fully acquainted. Moreover, they are constantly making arbitrary interpretations of things, and it is difficult to enlighten them by means of reason. Thus for example when Imperial Utterances [i.e., edicts and decrees] are handed down, they are all received and acted on by the Grand Councillors, but the barbarians respect them as being written by the Imperial hand; if they were definitely informed that these are not from [p. 19] the Imperial brush, then there would be no means of maintaining their confidence. This, then, is something that ought not to be made known to them.

When the barbarians meet together and eat, it is called "a banquet."⁴ Generally they assemble a large number of people at a great banquet and eat and drink together for the fun of it. When your slave has been at the Bogue, Macao, and such places, and has entertained the various barbarians with a feast, their chieftains, leaders, and headmen have come, to the varied number of ten or more, or up to twenty or thirty persons. When on one occasion your slave has gone to the barbarians' storied residences or to the barbarian ships, the leaders and others have sat around in a circle in attendance upon him, competing to bring him food and drink — he could not but share their cup and spoon so as to hold their hearts.

Moreover, the barbarians commonly lay great stress on their women. Whenever they have a distinguished guest, the wife is certain to come out to meet him. For example, the American chief Parker and the French chief Lagrené both brought their foreign wives along with them, and on occasions when your slave has gone to the barbarians' storied residences to discuss business, these foreign wives have rushed out and saluted him. Your slave was confounded and ill at ease, while they on the other hand were deeply honored and delighted. Thus in actual fact the customs of the various Western countries cannot be regulated according to the ceremonies of the Middle

Kingdom. If we should abruptly rebuke them, it would be no way of shattering their stupidity and might give rise to their suspicion and dislike.

Furthermore, the various barbarians have come to live at peace and in harmony with us. We must give them some sort of entertainment and cordial reception;⁵ but we are on guard against an intimate relationship in intercourse with them. For this reason at those times when the treaties with the various countries were to be discussed and settled in succession, your slave has always ordered the provincial treasurer Huang En-t'ung [d. 1881] to tell the various barbarian envoys clearly that Chinese high officials when managing public affairs with other countries on no account can overstep the bounds and have personal relations; if there should be gifts which they desire to present as a courtesy, we can only firmly decline to accept them. If they were accepted in an underhanded manner, the ordinances of the Celestial Dynasty are extremely strict; not only would such an official injure the fundamental institutions of government, he would also have difficulty in escaping punishment according to the statutes of the realm. The barbarian envoys in question have heretofore had the sense to obey this instruction. But at times when they have been received in interviews, they have occasionally had small gifts to present, such as foreign wine or perfume, or the like. The value of these things has been very slight, and the barbarians' intention has been quite sincere. It has been inconvenient, right before their faces, to throw such gifts back at them. But he (Ch'i-ying) has conferred on them such things as snuff boxes and ornamental purses which are carried on the person simply in order to uphold the principle that though little is received, much should be given. . .⁶

As to these various countries, although they have rulers, they may be either male or female, and they may rule variously for a long or a short time, all of which is far beyond the bounds of any system of laws. For example, the English barbarians are ruled by a female, the Americans and the French are ruled by males, the English and French rulers both rule for life, while the ruler of the American barbarians is [p. 20] established by the campaigning of his countrymen, and is changed once in four years — after he leaves the position, he is of equal rank with the common people.

The official designations by which they call themselves also differ. (In China) most of them assume Chinese characters [i.e., titles of office] to make a false display and boast about themselves, as self-important as the Yeh-lang [the barbarian tribe who asked the Han envoy which state was larger, Yeh-lang or Han]. Those actions of course pay respect to their rulers, and have nothing to do with us. If we restrained them by the ceremonial forms used for dependent tribes, they would certainly not consent to retire and remain in the status of Annam and Liu-ch'iu, since they do not accept our calendar nor receive an Imperial patent of investiture.

With this type of people from outside the bounds of civilization, who are blind and unawakened in styles of address and forms of ceremony, if we adhered to the proper forms in official documents and let them be weighed according to the status of superior and inferior, even though our tongues were dry and our throats parched (from urging them to follow our way), still they could not avoid closing their ears and acting as if deaf.

Not only would there be no way to bring them to their senses, but also it would immediately cause friction. Truly it would be of no advantage in the essential business of subduing and conciliating them. To fight with them over empty names and get no substantial result would not be so good as to pass over these small matters and achieve our larger scheme.

The several measures stated above are all methods based on close investigation of the barbarian situation, an estimation of the exigencies of the times, and a thorough judgment as to the importance or unimportance, urgency or lack of urgency involved, and have had to be adopted as expedients and modifications to fit the circumstances. Either because the affairs were fundamentally of little importance or because the needs of the time were too urgently pressing, your slave has not ventured to memorialize especially and intrude them one by one upon the Sacred Intelligence. Now, since the barbarian affairs have been roughly brought to a conclusion, as is proper he states them, one and all, in a supplementary memorial.

[Vermilion endorsement:] They could only be managed in this way. We thoroughly understand it.

The problems of diplomatic intercourse which were faced by the Manchu grandee Ch'i-ying were met with every day on a more intimate plane in the treaty ports. There the mandarins whose careers depended upon their getting along with the foreigners studied at first hand how to deal with them. The Western trade and population rapidly increased at Shanghai and friction occurred at all the ports. But the rise of the great Taiping Rebellion which engulfed the interior of South China after 1851 (see Ch. Vc) weakened the position of the Ch'ing government. The new emperor, Hsien-feng, who reigned from 1851 to 1861, was narrowly anti-foreign and abetted the short-sighted Cantonese contempt for the West, but his regime was powerless to expel the barbarian and had to continue a half-hearted policy of conciliation. This left it up to the Ch'ing officials at the ports to get on with the foreigners as best they could. We quote below a description of the methods of conciliation used by an able military commander at Shanghai in 1854-55, Chi-er-hang-a (d. 1856). This Manchu official had been rapidly promoted to the governorship of Kiangsu because of his success in obtaining foreign assistance and coöperation when rebels occupied the old walled city of Shanghai (Sept. 1853-Feb. 1855) and so endangered the foreign settlement nearby.

When in 1853 the British barbarians saw the many difficulties in our domestic situation, and straightway became warlike, Chi-er-hang-a brought them under control [p. 5] by the use of right principles and subdued them by his spirit, while also showing his confidence in them by getting together with them, as a result of which he was able to turn them to our use. His method of showing confidence in them was first of all, necessarily, to break down their suspicions. Those of whom these barbarians are most suspicious are the high officers of China who do not memorialize their complaints truthfully to the Emperor. . . . Chi-er-hang-a scrupulously took their reasons for complaint and if they happened to be things that could be done, he would at once tell them that he was memorializing on their behalf according to the facts. If they were things that could not be done, then he would say to them, "You want me to memorialize on your behalf; I cannot but memorialize, but as soon as I have done so, His Majesty the Emperor will

certainly remove me from office and have me tried. We have been mutually friendly — let me take this gauze cap [symbol of office] and hand it over to foster our friendship, it is of no importance; but I do not know whether you gentlemen will feel at ease or not." If they put forth statements which were perverse or erroneous, he would reply directly, "My head can be cut off, but this cannot be done." The barbarians considered that he was not deceiving them and respectfully called him "Lord Chi" and so in their inner hearts were sincerely submissive.

The danger of any association with foreigners and the difficulty of dealing with them led to the emergence in the new treaty ports of a special class of Chinese officials who were specialists on the barbarian problem, comparable to the so-called "Far Eastern experts" of latter day America. One of the most competent of these men was the scholar-official Hsü Chi-yü (1795-1873), who helped to carry out Ch'i-ying's policy at the treaty ports of Amoy and Foochow in Fukien. His grandfather had been a provincial graduate (*chü-jen*) and his father a metropolitan graduate (*chin-shih*), which Hsü Chi-yü also became in 1826, so that his unorthodox interest in the West was that of a reputable scion of the established order. After service in the Hanlin academy at Peking and as a censor, he became the chief "barbarian controller" in Fukien, holding the posts successively of financial commissioner and governor between 1843 and 1851. His first foreign contact appears to have occurred at Amoy early in 1844, where an unfortunate British acting-consul was having a hard time doing business with the local Chinese authorities: lacking a competent interpreter, the Englishman in an interview would address his remarks in English to a Singapore Chinese, who would repeat them in Fukienese to a local Chinese, who would then state them in mandarin (Pekinese) to the officials.⁸ The local American missionary, Rev. David Abeel, who could understand "a good deal" of mandarin though not speak it, was called in to help stave off the resulting chaos. Thus it happened that Hsü Chi-yü met a Westerner of literary interests, who showed him an atlas of the world. After borrowing Abeel's atlas, Hsü took up world geography as a hobby. Abeel said of him, "He is the most inquisitive Chinese of a high rank I have yet met." Abeel gave him instruction in geography and history and other foreigners like Capt. Smith of H. M. S. *Druid* also helped him.⁹

Hsü's eventual product, "A brief description of the ocean circuit" (*Ying-huan chih-lueh*), was completed in 1848 and printed in 1850. It was shorter and less broadly discursive than Wei Yuan's *Hai-kuo t'u-chih*; but as a straight summary of world geography based on Western sources it was more handy and succinct — one might say "scientific." Hsü's maps, for example, were careful copies of Western maps, vastly more accurate than the old-style sketch-maps used by Wei Yuan.

Hsü Chi-yü fitted into the post-treaty phase of conciliation, for he was concerned less with military strategy against the British invasion than with the study of Western society as a proper subject of scholarly interest. While his official memorials inveighed against the twin evils of foreign opium and missionaries in the fashion of the period, he is known to have gone rather far in friendly contact with foreigners. After Hsü began service in the Tsungli Yamen (1865-69, see Ch. Va) the *Ying-huan chih-lueh* was reprinted by it in 1866.

The extracts translated below on Britain and the United States are in the form of digested statements, evidently based rather directly on Western sources, which are then followed by Hsü's own comments of a more interpretive nature. Thus the British institutions of parliament and jury trial are succinctly described, but without much comment, whereas the expansion of British power in America

and India receives comment of what might now be called a "geopolitical" nature. The exploits of the American father of his country, "Ton" (i.e., Washington, see Doc. 6), are played up, though perhaps no more than in American textbooks of the day. Governor Hsü's researches laid before his countrymen enough data on the economy and political institutions of the West to make it plain that the Western barbarians represented an entirely different and very powerful society. The difficulty lay in absorbing the lesson of this difference and applying it to statecraft.

DOC. 6. HSÜ CHI-YÜ'S ACCEPTANCE OF WESTERN GEOGRAPHY, 1848¹⁰

[*On Britain and her empire*] The population of England is dense and the food insufficient. It is necessary for them to import from other countries. More than [p. 44] 490,000 people are engaged in weaving. The weaving machine is made of iron, and is operated by a steam engine, so it can move automatically. Thus labor is saved and the cost of production is low. Each year more than 400,000 piculs [1 picul equals 133 lbs.] of cotton are used, all of which are shipped in from the five parts of India and America. . . . Silk is purchased and shipped from China and Italy. The work of manufacturing guns, cannon, knives, swords, clocks, watches, and various kinds of utensils and tools for daily use is done by about 300,000 people. Each year the income from the various products is worth approximately ten million taels or more. Their commercial ships are in the four seas; there is no spot which they do not reach. The great profits go to the merchants and dealers, while the workers are poor.

[Hsü then describes the British Parliament and its activities, and the system of trial by jury]

The English procedure of legal inquiry is that, when there is evidence of crime, the offender is arrested or sent to the court. When he is about to be examined, six persons of good reputation are first selected from among the common people and the offender is also ordered to select six persons for himself. Together the twelve persons make the inquiry, and decide the merits of the case before they report it to the judge. The judge then examines it and the law is executed. . . .

[Commentary, p. 45b] England consists merely of three islands, simply a handful of stones in the western ocean. Her area is estimated to be about the same as Taiwan and Ch'ung-chou [Hainan]. . . . Even if the soil is all fertile, how much can be produced locally? The reason for her becoming suddenly rich and strong, exerting political influence here and there beyond tens of thousands of *li* is that in the west she obtained America and in the east she obtained the various parts of India. The land of America hangs isolated on the globe, and since ancient times it has been little known. In the Wan-li period (1573-1620) of the Ming, it was discovered, and then a rich soil of ten thousand *li* was added to Great Britain, soon making her immensely rich. Even though the land of America is separated from England by ten thousand *li*, the British are skilled in ocean navigation, and make the voyage as easily as crossing a marshy ground with weeds. When the southern part was ceded to the United States of America, the northern part [i.e., Canada] which, though vast, is as barren and cold as Chinese Mongolia

(was retained by the British). After England lost this part [U. S. A.], she almost lost her prosperity [lit., color].

The five Indias lie on the southwest of China. . . . In 1755 Bengal was annexed, and taking advantage of their victories the English stealthily encroached on the various states like silkworms eating mulberry leaves. The various parts, scattered and weak, could not resist, and consequently more than half became British colonies. The land produces cotton and also opium. After opium became popular in China, ten-fold profits were made. The revenue collected by the English in large measure comes from the five Indias. To have lost in the west [America] and yet to have made it up in the east [India] — how fortunate she is!

After the English obtained the five Indias, they gradually expanded toward the southeast. Along the eastern coast of the Indian Ocean, ports were opened everywhere. . . . Malacca and Hsi-li (author's note: that is, Singapore) were exchanged with Holland. Eighty or ninety per cent of the wealth of the Small Western Ocean (Note: the Indian Ocean), came under British control. In the farther east, of the states on the various islands in the southern ocean of China, except Luzon which belongs to Spain, the rest are all trading ports of Holland. The luxurious places like Ko-lo-pa (Note: that is, Java), the strategic areas like Manila (Note: that is, small Luzon) also were coveted by the English. Unfortunately other people already possessed them; she had no reason to take them by force. And yet, she goes to and fro on the eastern sailing route, using the two places as her hostels, and Spain and Holland dare not offend her in the least. . . . At the present time, what Britain relies upon to be her outside treasury and to extend the power of her nation lies in the five Indias. The territory is on the southwest of further Tibet, whence it only takes twenty or thirty days to go to Canton by sea. This colony of the British has been for a long time close to our southern frontier, and yet our critics merely know that England proper is over 70,000 *li* away.

England herself is geographically small in area, but very numerous in population. The arable land is not sufficient to supply food for one-tenth of the population. Before the ceding of North America, the unemployed British subjects usually sailed westward to seek sustenance. After the ceding of America, the remaining land of England in the northern region [i.e., Canada] was too cold for farming. Even though the large territory of the five Indias was obtained, there were originally inhabitants in that area, and there was no unoccupied territory. Although many English people went to live there, after all they could not reverse their guest position to become the hosts [p. 47], and therefore they were anxious to find new places. In recent years, the great island of New Holland [New Zealand] has been obtained. The grass and weeds have been cut down in order that criminals may be banished to that place. The poor people, who have no means of making a living, were also taken there for settlement. In moving these people over a distance of 80,000 *li*, it was a hard and painstaking job (for the government) to plan to feed and accommodate the people. [End of commentary]

The annual revenue of England, apart from paying the interest to merchants, is approximately Tls. 200,000,000¹¹ and more. The expenditure is

also more than Tls. 200,000,000. The size of the regular army of England proper is 90,000 men. In India, the British soldiers are 30,000, and the local troops 230,000, who are called "sepoy" soldiers. She has more than 600 warships, large and small, and more than 100 steamships. Their sailors wear blue uniforms and their army wear red. The navy is stressed but the army is slighted. They depend entirely upon rifles and guns, and are not skillful in boxing. Excepting knives and swords, they have no other weapons.

[In the succeeding section of commentary, the author describes the types and sizes of British warships and their structure, and notes that the foreign ships are not afraid of storms but are vulnerable to rocks in the sea. He also describes Western cannon and the structure of steamships and their operation. His details indicate an understanding of the theory of steam propulsion. He also states that the steam engine was first used in Europe for weaving, later on extended to steamships, and in recent years in America extended to locomotives.]

[*On the American revolution and the U. S. A.*] ¹²

In the middle of the Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795), England and France were engaged in a war which lasted for years without being settled. Hundreds of methods had been used to raise provisions, and the rate of taxation was doubled. According to the old regulation, the seller of tea had to pay a tax; the British then ordered the purchasers also to pay a tax. The Americans could not bear this. In 1775, the local gentry gathered together in a public building, wanting to discuss the problem with their resident chieftain. The chieftain [i.e., British official] drove away the petitioners and urged the levy of the tax even more harshly. The multitude of the people were so irritated that they threw the tea from the ships into the sea, and they planned to raise an army to fight against the British.

There was a certain Washington (*Hua-sheng-tun*; note: also written *Wang-hsing-t'eng* and *Wa-sheng-tun*), a native of another part of America [i.e., not of Massachusetts], born in 1731 [1732]. When he was ten he lost his father, and his mother educated him and brought him up. He had cherished great ambitions in youth and was gifted in both literary and military matters. He was unusually gallant and robust. Once [p. 15] he served as a British military officer. . . . When the time came for the multitude of the people to revolt against the British, they urged Washington [lit., *Tun*, i.e., taking the last syllable as surname] to be their commander. . . . The army of Washington was defeated, and his followers were so discouraged that they wished to be disbanded and to go away. Washington maintained his spirit as usual. He gathered his forces and grouped them into an army to fight again, and he was victorious. Thus in eight years of bloody war, he was repeatedly defeated, but he also repeatedly refused to be discouraged. . . .

After Washington settled his country's affairs, he gave up arms and intended to return to his farm. The multitude could not bear to leave him, but insisted on electing him the head of the state. Then Washington held a discussion with the multitude, saying that to establish a state and to hand it down to his descendants would be selfish; the duty of looking after the people should be carried on by selecting those who have virtue. The traditional divisions [*pu*, parts] were set up as individual states, and each state

has a commander [i.e., governor]. . . . The leaders of the villages and towns write down the names of those whom they are going to elect and put them in a box. After this is finished, the box is opened, and the one who has obtained the most votes is established as governor. Whether he is an officer or of the common people, there is no restriction according to his previous status, and after retirement, the governor is still considered an equal of the common people. . . .

[P. 16b] The whole continent of America reaches the great western [i.e., Atlantic] ocean in the east, and the great ocean sea [i.e., Pacific Ocean] in the west. The United States are all in the eastern part. . . . The uncultivated region in the west is all occupied by the aborigines. Whenever new territory is to be opened, at first hunters are employed to kill the bears, deer, and wild oxen, and then the unemployed people are allowed to cultivate the land. When forty thousand inhabitants have been gathered together or born in the region, then a city is built which is given a name as a territory [*pu*] attached to the whole group of states. At present, apart from the states, three territories have been added.

[P. 33] The various states of America have an equable and normal climate. In the north it is like Chihli and Shansi and in the south it is like Kiangsu and Chekiang. The river currents are gentle and the soil is good. There is no desert and little plague. (Note: in the south there is a pestilential vapor, but it is not very poisonous.) The land is level and fertile and suitable for the five grains. Cotton is the best and the most produced, whence the various countries like England and France all get their supplies. There are all kinds of vegetables and fruits. Tobacco leaves are extremely good and are circulated far and wide. In the mountains coal, salt, iron, and white lead are produced. Within the country there are many small rivers, and the Americans have dredged them from place to place in order to facilitate water transportation. Steam locomotives [lit., fire-wheel carts] are also made. Stones are used to pave the road bed and they melt iron and pour it like a liquid in order to smooth the running of the train. Within one day it can run more than 300 *li*. Steamships are even more numerous, running back and forth on the rivers and seas like shuttles, because the land produces much coal. . . .

Once every two years, one person is elected for his outstanding ability and point of view out of every 47,700 people to stay at the capital city to participate in and discuss the national affairs. In the capital, where the president lives, there is a congress (*kung-hui*) representing all the states, each of which elects two wise men to participate in this congress and decide great political issues such as making an alliance, declaring war or adopting defensive measures, determining the rate of customs and taxes on trading transactions and the like. The full term is six years. In each state there are six judges to take charge of making verdicts or imprisonments. They are also elected to fill these positions. If there is anyone who is prejudiced or unfair, he may be removed by public opinion. . . .

The standing army of the United States of America is not more than 10,000, who are distributed among various forts and strategic points. Except for scholars, physicians, and astronomers, the rest of the people — farmers,

workers, and merchants — from twenty to forty years old are subject to selection by the officials to serve as militia [*min-ping*] and are issued registration cards. . . The militia system of about 1,700,000 men is fundamentally identical with the method of our ancient people who quartered troops on the farmers.

[P. 34b] In the United States of America, all the white men have immigrated to live there; there are people from all countries of Europe but those coming from England, Holland, and France are the most numerous. Among these three countries, England again provided more than one-half. Therefore, the spoken and written language is the same as that of England. . . The business and transportation work is all done by the white people. The people are docile, good-natured, mild, and honest. They do not have the fierce and cruel bearing of birds of prey. They work very hard in making a living and their merchant ships sail the four seas. All the states of America accept the religion of Jesus [i.e., Protestant Christianity], and are fond of academic discussions and activities. Everywhere there are schools. Their scholars in general are divided into three kinds: namely, academic, studying astronomy, geography, and the tenets of Christianity; medical, for curing diseases; and legal, for training lawyers and judges.

CHAPTER V. THE EMERGENCE OF THE THEORY OF SELF-STRENGTHENING

By 1860 the rulers of China had wasted twenty years in refusing to face the problems created by Western contact. These lost decades, to be sure, had seen the outbreak of a great rebellion against the Manchu dynasty which for some time threatened it with extinction and absorbed its waning energies. Simultaneously there continued to develop those points of friction — at Canton, in the opium trade, and elsewhere along the coast and in the treaty ports — which led eventually to the second war between Britain and the Ch'ing empire, in which France also joined. Negotiations for treaty revision having been frustrated by Chinese intransigence, the British and French finally seized convenient pretexts, sent a joint expeditionary force, occupied Canton, and negotiated treaties at Tientsin (as the Americans and Russians did also) in 1858. At first glance this would seem to be a plain case of the imperialist powers taking advantage of China's domestic difficulties to force their will upon her, and we may indeed judge this to be the general pattern of China's modern experience among the nations. Yet a view of China's nineteenth-century foreign relations which saw only the aggression of the West would certainly be one-sided. Chinese-Manchu attitudes and reactions were an essential factor in the historical process, as can be illustrated by a comparison of the periods just before and after 1860.

In the year preceding, when the ratifications of the treaties of Tientsin were to be exchanged, the Ch'ing court conceived and executed a bold stratagem to ambush the barbarian envoys and forestall their approach to the capital. In hostilities at Taku, outside Tientsin, they were for the moment victorious, and the British force retired in defeat. This only set the stage, however, for a second campaign in 1860, in which Anglo-French troops fought their way to Peking,

forcing the emperor to flee, and secured by force a confirmation of all their demands. From that time foreign ministers were to reside at the capital, foreign ships to ply the Yangtze, and foreign goods and missionaries to penetrate into the interior. This utter failure of Ch'ing power to hold off the West, by either force or conciliation, finally brought a change in the court's attitude and policy.

The years after 1860 saw a hopeful effort to develop new Chinese institutions, particularly for the conduct of foreign relations and the collection of customs duties, and to secure foreign advice and assistance, particularly against the rebels in South and Central China. Who knows what might have been accomplished if such policies had been adopted earlier? To suggest that they could have been instituted in the 1840's or 1850's is, of course, to overlook the facts of the historical situation. Our point is that the historical forces of the time had to become manifest through a specific change in attitude, in the Chinese response to the Western problem. For this reason the reversal of policy at Peking in 1860 merits our close attention.

a. Prince Kung and the Tsungli Yamen

In May of 1860 the defeat of the regular Ch'ing forces by the Taiping rebels at Nanking forced the central government to relinquish its time-honored policy of centralization of power and yield great freedom of action to the provincial governors general, most of whom were Chinese. Four months later, in September, came the events noted above — the British and French allied army routed the Manchu troops assembled to defend Peking, the emperor had to flee, and the demands of the foreign powers, which the emperor had stubbornly resisted at enormous cost since 1851, had to be completely accepted. The shocking realization by the court that the two main supports of the Manchu throne — the Manchu army at Peking and the Chinese troops in each province — had both been shattered brought about a reversal of policy towards the Westerners that was to prevail for over twenty years. This new attitude was particularly in evidence during the first decade after the debacle of 1860, the decade of the "Tung-chih Restoration," when the decline of the dynasty was temporarily checked by a reassertion of the Confucian principles of civil government.

As the Emperor Hsien-feng fled from Peking he had designated his younger half-brother, I-hsin (1833-1898), commonly called Prince Kung, as his representative to deal with the victorious British and French envoys. There was nothing the prince could do at that time but sign a convention confirming the treaties drawn up two years previously and meeting all further demands. Being entrusted with the fulfillment of the obligations specified in the new treaties, he found it essential to create a new office for foreign affairs, free from the traditions and precedents that dominated the old administration at Peking. In late 1860 the foreign troops had begun to withdraw to Tientsin, so as to set sail before the river was frozen over. When the prince and his two major assistants began to evolve a definite plan to deal with the Western powers, the result was the following memorial submitted by Prince Kung, Kuei-liang, and Wen-hsiang, received at Jehol on January 13, 1861, and at once read and approved by the emperor and the grand councillors.

DOC. 7. THE NEW FOREIGN POLICY OF JANUARY 1861¹

After the exchange of treaties, the barbarians have returned to Tientsin and sailed hurriedly back to the south in groups. Moreover, they still base their demands on the treaties. This shows that they do not covet

our territory and people. Hence we can still through faithfulness and justice tame and control them while we ourselves strive towards recovery. The present case is somewhat different from the (barbarian invasions) of former dynasties. . . . Now the Nien rebellion [1851-1868] is ablaze in the north and the Taiping in the south, our military supplies are exhausted and our troops are worn out. The barbarians take advantage of our weak position and try to control us. If we do not restrain our rage but continue the hostilities, we are liable to sudden catastrophe. On the other hand, if we overlook the way they have harmed us and do not make any preparations against them, then we shall be bequeathing a source of grief to our sons and grandsons. The ancients had a saying, "Resort to peace and friendship when temporarily obliged to do so; use war and defense as your actual policy." This is truly a well-founded statement.

The situation today may be compared (to the diseases of a human body). Both the Taiping and Nien bandits are gaining victories and constitute an organic disease. Russia, with her territory adjoining ours, aiming to nibble away our territory like a silkworm, may be considered a threat at our bosom. As to England, her purpose is to trade, but she acts violently, without any regard for human decency. If she is not kept within limits, we shall not be able to stand on our feet. Hence she may be compared to an affliction of our limbs. Therefore we should suppress the Taipings and Nien bandits first, get the Russians under control next, and attend to the British last. . . .

If we follow our plan at the present time, we should act according to the treaties and not allow the foreigners to go even slightly beyond them. In our external expression we should be sincere and amicable but quietly try to keep them in line. Then within the next few years [p. 19], even though occasionally they may make demands, still they will not suddenly cause us a great calamity. After careful deliberation on the whole situation we have drafted six regulations:

(1) To establish at the capital the Tsung-li ko-kuo shih-wu ya-men ["office in general charge of foreign affairs"; i.e., the "Tsungli Yamen"] . . . under the direction of princes and ministers. . . . As soon as the military campaigns are concluded and the affairs of the various countries are simplified, the new office will be abolished and its functions will again revert to the Grand Council for management so as to accord with the old system.

(2) To establish the offices of high commissioners to facilitate the handling of affairs respectively at the northern and southern ports. [Here follow details on the office of superintendent of trade for the five southern ports: Canton, Foochow, Amoy, Ningpo and Shanghai, and the superintendent of trade for the three northern ports: Newchuang, Chefoo and Tientsin.]

(3) To arrange for maritime customs collections at the treaty ports and on the Russian frontier; (4) to ensure mutual information among officials handling foreign relations, so as to prevent errors.]

(5) To select two persons from Canton and two from Shanghai who understand written and spoken foreign languages and send them to Peking for consultation. [This is the initiation of the interpreters' college, Tung-wen Kuar., discussed further in Ch. VIII below. (6) In each seaport, the internal and external commercial conditions, as well as foreign newspapers,

should be reported in communications to the Tsungli Yamen once a month to supply material for official perusal.]

Thus was created the Tsungli Yamen, a special board or subcommittee under the Grand Council which was to concern itself with all aspects of relations with the Western powers. While not a genuine ministry, it served as the prototype of a foreign office until the creation of the Wai-wu-pu, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in 1901. In fact, its temporary and special status made it possible to select for service in the Tsungli Yamen some of the ablest personnel and most powerful officials.

As head of the new office, Prince Kung succeeded in establishing a working relationship with the British, French, American, and Russian envoys, in starting a Western-trained Manchu army using Russian guns, and in reinvigorating the central government at Peking. When the emperor died a year later, the prince emerged as regent for the new Tung-chih Emperor of the period 1862-1874. From 1861 to 1884, the year of his dismissal from the Tsungli Yamen, Prince Kung seems to have concentrated mainly on keeping the peace with the Western powers, almost at any price, in order to give China time to become strong. His internal policy from 1861 to 1865 was also one of relative meekness towards the able Chinese administrators in the provinces, who were allowed a great deal of freedom in their conduct of the civil war against the Taipings and other groups of rebels. The final victory over the Taipings in 1864 was partly due to this policy.

Prince Kung was not a man of great abilities or personal ambitions. However, he was wise enough to listen to his advisers in the central government. He never issued arbitrary orders, but, in matters of importance, consulted the leading provincial officials before making a decision - a procedure that remained standard practice down to the end of the dynasty. At Peking he worked closely with two principal assistants, Kuei-liang and Wen-hsiang. Kuei-liang (1785-1862) was the prince's father-in-law and had had a good deal of experience in dealing with Westerners at Canton, Shanghai, and Tientsin, but he was by 1860 old and ill. Hence much of the routine was handled by Wen-hsiang (1818-1876), a Manchu official known for his integrity and intelligence and a member of the Tsungli Yamen from 1861 until his death in 1876. The fact that he was brought up in poverty at Mukden probably enabled him to see things more realistically than his fellow-nationals accustomed to the luxuries of Peking.²

The new dispensation in China's foreign relations symbolized by the Tsungli Yamen was only an aspect of the general process of dynastic revival which occurred during the "Restoration" of the Tung-chih period. Essentially this was a process of temporary resuscitation rather than of innovation, an Indian summer of a declining regime rather than the creation of a new one. The Restoration period saw the pacification of the Taiping and other rebellions, resumption of the examinations and reinstatement of civil administration over wide areas, reduction of the land tax and other measures of relief for the agrarian economy, and a vigorous effort to select and train men of talent and imbue them with the principles of Confucian morality. This reaffirmation of the Confucian ideology of scholar government, the core of the Restoration movement, called for the application of traditional principles to the new situation of the 1860's. Reform of old institutions and establishment of new policies were therefore the order of the day, but both were sought within the framework of the orthodox Confucian system. Intellectual leadership was taken by scholar-officials who were steeped in the classical teachings of loyalty and ethical government. One of the most influential, though least known, of these men is discussed in the next section, with special reference to his attitudes and suggestions concerning relations with the West.

b. *Feng Kuei-fen and his Essays*

Feng Kuei-fen (1809-1874), a scholar of Soochow, was probably the first man to apply to China's modern problems the term *tzu-ch'iang* (lit., "self-strengthening," or "to make ourselves strong"). His ideas also anticipated the famous phrase *Chung-hsueh wei-t'i, Hsi-hsueh wei-yung* ("Chinese studies [learning, culture, values] for the base [fundamental structure, framework], Western studies for use [practical application]"), a slogan to be made famous a generation later by Chang Chih-tung in the 1890's (see Ch. XVII).

Feng obtained a *chin-shih* degree with high honors in 1840, and thereafter was a compiler of the Hanlin Academy for seven years — a position which enabled him to know government problems from the inside. He was well read and widely interested not only in the classics but also in mathematics, philology, astronomy, geography, agriculture, irrigation, and other subjects. He served as an assistant to Lin Tse-hsü and as secretary to Li Hung-chang (see Ch. VII) and other high dignitaries at various intervals over a period of many years. During the Taiping Rebellion he had organized a volunteer corps to defend Soochow; his letter to Tseng Kuo-fan in 1861 helped the latter to dispatch Li Hung-chang to Kiangsu province. This period of service made it possible for Feng to have direct contact with foreigners. In the meantime, he became concurrently director of two academies, one in Shanghai and one in Soochow. After the suppression of the rebellion he acted as Li Hung-chang's adviser for more than a year, and at his suggestion a school of Western languages and sciences was established in Shanghai in 1863, and the taxation in the region of Soochow was reduced in 1865.

The *Chiao-pin-lu K'ang-i* or, roughly translated, "Personal protests from the study of Chiao-pin," consists of forty essays which deal with governmental, financial, educational, and other aspects of China's modernization. The essays were first written in Shanghai around 1860, compiled under the above title with an author's preface in 1861, and were then presented to Tseng Kuo-fan, who intended to have them published. The author, however, very modestly declined, although he allowed his friends to read them or make copies.³ In 1898 *Chiao-pin-lu K'ang-i* was finally brought to the attention of Emperor Kuang-hsü, who ordered the Grand Secretariat to make a thousand copies to be distributed to, and discussed by, all government offices. Most of the essays were also reproduced in the various collections of *Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien*, or "Essays on administration of government during the Ch'ing Dynasty,"⁴ an indication that they had far-reaching influence.

The following translations indicate Feng's recognition of the fact that the changing modern world had become much larger than anything ever imagined in ancient China. He recognized, too, the importance of Western sciences as necessary auxiliaries of Chinese knowledge. It was Feng who suggested the study of Western languages and sciences, which resulted in the establishment of the Kuang fang-yen kuan at Shanghai, which was an extension of the T'ung-wen Kuan (see Ch. VIII). In foreign affairs, he advocated a fair deal for the foreigner, and sought to get rid of Chinese jealousy and suspicion by turning from the general concept held before 1860, that all barbarians were of bad faith, to a new view that the barbarians were of good faith and should be treated with sincerity and respect.

Judged by these trenchant essays, written in a trim and condensed classical style, Feng Kuei-fen was most remarkable for his realistic appreciation of the importance of genuine learning. His contempt for the Canton-style "linguists," through whom Western lore had been murky filtered into China, springs from this attitude, as well as his demand for language training, translations, and the

study of mathematics and sciences, as the only possible basis for a mastery of the fundamental principles from which the barbarians got their power. His independence of mind is evident in the short shrift he gives to Wei Yuan's ideas, and in his readiness to tamper with the sacrosanct examination system.

DOC. 8. ON THE ADOPTION OF WESTERN KNOWLEDGE⁵

The world today is not to be compared with that of the Three Dynasties (of ancient China). . . Now the globe is ninety-thousand *li* around, and every spot may be reached by ships or wheeled vehicles. . . According to what is listed on the maps by the Westerners, there are not less than one hundred countries. From these one hundred countries, only the books of Italy, at the end of the Ming dynasty, and now those of England have been translated into Chinese, altogether several tens of books. Those which expound the doctrine of Jesus are generally vulgar, not worth mentioning. Apart from these, Western books on mathematics, mechanics, optics, light, chemistry, and other subjects contain the best principles of the natural sciences. In the books on geography, the mountains, rivers, strategic points, customs, and native products of the hundred countries are fully listed. Most of this information is beyond the reach of our people.

Nowadays those familiar with barbarian affairs are called "linguists." These men are generally frivolous rascals and loafers in the cities and are despised in their villages and communities. They serve as interpreters only because they have no other means of making a livelihood. Their nature is boorish, their knowledge shallow, and furthermore, their moral principles are mean. They know nothing except sensual pleasures and material profit. Moreover, their ability consists of nothing more than [p. 38] a slight knowledge of the barbarian language and occasional recognition of barbarian characters, which is limited to names of commodities, numerical figures, some slang expressions and a little simple grammar. How can we expect them to pay attention to scholarly studies? . . .

If today we wish to select and use Western knowledge, we should establish official translation offices at Canton and Shanghai. Brilliant students up to fifteen years of age should be selected from those areas to live and study in these schools on double rations. Westerners should be invited to teach them the spoken and written languages of the various nations, and famous Chinese teachers should also be engaged to teach them classics, history, and other subjects. At the same time they should learn mathematics. (Note: All Western knowledge is derived from mathematics. Every Westerner of ten years of age or more studies mathematics. If we now wish to adopt Western knowledge, naturally we cannot but learn mathematics. . .)

I have heard that there are large collections of books in the Mei-hua shu-kuan [American Presbyterian Press] and in the Mo-hai shu-kuan [London Missionary Society's Printing Office]. Moreover, in 1847 the Russian barbarians presented us with more than one thousand books which are preserved in the Fang-lueh-kuan [Military Archives Office, in Peking]. These books should be sent to the new schools so that the valuable ones may be selected and translated. . .

After three years all students who can recite with ease the books of the various nations [p. 39] should be permitted to become licentiates; and if there are some precocious ones who are able to make changes or improvements which can be put into practice, they should be recommended by the superintendent of trade to be imperially granted a *chü-jen* degree as a reward. As we have said before, there are many brilliant people in China; there must be some who can learn from the barbarians and surpass them. . .

If we let Chinese ethics and famous [Confucian] teachings serve as an original foundation, and let them be supplemented by the methods used by the various nations for the attainment of prosperity and strength, would it not be the best of all procedures?

Moreover, during the last twenty years since the opening of trade, a great many of the foreign chiefs have learned our written and spoken language, and the best of them can even read our classics and histories. They are generally able to speak on our dynastic regulations and government administration, on our geography and the state of the populace. On the other hand, our officers from generals down, in regard to foreign countries are completely uninformed. In comparison, should we not feel ashamed? The Chinese officials have to rely upon the stupid and silly "linguists" as their eyes and ears. The mildness or severity, leisureliness or urgency of their way of stating things may obscure the officials' original intent after repeated interpretations. Thus frequently a small grudge may develop into a grave hostility. At the present time the most important administrative problem of the empire is to control the barbarians, yet the pivotal function is entrusted to these people. No wonder that we understand neither the foreigners nor ourselves, and cannot distinguish fact from unreality. Whether in peace negotiations or in deliberating for war, we can never achieve the essential guiding principles. . .

If my proposal is carried out, there will necessarily be many Chinese who learn their written and spoken languages; and when there are many such people, there will certainly emerge from among them some upright and honest gentlemen who thoroughly understand the fundamentals of administration, and who would then get hold of the essential guiding principles for the control of foreigners. . .

DOC. 9. ON THE MANUFACTURE OF FOREIGN WEAPONS⁶

The most unparalleled anger which has ever existed since the creation of heaven and earth is exciting all who are conscious in their minds and have spirit in their blood; their hats are raised by their hair standing on end. This is because the largest country on the globe today, with a vast area of 10,000 *li*, is yet controlled by small barbarians. . . According to a general geography by an Englishman, the territory of our China is eight times larger than that of Russia, ten times that of America, one hundred times that of France, and two hundred times that of England. . . Yet now we are shamefully humiliated by those four nations in the recent treaties — not because our climate, soil, or resources are inferior to theirs, but because our people are really inferior [p. 41]. . . Why are they small and yet strong? Why are

we large and yet weak? We must try to discover some means to become their equal, and that also depends upon human effort. Regarding the present situation there are several major points: in making use of the ability of our manpower, with no one neglected, we are inferior to the barbarians; in securing the benefit of the soil, with nothing wasted, we are inferior to the barbarians; in maintaining a close relationship between the ruler and the people, with no barrier between them, we are inferior to the barbarians; and in the necessary accord of word with deed, we are also inferior to the barbarians. The way to correct these four points lies with ourselves, for they can be changed at once if only our Emperor would set the general policy right. There is no need for outside help in these matters. [Here Feng goes on to point out that the only help China needs from the West is in modern arms, and claims that in recent contests with Western troops the Chinese army has not been inferior in physical qualities, nor even sometimes in morale, but always in arms.]

What we then have to learn from the barbarians is only the one thing, solid ships and effective guns. When Wei Yuan [in his *Hai-kuo t'u-chih*, see Doc. 3 above] discussed the control of the barbarians, he said that we should use barbarians to attack barbarians, and use barbarians to negotiate with barbarians. Even regardless of the difficulties of languages and our ignorance of diplomatic usages it is utterly impossible for us outsiders to sow dissension among the closely related barbarians. Moreover, he considered the various barbarian nations as comparable to the Warring States [403–221 B.C.], but he did not realize that the circumstances are different. Wei saw quite a number of barbarian books and newspapers and should not have made any such statement [p. 42]. It is probably because in his life and academic ideas he was fond of regarding himself as a political strategist.⁷ In my opinion, if we cannot make ourselves strong [*tzu-ch'iang*] but merely presume on cunning and deceit, it will be just enough to incur failure. Only one sentence of Wei Yuan is correct: "Learn the strong techniques of the barbarians in order to control them. . ."

Funds should be assigned to establish a shipyard and arsenal in each trading port. Several barbarians should be invited and Chinese who are good in using their minds should be summoned to receive their instructions so that they may in turn teach many artisans. When a piece of work is finished and is indistinguishable from that made by the barbarians, the makers should be given a *chü-jen* degree as a reward, and be permitted to participate in the metropolitan examination on an equal footing with other scholars. Those whose products are superior to the barbarian manufacture should be granted a *chin-shih* degree as a reward, and be permitted to participate in the palace examinations on the same basis as others. The workers should be double-paid so as to prevent them from quitting.

Our nation has emphasized the civil service examinations, which have preoccupied people's minds for a long time. Wise and intelligent scholars have exhausted their time and energy in such useless things as the eight-legged essays [highly stylized essays for the civil service examination, divided into eight paragraphs], examination papers, and formal calligraphy. . . Now let us order one-half of them to apply themselves to the

pursuit of manufacturing weapons and instruments and imitating foreign crafts. . . The intelligence and wisdom of the Chinese are necessarily superior to those of the various barbarians, only formerly we have not made use of them. When the Emperor above likes something, those below him will pursue it even further, like the moving of grass in the wind or the response of an echo. There ought to be some people of extraordinary intelligence who can have new ideas and improve on Western methods. At first they may learn and pattern after the foreigners; then they may compare and try to be their equal; and finally they may go ahead and surpass them—the way to make ourselves strong actually lies in this. . .

[P. 43] Two years ago the Western barbarians suddenly entered the Japanese capital to seek trade relations, which were permitted. Before long the Japanese were able to send some ten steamships of their own over the western ocean to pay return visits to the various countries.⁸ They made many requests for treaties which were also granted by these countries, who understood Japan's intentions. Japan is a tiny country and still knows how to exert her energy to become strong. Should we, as a large country, alone accept defilement and insult throughout all time? . . . We are just now in an interval of peaceful and harmonious relations. This is probably an opportunity given by heaven for us to strengthen ourselves. If we do not at this point quickly rise to this opportunity but passively receive the destiny of heaven, our subsequent regret will come too late. . . If we live in the present day and speak of rejecting the barbarians, we should raise the question as to what instruments we can reject them with. . .

Some suggest purchasing ships and hiring foreign people, but the answer is that this is quite impossible. If we can manufacture, can repair, and can use them, then they are our weapons. If we cannot manufacture, nor repair, nor use them, then they are still the weapons of others. When these weapons are in the hands of others and are used for grain transportation, then one day they can make us starve; and if they are used for salt transportation, one day they can deprive us of salt [p. 44]. . . Eventually we must consider manufacturing, repairing, and using weapons by ourselves. . . Only thus will we be able to pacify the empire; only thus can we play a leading role on the globe; and only thus shall we restore our original strength, and redeem ourselves from former humiliations.

DOC. 10. ON THE BETTER CONTROL OF THE BARBARIANS⁹

Today our country considers barbarian affairs to be the first important matter of government, and the suppression of the bandits to be the second. Why? Because the bandits can be exterminated but it is impossible to do so with the barbarians. . . If a plan of controlling the barbarians is not devised, then when it behooves us to fight, we, on the contrary, may negotiate peace; or when it behooves us to negotiate peace, we, on the contrary, may fight on; and so the barbarian problem will become worse. Or if we vacillate between peace and war, the barbarian problem will also become worse. . .

Today peace has been negotiated; we should devote ourselves to peace.

We should treat the barbarians with entire candor. Traces of jealousy and suspicion will not avail us anything. . .

Should we then force ourselves to comply with every demand? The answer is, no. My opinion is simply that to submit outwardly, but to be jealous and suspicious inwardly, is not a good policy. The barbarians always appeal to reason. We should forthwith take their methods and apply them in return. According to reason, if a demand is acceptable, then we should accept it; according to reason if it is not acceptable, we should try to convince them on rational grounds. The various barbarians, though ignorant of our "three bonds" [the relation between prince and minister, father and son, husband and wife] still know one thing, namely, good faith. Not because they are naturally trustworthy, but because, if one nation breaks faith, then a hundred nations will rise in a group to attack and oppress her so that she is obliged to keep faith. . . Can peace be maintained for a long time? We know that the various barbarians cannot be without improper aims. But for the next several years to come, there will be no war. China is the largest country on earth with ample, fertile plains and marshes, numerous people and abundant resources. Naturally the mouths of all nations are watering with desire. For years past they have extensively compiled maps including tracks of roads and footprints all the way to Yunnan, Kweichow, Szechwan, and Shensi. What is their intention? Nevertheless, at present there will be no incident, because the four countries, Russia, England, France, and America, have too much uncultivated land, equal power, outward harmony, and covert jealousy to act together and force a submission, and no one dares to make the first move [p. 46b]. . . The Tientsin incident of 1858 was started by England, but the other three countries were necessarily involved. They all came together for no other reason than that England dared not monopolize the gain; she feared the other three countries would plot behind her back. In 1860, when the barbarians stopped as soon as they had obtained a proper excuse, it was also because they feared that Russia and America would plot behind their backs. . . In the future, if the relations among the four nations should become consolidated, they might cooperate to plot against us; or if the four countries fought among themselves, one country might be victorious and the three others might fall under her control, and then the victor might encroach upon us. Thus, the mutual hatred among the four countries will take precedence over their hatred of us. Their relations can never be consolidated and the date for the struggle between them must not be far away. This warrants our anxiety. . .

Recently we have heard that the footsteps of the Russian barbarians have reached the region of the Sui-fen River [p. 47] which is not far away from the Ch'ang-pai mountains and Kirin, and this merits even greater anxiety.

c. *The Taiping Rebels' Interest in Modernization*

Like most writers on nineteenth-century China, we have referred to the Taiping Rebellion (1851–1864) several times in preceding pages without trying to sum it up. The many records concerning it are still being studied and generalizations such as are made about the French Revolution or the American Civil

War are not yet possible. But a contemporary observer estimated that the rebellion took, all told, some twenty million lives, and it would not be wrong to class it among the great social upheavals of modern times. The ground for the rebellion was prepared by a variety of social conditions and circumstances, such as the incidence of population growth, economic depression (possibly connected with changes in foreign trade), the growing corruption of the Ch'ing officialdom, and the lowered prestige of the dynasty as a result of the Opium War. Protestant evangelism also played its part, and the leader of the movement, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan (1814-1864), used certain aspects of Christian doctrine in setting up his personal theocracy. As the movement got under way, a multitude of poverty-stricken peasants were joined by secret society members who had cherished anti-Manchu sentiments since the beginning of the dynasty and by jobless coolie porters, opium smugglers, and pirates from the Canton area. Starting in the mountains of Kwangsi, west of Canton, the rebels advanced rapidly northward through Hunan to the Yangtze and down it to Nanking, which they chose in 1853 to be the capital of the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace (*T'ai-p'ing f'ien-kuo*). They aimed not only at driving out the Manchus, as the founders of the Ming Dynasty had driven out the Mongols, but also at setting up a kind of communistic and theocratic state. They failed to reach this goal for many reasons, among them the united opposition of the privileged classes, led by the Confucian scholar-official Tseng Kuo-fan (1811-1872), the help given the imperial forces by the Western powers after 1860, and perhaps most important, the Taipings' own lack of competent leaders and adequate methods. While the rebel movement in many ways harked back to China's past, it is interesting for our purposes in this volume to note its reforming zeal, which in favorable circumstances might conceivably have developed a program of modernization for China. Even in the midst of constant warfare, the rebels tried or intended to secure an equal distribution of the land, to simplify the Chinese language, to enforce monogamy (among the common people), and to prohibit prostitution, footbinding, the sale of slaves, opium smoking, adultery, witchcraft, and gambling.¹⁰

It is interesting, of course, to speculate on the relations with the West which might have developed had the Taiping rebels been victorious. On the subject of modernization and reform of Chinese customs and institutions, the thinking of some Taiping leaders seems to have been more advanced, or at least more imaginative, than that of the opposing Ch'ing officialdom, as may be seen in the next document we quote.

Hung Jen-kan (1822-1864), a relative of Hung Hsiu-ch'üan, the founder of the Taiping kingdom, did not join in the military campaigns of 1851-1859, but took shelter in Hong Kong, where he received more training from Western missionaries than any other Taiping leader. He studied Christian doctrine with the Reverend Theodore Hamberg (1819-1854), to whom he supplied the basic information about Hung Hsiu-ch'üan that resulted in Hamberg's book, *The Vision of Hung-Siu-Tshuen and the Origin of the Kwangsi Insurrection* (Hong Kong, 1854), one of the basic English sources on the Taiping Rebellion. For three years he was employed by James Legge (1815-1897) in the London Mission at Hong Kong. Through long association with Westerners, he learned something of astronomy and other sciences.

In 1854 Hung Jen-kan tried to go to Nanking via Shanghai but was unable to get beyond the latter city and had to return to Hong Kong. When he finally reached Nanking in 1859, he was warmly welcomed by Hung Hsiu-ch'üan, who was said to trust no one but his brothers and other relatives with the handling of important affairs after the internal dissensions of 1856. Hung Jen-kan was soon made minister of foreign affairs and prime minister but, not having fought for the

Taiping empire in its early years, he was afraid that the old comrades might be jealous of him. He therefore presented to the Heavenly King his book, *A New Work for Aid in Administration* (*Tzu-cheng hsin-p'ien*), printed in 1859, which became one of the two chief Taiping writings on political ideology.¹¹

Hung's reform program reflects his Western contact. Impressed by what he heard of the rapid progress in Westernization of Siam and Japan, he planned to abolish such customs as the wearing of long fingernails, footbinding, the raising of birds, and the wearing of ornaments. He suggests that calligraphy and painting, gold and jewels should be esteemed less than steamships, trains, thermometers, barometers, binoculars, and other scientific instruments. For institutional reforms, he recommends the inauguration of railroads, steamships, banks, post offices, newspapers, hospitals, institutions for the blind and the deaf, the prohibition of infanticide and of the sale of slaves, a ban on the performance of plays for religious or superstitious purposes, and the transformation of monasteries into hospitals. This indicates that he had in mind a sort of industrial and economic program for China. Many of his suggestions were carefully noted by Hung Hsiu-ch'üan, the Heavenly King himself, who wrote in the top margin, comments such as "I concur" or "This policy is perfectly correct." Nevertheless, in reading the following document one cannot help wondering exactly to what degree Hung Jen-kan knew what he was talking about. At any rate, he had linguistic difficulties in explaining new ideas by classical Chinese expressions.

DOC. 11. HUNG JEN-KAN'S PROPOSALS, 1859¹²

(1) [Authority should be centralized and applied to all the people. On the other hand, the people's opinion should have ready access to the government.]

(2) The promotion of the facilities of communication [lit., carriages and horses] is aimed at convenience and speed. If someone can make a locomotive such as those made in foreign countries, which are capable of seven or eight thousand *li* in a day and a night, let him be permitted to monopolize the profit [i.e., patent], and after a certain limit of time let other people be permitted to imitate his invention. If he does not wish to monopolize the profit but to let society have the benefit, he should petition the government for permission to give up his monopoly in order to prevent bad practices [patent claims by people who would be less public-spirited]. At first, we should construct twenty-one main railroads in the twenty-one provinces, to serve as the veins of the whole country, and when the traffic is in good circulation, the nation will be healthy. . .

(3) The promotion of ships, which should be solid, nimble, and fast. Whether fire, steam, (human) energy or wind is to be used for power should be decided by the inventor. . . At present there is a steamship [p. 15] which can run more than two thousand *li* within a day and a night and which a great merchant can use to transport passengers and . . . commodities, while the government could use it for war or for defense and patrolling. . . If the Heavenly Kingdom could promote this craft, then the Yellow River could be dredged and made to flow into the sea. Shipping on the Yangtze and the Huai rivers could be used for the exchange of products between the places where they are produced and to take them to others where they are

lacking. In strategic spots steamships could be used to ward off trouble, and in drought or flood they could serve in famine relief. . .

(4) The promotion of banks. If a rich man wants to open a bank, he shall first report and deposit his deeds and other securities in the national treasury, whereupon he will be allowed to issue one million and a half (taels of) bank notes, which will be inscribed with very elaborate designs, stamped with the state seals, and be exchangeable for silver or commodities or for other bank notes and silver. On all these bank notes it will be allowed to charge three per cent interest. . .

(5) The promotion of patents for inventing utensils and for various arts. If there are those who can make very fine, unusual and convenient articles, they alone shall be permitted a manufacture and sales monopoly. Imitators shall be considered to have committed a crime and shall be punished. . . As a reward for a small article, there shall be a five-year (period of monopoly rights) and for a large one, ten years. . . After the time limit, other persons shall be allowed to make them.

(6) The promotion [i.e., exploitation] of hidden treasures. If there are people who discover gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, coal, salt, amber, oyster shells, jade, precious stones, and other materials, they shall be required to report this to the government. They shall be appointed as the chief superintendents and be permitted to employ people to mine. Twenty per cent shall be given to the chief superintendents, twenty per cent to the national treasury, and sixty per cent to the miners. . .

(7) [P. 16] The promotion of a postal service to transmit state documents, post offices to circulate all kinds of private letters, and newspaper offices to report frequent changes of current affairs.

(8) The promotion of Court investigators [to establish the facts officially, etc.]. . .

(9) The promotion of official reporting officers [lit., newspaper officers] in all provinces. These officials shall have duties but no authority. They must be honest and impartial, so that they will be independent and not controlled by other government officers nor should they try to control other officers. They will devote their time to collecting news from the eighteen provinces and a myriad of other places. . .

(10) [P. 17] The promotion of money and grain storehouses in the provinces, counties, and districts to take care of the salaries and public funds for civil and military officers. Officers should be established to take charge of monthly reports. If there are those who, apart from their salaries, illegally take one cent of bribery from the people, a punishment should be meted out to them.

(11) The promotion of public organizations for the populace [*shih-min kung-hui*]. Those who are rich and philanthropic, and who respect the sacred humanitarian hearts of the Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Elder Brother [i.e., Jesus Christ], should be allowed to make contributions at their pleasure in order to help the distressed and the endangered and the ignorant.

(12) The promotion of hospitals to relieve those who are ill and in

suffering. . . Physicians shall be installed but they must have passed several examinations before they can be employed. . .

(13) The promotion of rural officers [to be supported by public contributions and to maintain local order, etc.].

(14) The promotion of rural soldiers. . . In the daytime they shall supervise all the families in cleaning the streets or roads in order to get rid of the dirt and poisonous things that cause injury to the people. They are also to arrest those who fight and steal, and to summon the bystanders to the office of the county officers to be witnesses and help render a verdict. Those who give false evidence shall be punished. . .¹³

The rest of the book deals with the abolition of group punishment, arguing that only the culprit himself should be punished, while his family members and others should be spared; with the prohibition of infanticide, of the sale of slaves, etc., as summarized above; with the prohibition of personal visits to official residences in order to avoid the solicitation of favors; with the conversion of temples into churches; and with the criteria for a good soldier and general. Needless to say, Hung Jen-kan had no chance to carry much of his program into effect.

3

THE DESIRE FOR WESTERN TECHNOLOGY, 1861-1870

CHAPTER VI. TSENG KUO-FAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD WESTERNERS AND THEIR MACHINERY

By 1861 the main ideas of the Restoration period, as illustrated in the memorials of Prince Kung and his colleagues or the essays of Feng Kuei-fen, had been enunciated, while the Ch'ing victories over the Taipings in that year marked the turning of the tide in favor of the established dynasty. For the next decade, until his death in 1872, a significant share of the moral leadership of the Chinese state rested with the chief architect of victory over the rebellion, Tseng Kuo-fan (1811-1872). So outstanding was this one individual, as a leader of men and an embodiment of the Confucian principles of administration, that it will be quite impossible to do him justice here. In what follows we confine ourselves to excerpts from Tseng's day to day writings, to indicate some of his comments on and attitudes toward the Westerners. Absorbed as he was in the problems of domestic government, it is uncertain how far Tseng Kuo-fan ever faced up to the implications of the technological superiority of the Western world.

Born into a Hunan farmer's family, Tseng first learned to write eight-legged essays and classical poems in order to pass the civil service examinations. He developed a great interest in the moral principles of Sung Neo-Confucianism and made a study of ancient philology. By the time he was twenty-eight, he had become a very assiduous student, although he was a man of only moderate scholastic aptitude. The years from twenty-eight to forty-two he spent in Peking, where he obtained his *chin-shih* degree, became a member of the Hanlin Academy, and made friends of many leading scholars and officials. Between the ages of forty-two and sixty-two, he had a strenuous military career, spent mainly in suppressing the Taiping rebels and some of the Nien bandits. By 1864, when the Taiping Rebellion was put down, Tseng Kuo-fan had acquired enormous prestige and influence. It was typical of his disciplined Confucian character, however, that his loyalty to the Manchu Son of Heaven never wavered. Rather than seek personal power, he led the Restoration movement to meet China's problems along traditional lines. As a representative of the landlord-scholar-official class, he identified his interests with those of the Confucian monarchy.

Tseng Kuo-fan's policy for dealing with the West, revealed mainly in his

letters to Li Hung-chang and other officials, stressed the old Confucian virtues of sincerity and good faith. His progress from writing eight-legged essays to taking an interest in Western ships and guns was gradual and can be traced in his voluminous diary. His first turning in this direction was in order to improve China's defenses. As early as 1853 he recognized the need of a naval force and memorialized accordingly.¹ He became interested also in Western methods of training soldiers; and not only in purchasing foreign guns, but also in their imitation and manufacture by his own people. In 1855 he established small arsenals in Kiangsi. When he moved his headquarters to Anking in 1861, he established both an arsenal and a shipyard there.² In his diary entry of June 3, 1862, Tseng recorded a conversation with his staff members as follows:³

If we wish to find a method of self-strengthening, we should begin by considering the reform of government service and the securing of men of ability as urgent tasks, and then regard learning to make explosive shells and steamships and other instruments as the work of first importance. If only we could possess all their superior techniques, then we would have the means to return their favors when they are obedient, and we would also have the means to avenge our grievances when they are disloyal. If on our side we have no instruments to depend upon, then when we are wrong, we naturally take the blame; when we are right, we also take the blame. If we hate them, we shall be blamed; if we favor them, we shall also be blamed. Though all the people in the interior flatter the barbarians, we certainly have no power to forbid them to do so. Even if everybody hated the barbarians, we could not take advantage of it.

On a visit to Shanghai in June 1868, Tseng wrote in his diary:⁴

I saw landscape pictures through a foreign glass [stereoscope] which was brought here by Governor Ting [Ting Jih-ch'ang]; they are very beautiful. [On the following day, he writes:] I went to Yang-king-pang [the part of Shanghai along the later Avenue Edward VII] to return a visit of the French Consul-general Pai-lai-ni [M. Brenier], who entertained us very cordially. Even the bedrooms of his mother and his wife were prepared in advance to be shown to us. He conducted me, the governor, and the provincial commander-in-chief up through every floor of his four-storied residence. The splendid rooms and magnificent terraces, with bronze sculptures and colorful decorations, are probably superior even to the palaces of Chinese emperors.⁵

Three days after this visit, the *North China Herald* published a rather sarcastic account, guessing quite wrongly that a bad impression "must have been made on the mind of the august visitor who passed through our midst."⁶ Actually Tseng steadily developed his interest in Western science. At Nanking he had a big model of the earth and frequently consulted the *Ying-huan chih-lueh* of Hsü Chi-yü when he had trouble with the names of foreign countries in official documents.⁷ From 1862 on he often received foreign visitors or officials, including Robert Hart, General Staveley, J. M. Brown, Anson Burlingame, and Halliday Macartney. To learn how to be modern, he put down in his diary the new Chinese terms for light, chemistry, electricity, magnetism, zoology, botany, and similar subjects.⁸ Nevertheless, he remained personally conservative about foreign medicine. On May 8, 1871, he writes in his diary: "My wife's illness has daily become

more serious. The children have invited a foreigner to treat her. In my mind I disapprove of it, but for the time being, I allow them to do so."⁹ In his diary over a period of many years, he frequently describes his great suffering with chronic ringworm, the loss of the sight of one eye late in his career, and severe toothache. At that time, in both Shanghai and Tientsin, he could have obtained some relief from foreign physicians, had he been willing to consult them.

DOC. 12. EXCERPTS FROM TSENG'S LETTERS, 1862

During 1862, Tseng wrote to Li Hung-chang on various occasions as follows:

The barbarian affairs are fundamentally difficult to manage, but the basic principles are no more than the four words of Confucius: *chung*, *hsin*, *tu*, and *ching* — faithfulness, sincerity, earnestness, and respectfulness. . . *Hsin* means merely not to tell a lie, but it is very difficult to avoid doing so. We should start to work on the basis of this word. . . If today certain words were said definitely, tomorrow we should not, on account of a little advantage or harm to ourselves, change them. . .¹⁰

When you have contacts with foreigners, there are four important sentences to keep in mind, namely: your words must be faithful and sincere; your conduct must be earnest and respectable; you should cooperate with them in defense, but not in attack; and you should keep at a distance from them at first, but later on become close. . . This last phrase means that we must earnestly strive to make our military power adequate so that we can stand on our own feet. At first, by ourselves, let us suppress the rebels in one or two places where our sternness and bravery will not be ridiculed by foreigners, and then we can become close to them, and it still will not be too late. Although at present we may seem to be quarreling with the foreigners, if we use these few sentences as a basis for getting along with them, we shall in time certainly achieve harmony with them, and be mutually content. . .¹¹

Confucius says, "If you can rule your own country, who dares to insult you?" If we are unified, strict, and sober, and if hundreds of measures are fostered, naturally they will not insult and affront us without reason. If we are not to be insulted and affronted, and if everywhere we are humble and modest, certainly we shall have no future anxiety. The way to win the hearts of people coming from afar lies in this, and the method of self-strengthening also lies in this. . .¹²

In your association with the foreigners, your manner and deportment should not be too lofty, and you should have a slightly vague, casual appearance. Let their insults, deceitfulness, and contempt for everything appear to be understood by you and yet seem not understood, for you should look somewhat stupid. This also is a good way of facing the situation. . .¹³

We should carefully watch and learn their superior techniques and also observe their shortcomings. We should not boast of, nor neglect our ceremonies. If they esteem sincerity and cultivate harmony, we should by no means open any frontier hostility with them; if they abandon good relations and break their covenant, we should then have the weapons to oppose them.¹⁴

DOC. 13. FOUNDING THE SHANGHAI ARSENAL

Tseng Kuo-fan's chief effort at Westernization was the Kiangnan Arsenal established by himself and Li Hung-chang at Shanghai in 1865.¹⁵ Shortly after his transfer to the governor-generalship of Chihli in 1868, Tseng wrote a memorial to present a retrospective account of its founding. He first recalled that his memorial of August 14, 1861, had urged the building of steamships, and then continued:¹⁶

In 1862-63, when I was encamped at Anking [Anhui], where I established a factory to try to make foreign weapons, I used Chinese exclusively and did not employ any foreign mechanics. Although a small steamboat was built, its speed was very slow. The knack of building it was not completely acquired. In the winter of 1863 I sent the expectant sub-prefect Yung Wing abroad to purchase machinery, since I intended to make a gradual expansion. Your minister, Li Hung-chang, now governor-general of Hu-kuang, had paid attention to foreign weapons since the beginning of his tenure of the governorship of Kiangsu [1862]. At that time Ting Jih-ch'ang was the taotai of Shanghai. Both he and Li discussed the strategy of resisting foreign aggression and the method of manufacturing weapons. In the fifth month [May 25-June 22] of 1865, I purchased a set of machines in Shanghai and sent the prefects, Feng Chun-kuang, Shen Pao-ching, and others to open a machine shop [lit., *t'ieh-ch'ang*, iron factory]. At this juncture the machines bought by Yung Wing, having also arrived at Shanghai, were combined with the others into one arsenal. At first, because it was at the height of the attack on and suppression of the Taipings, guns and cannon were made. Also, on account of the shortage of funds, it was difficult to start shipbuilding until the fourth month [May 4-June 1] of 1867, when your minister memorialized and requested the assignment of twenty per cent from the foreign customs revenue, using ten per cent particularly for the expense of building steamships. Fortunately we are indebted to the Sacred Empress for her acceding to the request. Thereupon both the funds appropriated and the materials purchased gradually became more abundant. . .

It has been learned that in building steamships the boiler, the engine, and the hull are the three most important parts. Formerly when the steamship was built by ourselves in the foreign factory at Shanghai the boiler and engine [p. 28] were both bought from foreign countries and brought to China to be fitted into the hull. There has never been a case where we ourselves designed the blueprint and made the whole set of heavy engine and boiler. This time, when we began construction, we employed our own ingenuity in the study of the blueprint. . . During the first ten days of the seventh month [August 18-27, 1868], the building of the first ship was completed. Your minister named her the S.S. *T'ien-chi* [lit., peaceful and auspicious], meaning that she will be in calm waves within the four seas, and the factory business will be secure and prosperous. Two parts, the boiler and the hull, were both made by ourselves in the factory, but the engine was an old one which was purchased and repaired. . .

[P. 29] The said arsenal was formerly at Hung-k'ou, Shanghai, where a foreign workshop was temporarily rented, located in the midst of Chinese

and foreigners. This caused much inconvenience. Moreover, the number of machines had daily increased, so that the factory became too small to contain them. During the summer of 1867, we began to build a new arsenal south of the city of Shanghai. . .

In addition a school should be established in which to learn translation, because translation is the foundation for manufactures. Foreign manufacturing is derived from mathematics, all the profound mysteries of which can be discovered through diagrams and explanations. It is simply because the languages are mutually incomprehensible that, even though every day we practise on their machines, after all we do not understand the principles underlying their manufacture and operation. This year the commissioners in the arsenal have paid great attention to translation. At different times we have invited three persons, Wei-lieh-ya-li [Alexander Wylie] of England, Fu-lan-ya [John Fryer] and Ma-kao-wen [John MacGowan] of America, who have devoted their energies to selecting and carefully translating books which would be beneficial to manufacturing. . .

Tseng Kuo-fan's approach to foreign policy was on the basis of his own Confucian moral code. As with any leader of great moral earnestness, his faith in the efficacy of his own right principles gave him determination and courage. To foreigners who have not shared these principles, this faith has sometimes made him seem naive or moralistic. In 1867 the Tsungli Yamen circularized the high provincial authorities to secure their views on the proposed revision of the treaties of 1858 — a form of consultation which Peking found particularly useful in the post-Taiping period.¹⁷ Tseng Kuo-fan's reply stressed so clearly and explicitly the application to foreign relations of the classical ethic of Confucianism that the document speaks for itself. Few Chinese statesmen after his time were able to speak with such simple and profound conviction.

DOC. 14. TSENG'S VIEWS ON TREATY REVISIONS, 1867¹⁸

In our relations with foreign countries, we should pay the greatest attention to faithfulness and righteousness, and especially should value determined resolution. What we cannot do, we should firmly resist from beginning to end, and we should never let ourselves be reversed by any difficulties. In what we can do, we should show our broad-mindedness and generosity and make an instant decision by a single word. We should absolutely never hem and haw [lit., half spit and half swallow], nor show the slightest sign of hesitancy, which gives them an opening for cunning argument.

Generally speaking, the foreigners in Europe have been annexing each other's territories for several hundred years, for no other reason than to seize the profits of the business people of the one country so that the ambitions of the attacking country may be satisfied. When the foreigners came to China, they set up ports of trade widely, for transporting and selling hundreds of their commodities. They also wished to apply the cunning scheme of exploiting and squeezing others so as to restrict the livelihood of our business people. Since the hostilities, the Chinese people have been for a long time in deep suffering, as if immersed in water or fire. In addition, the three (northern) and five (southern) ports¹⁹ for international trade and the trade in the Yangtze River make their livelihood more and more diffi-

cult. The common people are impoverished, have no one to appeal to, and are as oppressed as if they were hanging upside down. Now if we allow the foreigners to transport [p. 2] salt, then the livelihood of the salt merchants who sell and transport it will be ended. If we allow foreigners to establish warehouses, then the livelihood of the storehouse owners will be ended. If we allow small steamboats to enter the inland rivers, then the livelihood of the boatmen and helmsmen of large and small boats will be ended. If we allow the foreigners to inaugurate and operate telegraph lines and railways, then the livelihood of the drivers of carts and mules and of the hotel porters will be ended. Of the various matters they have demanded [in the proposed treaty] we think that the only thing worth trying is the matter of coal mining, in which we shall borrow foreign tools for the operation of the mines to produce permanent benefit for China. . . . As to other matters like steamships and railroads, etc., if they are to be carried out by foreigners, then the foreigners will take the profits from our interior; if they are to be carried out by Chinese who are attached to foreigners, then the rich and powerful people will usurp the profits of the poor people. None of these things should be done. . . .

The main thing is to argue with the foreigners on the point of the livelihood of the common people. Actually this principle is so strong that it is indisputable. If the foreigners contest and argue endlessly, we may best tell them that even if the authorities in the capital complied with their demands reluctantly, your ministers in the provinces would still fight against them with all their might. Even if the ministers and officials complied with their demands reluctantly, millions of the common people of China when pushed to extremity would think of revolt and would regard them as enemies. This is also totally impossible for Chinese officials to forbid. China's princes and high ministers who plead for the lives of the Chinese people will not be worried for lack of expressions to put in their arguments. Even if, on account of this, we should incur hostilities, we shall have resorted to war to save the livelihood of the Chinese people and not be struggling for a superficial reason; thus we can face Heaven, Earth, and the spirits of all the emperors above and also the multitudes of the people within the vast country below. When we have nothing to fear in our minds, then there will be nothing to regret in the future. . . .

[P. 3] As for the item of sending envoys abroad, since China and the foreign countries have already become friendly, to have relations with them is a normal matter. Some critics fear that our envoys may bring disgrace to their missions, and others are afraid that the cost will be enormous. These are words of overanxiety. It seems suitable to order the high ministers at the capital and elsewhere to look for men who could be envoys to distant countries and to mark their abilities for future use. Regardless of official rank, and with no definite time limit, whenever we have the person, we should send him, and if we have no man, we will not send anyone. . . .

As for the expansion of missionary activities, we have found on investigation that at the beginning of Catholic missions in China, money and profit were expressly used to entice the people. In recent days foreign missionaries have been mostly poor. Their money is insufficient, so their theories like-

wise will not be believed. . . . Catholicism had its beginning in Europe and yet today Protestantism has been separately established there as a reformed Catholicism. From this we can see that the religions of the heathen will decline at one time and be prosperous at others, and only the doctrine of the Duke of Chou and Confucius has never been worn out through all the ages. If China only cultivates her art of government and unifies her popular customs, making her education and religion enlightened, then even though the foreigners use hundreds of schemes to expand [p. 4] their religion, eventually there will be few who will believe in it. . . .

Concerning these several items, of which the harm is rather slight, not only need we not dispute with them strongly, but also whatever they may demand may be immediately complied with. Only concerning the railroads, steamships, transportation of salt and opening of warehouses, and other matters which injure the livelihood of our people should we use all our energy to contend against them. We need not use words of rejection nor need we use any severe and stern language, but we should use polite words to make a plea and to move them by our sincere intentions. From beginning to end, we should not shift nor change our stand. We should make them understand that to have humane concern for our people in order to protect the nation is a constant principle of truth for emperors of all ages. It is also the family law of all emperors of our dynasty. In China today, where there are numerous troubles and where the foreigners are just expanding their influence, we cannot bend ourselves to the peace negotiations without any regard for the difficulties of the people in the interior. Even in the future, when China may become fully prosperous, and the foreigners may be in decline and weak, we shall also only seek to protect our common people, without any ambition to display our military power abroad. Even though they are stubborn and tricky, they must also understand that truth cannot be twisted, and the wrath of the multitude cannot be provoked. Probably they will be influenced by our extreme sincerity and accede easily to our conditions. These are my unworthy opinions; whether they are proper or not, I carefully offer my humble suggestions for your selection.

Although Tseng Kuo-fan's synthesis of Confucian principles and Western arms set a style for the succeeding generation, its efficacy as a basis for modern international politics was never proved in practice. In 1871, shortly before his death, we find Tseng arguing for the granting to Japan of the commercial privileges enjoyed by the West, in the following optimistic terms:²⁰

We train soldiers to work toward self-strengthening, but from the beginning we have had no intention of displaying our power outside our own territory. We collect duties by following to some degree the foreign methods, but we have no ambition to accumulate and grasp a big profit. If all our measures are developed with enlightenment, if the Western foreigners and Eastern foreigners are treated equally well and we use both prestige and virtue to control them according to the proper time and make foreign nations understand that the Sacred Dynasty's control of peoples coming from afar is uniformly based on the great principles of justice, then a myriad states will unanimously appreciate our sincerity. . . .

CHAPTER VII. LI HUNG-CHANG AND THE USE OF WESTERN ARMS

Under Tseng Kuo-fan's aegis the most powerful official to emerge in the lower Yangtze provinces in the 1860's was Li Hung-chang (1823-1901), whose personality was to dominate much of China's foreign policy in the late nineteenth century (see Ch. X a, below). One of Li's first contributions was to take practical steps to secure Western arms, the need for which was now widely recognized.

The new Chinese view on this problem was illustrated by the censor Wei Mu-t'ing, who pointed out in a memorial of November 14, 1861, that firearms had originated in China under the Chin dynasty (A.D. 1115-1234) and had merely been improved upon by the Europeans. The Jesuits Adam Schall (1591-1666) and Ferdinand Verbiest (1623-1688) had cast cannon in China. Foreign arms should now be used to wipe out the Taipings.

Moreover I have heard that Russia formerly did not have a navy. After the Khan [i.e., the Tsar], Peter, came to the throne, he personally went to Holland in disguise to practice and learn about naval affairs and firearms. After several years he returned to his country where he immediately constructed warships. Step by step he enlarged his territory for several thousand *li*. Now in Europe the Russian troops are the strongest.¹

A year later an imperial edict (Nov. 17, 1862) ordered the provincial authorities to train Chinese officers in Western military methods, so as to crush the Taipings:²

The rebellious bandits have been running away and disturbing the south-east, and have spread to Shanghai, Ningpo, and other ports where the government troops are not effective, and for the time being, we have to make use of foreigners to train our soldiers, as a scheme for self-strengthening. . . . But to use foreigners to do the training is also to use foreigners to be the commanders; that is, they take the responsibility as instructors and also share the authority of commanders and generals. . . . It would be better to select our own officers and order them to learn the military methods of foreign countries. . . . Then not only can we save expenses, but also we shall not give foreigners any military authority. Let Tseng Kuo-fan, Hsueh Huan (1815-1880), Li Hung-chang, and Tso Tsung-t'ang (1812-1885) select ten or twenty officers of the rank of captain or lower whose talents merit such training, and order them to learn the military methods of foreign countries at Shanghai and Ningpo [p. 42]. . . . If the newly trained officers after several months have accomplished something, then we can assign to their command the soldiers at Shanghai, Ningpo, and other places, where they are learning foreign military methods, and it will no longer be necessary to have them controlled by foreigners.

The difficulty of using foreign officers and instructors without being used by the foreign power concerned, a problem which so many weak countries have faced in the age of imperialism, was quickly perceived by Li Hung-chang. As governor of Kiangsu, he had to develop close working relations with Frederick Townsend Ward (1831-1862), "Chinese" Gordon (1833-1885) and other foreign

commanders who successively led the mixed Sino-foreign force organized with Western arms to defend Shanghai.

DOC. 15. LI'S LETTER TO TSENG KUO-FAN ON THE EVER-VICTORIOUS ARMY, FEBRUARY 1863³

In my camp not a single day passes without foreigners coming to see me and I am really embittered by the trouble they cause. Nevertheless, on account of this, I am thoroughly in touch with them both in spirit and in person, and in the midst of all this there is no one who dares to spread rumors or coerce me to do anything. Because I do not care very much for ceremonies, they are also rather frank in pouring out their feelings completely; however, I have no time to return their visits one by one.

"In resorting to warfare it depends upon the man, not upon the weapons." This is certainly a profound idea. [Tseng had said in a letter⁴ that if generals and soldiers are good, it does not matter if the weapons are poor]. . . . I have been aboard the warships of British and French admirals and I saw that their cannon are ingenious and uniform, their ammunition is fine and cleverly made, their weapons are bright, and their troops have a martial appearance and are orderly. These things are actually superior to those of China. Their army is not their strong point, yet whenever they attack a city or bombard a camp, the various firearms they use are all non-existent in China. Even their pontoon bridges, scaling ladders, and fortresses are particularly well prepared with excellent technique and marvelous usefulness. All these things I have never seen before. However, they cannot pitch a camp nor live in tents, and, in addition, when they approach enemies they are very cautious. Their courage is mostly insufficient. In these things they are inferior to good Chinese soldiers.

The rebel Chung [the Taiping Loyal Prince, Li Hsiu-ch'eng] hired some foreigners who are rascals and who also have no way to seek for or buy real cannon. . . . The foreign chiefs unanimously say that the rulers of England and France do not allow their big guns and mortars [p. 47] to go to China. Formerly the English chief who managed the affairs of the Ever-Victorious Army with me said that if we did not permit his country to send an officer to lead the army jointly, he would immediately take back our foreign arms, and he fears that the Army will be rendered useless. . . .

I feel deeply ashamed that the Chinese weapons are far inferior to those of foreign countries. Every day I warn and instruct my officers to be humble-minded, to bear the humiliation, to learn one or two secret methods from the Westerners in the hope that we may increase our knowledge. However, the able fighters Ch'eng Hsueh-ch'i (1829-1864) and Kuo Sung-lin (1834-1882) are firm and obstinate and for this reason they are unwilling to learn. Liu Ming-ch'uan (1836-1896) is more understanding and he is very anxious to ask for guns and mortars but is unable to get them. If we encamp at Shanghai for a long time, and cannot make use of nor take over the superior techniques of the foreigners, our regrets will be numerous!

The next document is remarkable both for its perception of the way China's social structure impeded Westernization and for its forecast of possible military developments in Japan and within China.

DOC. 16. LI'S RECOMMENDATION OF WESTERN MILITARY
METHODS, JUNE 1863⁵

[Li begins by describing how he devoted his attention to Western arms after he reached Shanghai, purchasing and studying foreign weapons and using the assistance of skilled mechanics in the effort to comprehend them. His detailed factual account of the process of casting cannon would indicate that he had gained a more thorough understanding than some of his colleagues such as Tseng Kuo-fan.]

[P. 8] Of all firearms presently in use, explosive shells⁶ can best assure victory, and particularly effective are the long guns to fire them; but unless we use the whole set of foreign machines and employ foreign skilled workers, we cannot start making them. Both the long-range and short-range guns would be ineffective without foreign gunpowder. The various arsenals under my jurisdiction cannot yet try to cast the long guns but we have bought several tons of large and small guns from England and France. We cast our own shells to supply the endless need for them.

I have learned that when Western scholars make weapons, they use mathematics for reference and exert their energy in deep thinking to make daily increases and alterations. Consequently they can make different weapons every month and every year. Of the Chinese books on making cannon, the *Tse-k'o-lu* by T'ang Jo-wang [Adam Schall], and more recently, Ting Kung-ch'en's *Yen-p'ao t'u-shuo*,⁷ "An illustrated explanation of artillery," are the most detailed, but both are superficial works which have been copied with misunderstanding and with the use of imagination. And yet our people all regard them as secret books (to be carefully guarded). No wonder the closer we seek the art of cannon making, the further we lose it! Generally, if a tool is inaccurate, it has no value. If a tool is not carefully used, then having an accurate tool is the same as being without it. When the cannon cannot be discharged, and the ball cannot be fired, this is the fault of the manufacturer [p. 9]. The long or short distance, and the quick or slow speed of the ball, the high or low elevation of the cannon and its slow or rapid discharge are the responsibility of the gunners. In all these respects there are definite and fixed principles which cannot be learned by smatterers.

Personally I think that "when a series of changes has run all its course, another change ensues,"⁸ and after change, things will proceed smoothly. Chinese scholars and officials have been indulging in the inveterate habit of remembering stanzas and sentences and practicing fine model calligraphy, while our warriors and fighters are, on the other hand, rough, stupid, and careless; so that what the scholars and officials use is not what they have learned, and what they have learned is not what they use. In peace time they sneer at the sharp weapons of foreign countries as things produced by strange techniques and tricky craft, which they consider it unnecessary to learn. In wartime then they are alarmed that the effective weapons of Western countries are so strange and marvelous, and regard them as something the Chinese cannot learn about. They do not know that for several hundred years the foreigners have considered the study of firearms as important as their bodies and lives . . . The foreign officials and workers in charge of

manufacturing them are honored and admired by the whole country, and not treated as small artisans.

Everything in China's civil and military systems is far superior to the West. Only in firearms is it absolutely impossible to catch up with them. What is the reason? It is because in China the way of manufacturing machines is for the scholars to understand the principles, while the artisans put them into practice and do the work. In developing their learning the two do not consult each other, hence their achievements cannot keep abreast. The best of the artisans is limited to becoming a head craftsman. Foreigners, however, are different. He who can make a machine that can be used by the nation can become a prominent official and his family for generations can live on the trade and keep their position hereditary. Thus there are grandfathers and fathers who learn the same trade and cannot thoroughly master it, yet the son and grandson still practise it for generations, insisting upon mastering it before they stop. "If the Emperor above desires fish, the official would even dry up the valley to catch fish": if there is an offer of honor and profit, will no one exhaust his energy to seek it, exerting his strength day and night with the determination of not stopping until he has thoroughly mastered it?

Formerly England, France, and other nations regarded Japan as a foreign treasury, recklessly making demands upon her. The Japanese emperor and ministers exerted themselves to become strong, selecting brilliant sons from the imperial house and high ministers to learn various techniques in the factories of Western nations. They also bought the machines for making machines so as to practise manufacturing in their own country. Now they can navigate steamships, and make and use cannon. Last year the English people threatened them ostentatiously and brought up soldiers. And yet the superior techniques of the effective weapons which the British people have been relying upon [p. 10] for attacking and fighting had already been shared and mastered by the Japanese. Consequently, they remained steady and undisturbed; and the English in fact could do nothing against them. The Japanese of today are the "dwarf pirates" [*wo-k'ou*] of the Ming dynasty. They are farther away from Western countries but close to China. If we have some weapons with which to stand on our own feet, they will attach themselves to us, and watch the shortcomings or strength of the Westerners. If we have nothing with which to make ourselves strong, then the Japanese will imitate the Westerners and will share the Westerners' sources of profits. Japan, a tiny country overseas, can still change her course at the proper time and know what she should take as her model. Since we Chinese thoroughly understand the principle that when one reaches a point of exhaustion, one must reform and then one can go on smoothly, we should also greatly change our plans.

There is a further source of anxiety. China's remaining bandits have not yet been exterminated and the foreigners, whether they are officials or common people, are secretly selling them powerful weapons. Let us suppose that in some nook of the mountains or some corner of the sea there are worthless rogues who learn the Western methods under cover, secretly originate some new principles, and suddenly stop tilling the land, and show their superior ability in making new weapons. The weapons of our government troops are

old-fashioned and handed down from the past. How can we resist them? Whenever I think of this, I cannot but be startled with fear and sadly emit a long sigh. . . Su Tzu-chan [1036-1101] says, "If you speak in a time of peace, it is a sufficient basis for taking action, but frequently the trouble is that no one will believe you; if you speak in a time of trouble, it may be sufficient to secure belief but it will be already too late." I think that if China desires to make herself strong, there is nothing better than to learn about and use the superior weapons of foreign countries. If we wish to learn about and use the superior weapons of foreign countries, there is nothing better than to look for the machines with which to make machines. We can learn their methods but need not necessarily employ their people. If we wish to seek machines which will make machinery, and the men who can make machinery, we might specially set up a course for students [from the civil service examinations]. If the students will commit themselves to this course for the rest of their lives, as a means of attaining wealth, rank, and reputation, then the trade may be established, the technique may be mastered, and the abilities may be concentrated. In Peking the artillery and musketry division should particularly learn first to make cannon and improve on them, so as to prepare to inspire awe in the empire and reject foreign encroachment. . . We must take warning from what has happened to prevent what has not yet happened. Furthermore, we must investigate thoroughly why it has been so.

This statement from Li Hung-chang was put before the throne by Prince Kung and the other ministers of the Tsungli Yamen, with some very interesting additional considerations, some of which we translate as follows:

DOC. 17. THE TSUNGLI YAMEN MEMORIAL OF JUNE 1863 ON
CHINA'S DEFENSIVE STRATEGY⁹

It has been several decades since the foreigners first engaged in hostilities against us. Finally, in the period of Hsien-feng [1851-1861] domestic trouble and foreign insult came simultaneously. . . All commentators know that foreign countries such as England and France rely only on their solid ships and cannon to lord it overseas. But as to why their ships are solid and their cannon effective, this is put aside without discussion. Even if there were some who paid attention to this matter, there has been no way to learn about it because the foreigners keep secret this mechanical cunning, and are unwilling to teach others. . . But now all the foreign countries are willing to sell us foreign guns and cannon. . . and also willing to send people to teach us the manufacture of all sorts of arms. . .

In recent years, troops have been used in Kiangsu, where English and French officers have been hired to teach and drill our soldiers and militia. The foreign officers, then, import the victory-bringing firearms from their countries to the camps for our use, but charge us a big price. . . When we secure these weapons, they are sufficient to destroy strongholds and break open fortresses so that, wherever we advance, we are successful. All areas south of the Yangtze have been gradually cleared up. The promptness of this result has never been surpassed. . . At present the military campaign

is still going on in Kiangsu and Chekiang. If we use this as a pretext, that our soldiers are to learn the manufacturing of weapons in order to suppress the bandits, we shall not reveal any traces [of anti-foreign intentions]. This is indeed an opportunity which should not be missed. If we begin to learn the manufacturing after the suppression of the bandits, then even if the foreign craftsmen would like to come for the high pay, the foreign officers must become suspicious and hinder them. . . Thus we should seize the opportunity, at a time when in the southern provinces our military power is in great ascendancy and foreigners are delighted to show us their superior techniques, to make a substantial study of all kinds of foreign machines and weapons in order to learn their secret completely. In times of disturbance they can be used to oppose aggression, and in times of peace they can show our prestige. . .

Your ministers frequently, in periods of leisure from public affairs, have thought and planned again and again: the friendliness or opposition of foreigners always depends upon the strength or weakness of China. Certainly Japan is not the only one to consider us in this way. If we can strengthen ourselves, then we can live peacefully with the others, and covertly deter them from undertaking their cunning and aggressive plans. Otherwise, we shall have nothing to depend upon. . .

[P. 3] After the battalions at the capital have learned to use these superb and secret weapons, learning to make them can be extended only to the banner troops stationed in the various provinces, because the bannermen have definite places to live in, which are comparatively easy to guard. In order to avoid other subsequent evils the common people should still be forbidden to learn about and use these weapons. It behooves us to request an Imperial decree to order the Division of Artillery and Musketry to select eight intelligent and dexterous military officers and forty soldiers from among those who have had some training in making firearms, to be sent to Kiangsu and placed under Governor Li Hung-chang for assignment. . .

CHAPTER VIII. INSTITUTIONS FOR LINGUISTIC
AND SCIENTIFIC STUDIES (THE T'UNG-WEN KUAN)

To responsible officials on the spot like Tseng and Li, the undeniable need to make foreign arms entailed an equal necessity to study Western "mathematics," including its application in engineering. At Peking one of the first innovations to follow the Tsungli Yamen was the interpreters' college or T'ung-wen Kuan. Approved in 1861 at the same time as the Yamen, this college was set up first to produce diplomatic interpreters; but it soon expanded to include Western sciences taught by Western professors. For this forward step, as for so many others, the foreign customs inspectorate under Robert Hart (1835-1911) supplied steady financial support.¹

The original argument for the T'ung-wen Kuan in 1861 (which was briefly quoted above in our condensed summary, Doc. 7) had been as follows:²

(5) We request Your Majesty to order Canton and Shanghai each to

send to Peking two men who understand foreign spoken and written languages to be commissioned and consulted. We note that in any negotiations with foreign nations, the prerequisite is to know their nature and feelings. At present, their speech cannot be understood and their writing can hardly be deciphered. Everything is impeded. How can we expect to make a suitable settlement?

Formerly with regard to the Russian language, a precedent was established by setting up a school (*wen-kuan*) for its study, and this showed a profound wisdom. Now after a long time, the regulations have become a pure formality and the language has not been thoroughly understood. Some kind of encouragement seems to be warranted here in order to call people's attention to it.

We have heard that among the Canton and Shanghai merchants there are some who are devoting themselves to the study of the written and spoken languages of England, France, and America. We request that Your Majesty order the governors general and governors of the two provinces to select bona fide and reliable men and send two from each province, altogether, four, to Peking, bringing with them [p. 25] the books of the various countries. At the same time, let four or five brilliant boys under the age of thirteen or fourteen be chosen from each of the Eight Banners to study under them. Those who are sent to Peking should be well paid, after the practice of the Russian school, and following two years of service their diligence or laziness should be appraised, and those who make a good record should be rewarded and promoted. When the students from the Eight Banners can all master the written and spoken languages we shall no longer invite Canton and Shanghai teachers.

As for the Russian written and spoken language, we still beg Your Majesty to order the school to discuss its regulations carefully and promote its work seriously. Among the men who learn the languages of various nations, those who thoroughly master them should be immediately reported with a request that they be encouraged so that this work will not be later neglected.

In 1863, Li Hung-chang supported the idea of the T'ung-wen Kuan in an eloquent memorial evidently drafted by his secretary, Feng Kuei-fen; some parts are lifted from one of Feng's essays (see Doc. 8 above), and we have therefore omitted duplicate passages in the following extract.³

DOC. 18. LI HUNG-CHANG'S SUPPORT OF WESTERN STUDIES, 1863⁴

When China has contact with foreigners, we should first understand their ambitions, be aware of their desires, and thoroughly know their points of strength and weakness, their honesty and dishonesty, before we can expect to secure just treatment. During the last twenty years of trade relations there have been quite a few of their leaders who have learned our written and spoken language and the best are able to read our classics and history. . . . Whenever we have a discussion between Chinese and foreign high officials, we depend entirely upon the foreign interpreters to transmit the

ideas; it is difficult to guarantee that there is no such thing as prejudice or misinterpretation.

[P. 12] Your minister requests that we follow the example of the T'ung-wen Kuan by inaugurating at Shanghai another foreign language school, in which children from the vicinity below the age of fourteen, of brilliant ability and refined and quiet character, will be selected and taught by Westerners, and at the same time *chü-jen* and licentiates of excellent conduct and learning will be invited from the interior to teach them classics, history and literature. . . . After the students show achievement in their studies, they should be sent to the governor-general and governor of the province to be examined and to qualify as district licentiates. . . .

After the language students have become numerous, men of ability will emerge. . . . Are Chinese wisdom and intelligence inferior to those of Westerners? If we have really mastered the Western languages and, in turn, teach one another, then all their clever techniques of steamships and firearms can be gradually and thoroughly learned. [Li then raises the question of a similar school at Canton.]

As a result of this proposal, a language school modeled on the Peking T'ung-wen Kuan was set up at Shanghai in 1863. Another one was opened at Canton in 1864 and a somewhat similar institution at the Foochow Shipyard in 1866.

On December 11, 1866, Prince Kung, representing the Tsungli Yamen, urged the emperor to develop the T'ung-wen Kuan by adding a scientific department of astronomy and mathematics and by admitting students of high attainment in Chinese learning. He repeated the stock argument that "the machinery of the West, its steamers, its firearms, and its military tactics, all have their source in mathematical science." He proposed to invite professors from the West. "What we desire is that our students shall get to the bottom of these subjects . . . for we are firmly convinced that if we are able to master the mysteries of mathematical calculation, physical investigation, astronomical observation, construction of engines, engineering of water-courses, this, and this only, will assure the steady growth of the power of the empire."⁵ On January 28, 1867, Prince Kung submitted another memorial in which China's need of Western science was discussed in detail. This important document asserted that the natural sciences were the foundation of Western strength and stressed the point that officials like Tso Tsung-t'ang and Li Hung-chang who were conversant with foreign affairs all urged the adoption of Western learning and the manufacture of foreign weapons and machines as the method for China's self-strengthening.⁶

In spite of vehement conservative protests, the new department was set up and Hsü Chi-yü (see Ch. IV) became director of the school. Soon the T'ung-wen Kuan curriculum included astronomy, mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, geography, geology, mineralogy, metallurgy, mechanics, anatomy, physiology, political economy, and international law. Putting all these subjects under the heading of "astronomy and mathematics" presumably represented an effort of Prince Kung and his colleagues to lessen the conservative resistance by camouflaging their innovations, since Western astronomy and mathematics were known to have been introduced into China and accepted as early as the seventeenth century.

In the full-dress debate touched off by this action, the conservatives were led by the Grand Secretary Wo-jen (d. 1871), a Mongol whose high scholarship had made him a tutor to the emperor, head of the Hanlin Academy, and president

of several of the Six Boards in succession. A product of the orthodox philosophy of Chu Hsi, Wo-jen was in 1867 the recognized leader of the opposition to Prince Kung and Wen-hsiang, and he immediately memorialized against the establishment of Western studies in the T'ung-wen Kuan, inveighing openly against the Western influence on racial and cultural grounds.

DOC. 19. WO-JEN'S OBJECTION TO WESTERN LEARNING, 1867⁷

Mathematics, one of the six arts, should indeed be learned by scholars as indicated in the Imperial decree, and it should not be considered an unworthy subject. But according to the viewpoint of your slave, astronomy and mathematics are of very little use. If these subjects are going to be taught by Westerners as regular studies, the damage will be great. . . Your slave has learned that the way to establish a nation is to lay emphasis on propriety and righteousness, not on power and plotting. The fundamental effort lies in the minds of people, not in techniques. Now, if we seek trifling arts and respect barbarians as teachers regardless of the possibility that the cunning barbarians may not teach us their essential techniques — even if the teachers sincerely teach and the students faithfully study them, all that can be accomplished is the training of mathematicians. From ancient down to modern times, your slave has never heard of anyone who could use mathematics to raise the nation from a state of decline or to strengthen it in time of weakness. The empire is so great that one should not worry lest there be any lack of abilities therein. If astronomy and mathematics have to be taught, an extensive search should find someone who has mastered the technique. Why is it limited to barbarians, and why is it necessary to learn from the barbarians?

Moreover, the barbarians are our enemies. In 1860 they took up arms and rebelled against us. Our capital and its suburb were invaded, our ancestral altar was shaken, our Imperial palace was burned, and our officials and people were killed or wounded. There had never been such insults during the last 200 years of our dynasty. All our scholars and officials have been stirred with heart-burning rage, and have retained their hatred until the present. Our court could not help making peace with the barbarians. How can we forget this enmity and this humiliation even for one single day?

Since the conclusion of the peace [p. 25], Christianity has been prevalent and half of our ignorant people have been fooled by it. The only thing we can rely on is that our scholars should clearly explain to the people the Confucian tenets, which may be able to sustain the minds of the ignorant populace. Now if these brilliant and talented scholars, who have been trained by the nation and reserved for great future usefulness, have to change from their regular course of study to follow the barbarians, then the correct spirit will not be developed, and accordingly the evil spirit will become stronger. After several years it will end in nothing less than driving the multitudes of the Chinese people into allegiance to the barbarians.

Reverently your slave has read the instruction to the grand councillors and officers of the nine government bureaus in the *Collected Essays of the Kang-hsi Emperor*, in which he says, "After a thousand or several hundred years, China must be harmed by the various countries of Europe." The deep and far-reaching concern of the sage Emperor is admirable. Even though

he used their methods, he actually hated them. Now, the empire has already been harmed by them. Should we further spread their influence and fan the flame? Your slave has heard that when the barbarians spread their religion, they hate Chinese scholars who are not willing to learn it. Now scholars from the regular channels are ordered to study under foreigners. Your slave fears that what our scholars are going to learn cannot be learnt well and yet will be perplexing, which would just fall in with (the foreigners') plans. It is earnestly hoped that, in order to maintain the general prestige of the empire and to prevent the development of disaster, the Imperial mind will independently decide to abolish instantly the previous decision to establish such studies in the language school. The whole empire will be fortunate indeed.!

DOC. 20. THE TSUNGLI YAMEN'S REBUTTAL, 1867⁸

Your ministers have examined the memorial of Wo-jen: the principles he presents are very lofty and the opinion he maintains is very orthodox. Your ministers' point of view was also like that before they began to manage foreign affairs; and yet today they do not presume to insist on such ideas, because of actual difficulties which they cannot help. . .

From the beginning of foreign relations to the present there have been twenty or thirty years. At first the officials inside and outside the capital did not grasp the crux of the matter, and whether they negotiated peace or discussed war, generally there were empty words without effect; and so the incident of 1860 arose. At that time the foreign troops approached our city wall, and the gun-fire and flames illuminated the sky. The capital was in peril day and night. Scholars and officials either stood about, putting their hands in their sleeves, or fled away confusedly. Our deceased Emperor did not consider his ministers, I-hsin [Prince Kung] and others, to be unworthy, and ordered them to remain in Peking to manage the peace negotiations. Your ministers dared not imitate the vain and bitter cry of Chia I [201-169 B.C., a famous scholar who grieved so bitterly at the death of his prince that he died within the year],⁹ . . . nor would they use empty words in perfunctory performance of their duties. . . It has been eight years since the conclusion of the [1860] treaty. The matters in negotiation between China and the West have been extremely difficult. Your ministers jointly have tried their best to maintain the situation, and in recent days the Westerners have been generally docile and agreeable. However [p. 2], while merely to get along with them for the time being is all right, it is not possible in this way to protect ourselves for several years or decades to come. Therefore your ministers have pondered a long-term policy and discussed the situation thoroughly with all the provincial officials. Proposals to learn the written and spoken languages of foreign countries, the various methods of making machines, the training of troops with foreign guns, the dispatching of officials to travel in all countries, the investigation of their local customs and social conditions, and the establishment of six armies in the area of the capital in order to protect it — all these painstaking and special decisions represent nothing other than a struggle for self-strengthening.

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Moreover, the principal means which foreigners employ to secure victory

is the use of steamships and firearms first of all. Formerly, because the Europeans in making firearms did not care how much capital they used and also because firearms have their roots in astronomy and geometry and are developed by trigonometry and mathematics, so that their guns can be cleverly discharged and marvelously hit the mark, the censor Wei Mu-t'ing requested that at Shanghai and other spots factories be established [see Ch. VII above]. . . Your ministers have also discussed this in correspondence with Tseng Kuo-fan, Li Hung-chang, Tso Tsung-t'ang, Ying-kuei, Kuo Sung-tao, Chiang I-li, and others. They all agreed that the clever methods for manufacturing must begin with mathematics. . .

We are afraid that the people who are learning these things will have no power of discrimination and are likely to be led astray by foreigners, as Wo-jen fears. Therefore we have deliberated and decided that those who participate in the examinations must be persons from regular scholastic channels. It is indeed those students who have read widely and who understand right principles and have their minds set upon upright and grand purposes — and the present situation is just what causes the scholars and officials to feel pain in heart and head — who would certainly be able to lie on faggots and taste gall [i.e., nurse vengeance] in order to encourage each other vigorously to seek the actual achievement of self-strengthening. They are different from those who have vague, easygoing, or indifferent ideas.

Wo-jen says that the barbarians are our enemies. Naturally this shows that he also has the intention of lying on faggots and tasting gall. But let us ask, is his nursing of vengeance in this way for the purpose of gaining a temporary fame, or is he going to seek actual results? If [p. 3] he says that he seeks results, then let us ask, should he seek results from the foolish and mean fellows, or should he seek them from among the scholars and officials? That is why your ministers' Tsungli Yamen has requested that only people coming from the regular channels take the examinations for the language school. Now upon reading Wo-jen's memorial, one gathers that he considers this action to be absolutely impracticable. The grand secretary has long enjoyed a flourishing reputation for Neo-Confucian studies. As soon as his idea is expressed, there will undoubtedly be a large number from among the scholars and officials who will agree with him. Ever since your ministers have managed foreign affairs, they have always hoped to get the opinions of others so as to use them for greater advantage in the handling of current events; they have never dared to cherish the slightest idea of avoiding such opinions. But this memorial of Wo-jen will not only inhibit scholars henceforth from going forward, but also, we are particularly afraid, will make those inside and outside the capital, who are sincerely performing their duties with no inclination to empty talk, become disappointed and discouraged. Then what your ministers and provincial officials have planned for several years will fail in one morning — this is indeed of great concern.

Your ministers have thought again and again and found that the foreigners who dare to come to China and act as they wish without any restriction do so because their minds have been made up and their designs have accumulated during the last several decades. The Chinese spoken and written languages, the important and unimportant geographic areas,

and even a single word or a single action by us, they all know completely; whereas concerning the actions of their race, we do not know a thing. We merely continue our empty talk about moral principles and righteousness, and confusedly argue without end. Now the time for treaty revisions after a ten year period will soon come [i.e., in 1868]. Even if we plan and think about it day and night, it is already too late. If we remain contented with our ignorance, we are deeply concerned lest the situation will deteriorate like a stream running downhill every day. Yet as soon as we seek for some method of pursuing knowledge, then again public opinion will criticize us right and left. One mistake is enough; how can we bear to make another? . . .

Even though we run the risk of receiving the criticism of the empire we will not try to avoid it. But the grand secretary [Wo-jen] considers our action a hindrance. Certainly he should have some better plans. If he really has some marvelous plan which can control foreign countries and not let us be controlled by them, your ministers should certainly follow the footsteps of the grand secretary, exhausting their mean abilities in careful discussions with him, in order to show our harmony and mutual help, and to console your Imperial anxiety. If he has no other plan than to use loyalty and sincerity as armor, and propriety and righteousness as a shield, and such similar phrases, and if he says that these words could accomplish diplomatic negotiations and be sufficient to control the life of our enemies, your ministers indeed do not presume to believe it. . .

CHAPTER IX. TSO TSUNG-T'ANG AND THE FOOCHOW SHIPYARD

Tso Tsung-t'ang (1812-1885) was born into a poor peasant family of Hsiangyin and lived for a long time with his wife's family in Hsiangtan. (Tseng Kuo-fan, Tso Tsung-t'ang, and Mao Tse-tung were born and bred in neighboring districts of Hunan.) Being in straitened financial circumstances, Tso spent the first forty years of his life chiefly as a school teacher and gentleman farmer before he served in the army. In this period he associated with the scholar Ho Ch'ang-ling (1785-1848), who was the compiler, assisted by Wei Yuan (see Doc. 3), of the famous "Collection of essays by Ch'ing scholars of practical use to society" (*Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien*), and he participated three times (1833, 1835, 1838) in the metropolitan examinations but failed to get the *chin-shih* degree. After his third failure, Tso shifted his interest from memorizing Confucian classics for the examinations to pursuing knowledge for practical use. He read works on history and geography by early Ch'ing nationalist thinkers, such as Ku Yen-wu (see Ch. IIa), and also a large official work on the geography of Chinese Turkestan compiled in 1756-1782. This special study of works on Chinese topography and economics later proved helpful to his military campaigns and economic reconstruction work in the Northwest.

Tso was directly influenced by Lin Tse-hsü. When Lin passed through Changsha in 1849, Tso had a long talk with him and discussed all sorts of topics for a whole night. He was also fond of the *Hai-kuo t'u-chih* (see Doc. 3) and

once urged a relative to make a special study of it; in 1875 he wrote a preface to a new edition. Finally Tso's plans for the Foochow shipyard were carried out by Lin's son-in-law, Shen Pao-chen (1820-1879). Tso served as tutor (1840-1848) in the family of his friend, T'ao Chu (1779-1839), a governor-general of Kiangsu, Kiangsi, and Anhwei. It was during this period that his talents were recognized by Hu Lin-i (1812-1861), a general and statesman of Hunan, who later became his patron. His personal connections with the great scholars and officials of his native province gave Tso some insight into state affairs, and he watched closely the development of events during the Opium War. His interest in the use of Western arms dates from this period.

In 1852 he was recommended by Hu Lin-i to fight against the Taipings. Due to his unusual ability, he was made governor-general of Fukien and Chekiang in 1864, and he recovered the latter province in the same year, with the help of French officers and soldiers, from whom he acquired a better knowledge of Western weapons. Like Tseng, he also directed the building of a steamboat by native mechanics, and tried it out on the West Lake at Hangchow. Since its speed was unsatisfactory, he sought the counsel of two French engineers in 1864. In his insistence on steamships as a means of China's self-strengthening, he was one of the first proponents of a modern Chinese navy. Later he became enthusiastic about torpedoes and wished to invite German experts to make them.¹

But although Tso liked to employ foreign experts, he would not rely entirely on them. He wrote, "The method of self-strengthening should be to seek from among ourselves, not seek from among others. He who seeks the help of others will be controlled by others, and he who relies upon himself will have the situation under his own control."² Frankness and self-assurance were two of his chief characteristics.

Tso Tsung-t'ang was also an able administrator. As governor-general, he did a great deal toward the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Chekiang and Fukien after the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion. In Fukien, he selected a site for the shipyard at Ma-wei near Foochow (August 1866), and appointed two Frenchmen, Prosper Giquel (1835-1886) and Paul d'Aiguebelle (1831-1875), to serve as engineers and supervisors. He also planned a school, attached to the shipyard, to train young men to build and man ships. Some of the students of this school, such as Yen Fu (1853-1921, see Ch. XVI), later became famous. It is difficult to say whether Tso Tsung-t'ang was trying to develop a competitive program paralleling Tseng's Shanghai Arsenal; although Tseng and Tso, being leaders of the same province, were not on especially good terms, both were persistent in carrying out their plans. Document 21, below, indicates that Tso expected his plan for the Foochow shipyard to encounter many hindrances and criticisms from lethargic and conservative officials, who were quick in criticizing new undertakings but slow in presenting constructive proposals of their own. After submitting many memorials and receiving imperial approval, and after having put some of his plans into effect, Tso was transferred to Shensi, Kansu, and Sinkiang.

Tso's chief contribution was made in the barren area of the Northwest, where he spent more than twelve years (1868-1880). There he faced four great difficulties: money, food, ammunition, and transportation. To solve these problems, in a poor, thinly populated, culturally backward, politically corrupt, and rebellious area, far from the center of China, was a tough job. In order to save money and energy he aimed to complete the task according to a five-year plan which he reported to the emperor in advance. He ordered his soldiers, most or all of whom were originally peasants, to become military colonists, i.e., to raise their own food, improve irrigation, dig wells, and dredge rivers. They also planted thousands of

trees for which travelers today, on the long shaded highways of Chinese Turkestan, are said to be still grateful. For the making of clothes, he attempted to transform the village handicrafts into a modern machine industry by encouraging cotton planting, improving sericulture, and opening woolen and cotton mills. For ammunition he established a manufacturing bureau in Shensi (1866) with an arsenal (1871) and a gunpowder factory (1875) at Lanchow. He employed Chinese, German, and other foreign mechanics to direct this work.

For money Tso reorganized the land, salt, tea, likin, and other taxes. He fought against greedy Manchu officials and abolished much red tape. His financial and supply operations for many years were handled by the famous treaty-port banker, Hu Kuang-yung, who maintained a depot at Shanghai and raised funds from foreign merchants. In 1867 Tso contracted such a loan for 1,200,000 taels, and thereafter he floated similar "foreign" loans four times (1868, 1877, 1878, 1881), totaling 15,750,000 taels.³ His total expenditure in the Northwest is estimated to have been about one hundred million taels.⁴ He cast coins and silver dollars and also attempted in 1878 to establish a modern bank and even to open gold mines.

For transportation Tso established his own system, running from Hu Kuang-yung's office at Shanghai through a provisions depot at Hankow, which gathered food and other local products from the interior, and a general transportation office at Sian. For cultural purposes, he established a printing office at Sian to print important books, and opened academies and free schools to educate the people. Although criticized for cruelty to the rebels, he worked hard on rehabilitation, provided effective famine relief, and prohibited the planting of poppy and smoking of opium.

His periodic fiscal reports, reproduced in his collected writings, are quite detailed (no such reports are included in Li Hung-chang's works). Tso was a diehard — advocating war against France, Russia, or any other foreign aggressor. He had a simple belief that in negotiation with a foreign power there were only three possible lines to follow: offense, defense, and peace; but one must be able to fight an offensive war before one could defend oneself, and one must be able to defend oneself before a fair peace treaty could be obtained.⁵

Although the following document comes from an earlier and less successful phase of his official career, it shows Tso Tsung-t'ang's grasp of detail and vigorous imagination.

DOC. 21. Tso's PLANS OF 1866⁶

The great advantage of southeast China lies on the water and not on land. From Kwangtung and Fukien, to Chekiang, Kiangnan, Shantung, Chihli, and Shenking around to the Northwest, the three sides of China are surrounded by vast seas. . . In time of peace, we could use ships for grain transport; then a thousand *li* would be as if at one's threshold; if we used them for trade, then hundreds of commodities would be gathered in the markets. . . When some incident occurs, steamships could be used for mobilization and then the forces of the hundred clans of Kwangtung could be concentrated into the three states of Korea. . . Since warfare has opened up on the sea, the steam warships of various European countries have come directly to Tientsin. Our national defense line has actually become fictitious. Their ships sail as rapidly as a shooting star or a whirlwind and we have no way to stop them.

Since foreign ships were permitted to carry away northern goods to be sold in the various ports, the prices of commodities in North China have been exorbitantly high. The great merchants of Kiangsu and Chekiang, who used to make sea transportation their profession . . . cannot reduce their prices to compete with the foreign merchants. . .

Hitherto, ministers within and without the capital have repeatedly discussed the purchase of steamships instead of building them, but no one has yet presumed to discuss the establishment of a plant to build them. The reasons are, first, the difficulty of selecting a place for the shipyard; second, the difficulty of finding and buying steamship machinery; third, the difficulty of engaging head mechanics; fourth, the difficulty of raising and accumulating a huge amount of funds; fifth, the difficulty that the Chinese [p. 2] are unaccustomed to navigation and that after the completion of the ships we would still have to engage foreigners; sixth, the difficulties of the numerous requirements of expenditures for coal, salaries, and wages after the ships have been completed, all of which would have to be paid every month, in addition to which from time to time the ships would have to be repaired. Seventh, in this unusual enterprise it is easy for slander and criticism to arise; one person initiates the plan, another carries it out, while a third is a mere bystander; and if the enterprise fails near its completion, then both public and private loss will result. With these several difficulties, it is no wonder that there is no man who cares to take the responsibility. . .

Your minister humbly believes that if we desire to prevent harm from the sea and, at the same time, to receive its advantages, we must reorganize our navy; if we wish to reorganize our navy, we must establish a plant, to supervise and build steamships. The Europeans are skilful but we Chinese do not have to be content with our stupidity. . . It is not impossible to get the machines.

As to the difficulty of engaging foreign head mechanics, we may first lay down the requirements in the contract and fix their salaries, and after they arrive at the machine shops, the office will select from the interior young and bright craftsmen in various lines, to learn from and practise with them. Those who have brilliant talent and clever ideas, regardless of whether they are officials, gentry, scholars or ordinary people, should all alike go to the plant for study and practice.

[P. 3] It is estimated that the building of the shipyard, the buying of machinery, and the recruiting of head mechanics must cost more than three hundred thousand taels; and that the starting of the work and gathering of materials, together with the payment of salaries to the Chinese and foreign mechanics, will require approximately fifty or sixty thousand taels each month. Figuring for a year, it will require a cost of more than six hundred thousand taels. . . .

We are concerned lest after the completion of the ships we have no qualified captains to watch the compass, control the helm, and the like, for all of which we shall have to hire foreigners. To obviate this difficulty, it should be distinctly indicated when the contract is first made that the teaching of shipbuilding will at the same time include navigation. As soon as a ship is finished, some Chinese will immediately be ordered to accompany the

foreign mechanics to sea and sail to all the seaports. Regardless of whether they are soldiers, officers, or people in other fields, if any one of them has learned his job thoroughly and is able to become a captain, he will immediately be granted a military rank. . .

[P. 4] In an unusual enterprise, it is easy to incur slander or criticism. At the beginning people will worry about the lack of accomplishment; then they will criticize the expenditure as being too much, and will probably also say sarcastically that we have lost our national dignity. All this is imaginable and probably will happen. . . In the East, it was Japan that first bought a steamship, and then took it apart for examination and imitation. But they have not yet had any success. Recently Japan sent people to England to learn her language and study her mathematics as the basis for building steamships. Within a few years the steamships of the Eastern foreigners are certain to be successful. Only China, owing to the widespread fighting in recent years, has not yet had leisure to discuss this matter. . . Both Japan and China see the potential advantages on the high seas; Japan has something to rely upon and we alone have nothing. It is like crossing a river where others are rowing a boat while we are making a raft. It is like racing when others are riding on a steed while we are riding on a donkey. How is this possible? All of us are human beings, whose intelligence and wisdom are, by nature, similar; but in practice we cannot help being different. Chinese wisdom is spent on abstract things; the foreigners' intelligence is concentrated upon concrete things. Chinese take the principles of the classics as the foundation, and mechanical matters as the practical details; foreigners consider mechanical matters important, principles unimportant. Each of the two believes what it thinks right and neither can understand the other. . .

When the steamships are completed, the administration of grain transport will be prosperous, the military administration will be improved, the merchants' distress will be relieved and the customs duties will be greatly increased. The temporary cost will produce profit for several generations.

As for Chinese imitation of foreign ship construction, some people will probably think that we have lost our national prestige. This is still more wrong. [Tso here describes China's imitation of Western cannon in the seventeenth century.] Recently we have also been able to manufacture foreign guns, cannon and other weapons, whose foreign style China is imitating. If cannon can be imitated, why can ships alone not be imitated? How can this be considered a loss of our national prestige?

4

EFFORTS AT SELF-STRENGTHENING

1871-1896

CHAPTER X. THE PROBLEM OF LEADERSHIP: PERSONALITIES AND INSTITUTIONS

The response of Ch'ing officialdom to Western military power seems to have gone through a curious cycle: the brief activity of the Opium War period was followed by the stagnant xenophobia of the 1850's, the promising innovations of the 1860's were followed by an apparent diminution of effort in the 1870's and 1880's. Thereafter, one might point to a renewal of creative effort after the defeat by Japan in 1895, as though China's attempted regeneration in each period had required the shock of actual foreign aggression and defeat to provide its stimulus. When the heat was off, the effort at reform cooled down. At any rate, the 1870's and 1880's appear to record a slowing down of the attempt at meeting the West by self-strengthening. Perhaps this impression merely reflects the fact that less research has been done on these decades: perhaps, on the other hand, self-strengthening as it proceeded met increasing opposition or obstacles which could not be overcome.

One key to this problem was in the realm of leadership. We therefore devote attention first of all to Li Hung-chang and his subordinates, as leaders in Westernization in the provinces, and then to the holders of power in Peking, particularly the Empress Dowager. The difficulties of Westernization can be seen in the projects for training students and setting up diplomatic legations abroad, and for building railroads and creating a real navy at home. All of these were essential developments for China, yet in every case there was at work against them a remarkable recalcitrance and inertia, which delayed their achievement for many years.

Behind these phenomena it should become apparent as serious research progresses that China's slowness in self-strengthening was due in part to the fact that the officials concerned were more interested in profit to themselves than in progress for their country. Li Hung-chang, for example, put his own men into the key positions from which China's modernization was supposed to be directed; most of them profited accordingly through the perquisites of power which these modernization projects carried with them.

a. *Li Hung-chang and his Subordinates*

Li Hung-chang (1823-1901), whom we have quoted already in Chapter VII, was born into a well-to-do family of Ho-fei, Anhwei. At the early age of twenty-four, he gained the *chin-shih* degree as well as an appointment in the Hanlin Academy. There he studied informally under Tseng Kuo-fan and this connection laid the foundation for his future career. From the age of thirty to forty-five (1853 to 1868), Li was in military service suppressing the Taiping and the Nien rebels, rising from a post as staff officer to independent command. As a military commander, he seems to have usually judged situations correctly and laid down careful plans well in advance. With the help of the foreign-led Ever-Victorious Army, organized before he was dispatched to Shanghai in 1862, Li recovered the province of Kiangsu within two years, which facilitated the final capture of Nanking; he was also able to wipe out the Nien rebels in 1868 after more than twenty other commanders had failed. His military success has been attributed partly to the influence of his patron Tseng Kuo-fan, who helped him organize the Huai (or Anhwei) Army, on the model of Tseng's own Hunan Army.

As an official, Li Hung-chang held many high posts, some of them concurrently: governor of Kiangsu (1862-1865), grand secretary (1872-1901), minister of the Tsungli Yamen (1896-1898), commissioner to the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II (1896) and governor-general of Liang-kuang (1900-1901). His principal post, however, was that of governor-general of Chihli from 1870 to 1895, the fateful decades before the defeat by Japan.

Li's position of leadership in China was in *yang-wu*, or "foreign matters." This term included the conduct of diplomatic relations and the borrowing of Western technology, two activities that were indeed aspects of a single problem, how to survive in the modern world. The foreign-style enterprises were begun mainly for military purposes and followed one another in a logical sequence. To suppress the rebellions and for coastal defense, there were, first, the establishment of arsenals and shipyards, and the building of forts and vessels. Secondly, technicians were needed to make these weapons and so schools were established and students and officers sent to study abroad. Since modern defense required modern communication and transport, the construction of telegraph lines and the organization of a steamship line were undertaken. Eventually, since modern defense also required money and material resources, a cotton textile factory was established, and coal, iron, and gold mines were opened.

Li Hung-chang understood that machinery was the dynamic of Western civilization and so he made use of it. But from the beginning he lacked an over-all plan to be carried out step by step and merely began one thing after another according to current needs. As for the modern schools and the sending of students abroad, the aim was not so much to promote academic studies as to meet military needs or diplomatic problems. To Li Hung-chang's mind, the wealth and power of the Western countries were derived entirely along these material lines; that was apparently the full scope of his *yang-wu* or "foreign matters." He did not recognize the value of European political and social institutions, much though he might pay them lip service.

On the contrary, Li seems to have thought that the Chinese political and educational systems and Chinese culture and customs were all superior to those of foreign countries — except for cannon, railways, and machinery, in which China was inferior. If China could learn to use these material things, then Li would have fulfilled his duty in the handling of foreign matters. The fallacy of this reasoning was conclusively revealed in 1894 when the Chinese army and navy were almost completely crushed in brief encounters with the Japanese forces.

To blame Li Hung-chang personally for the debacle of 1894 does not seem to be entirely fair. Among the scholar-officials of his day, he was certainly one of the ablest and he probably understood as much about the problems of modernization as any other Chinese in a responsible post.¹ The fact that he could hold his high position for almost a quarter of a century shows his political astuteness. His prestige among foreigners in China, though qualified, was quite unequalled. The failure of China's modernization program during this period should be attributed mainly to the anti-foreign conservatism of the Chinese educated class as a whole, and to the selfishness of the Empress Dowager and certain high officials at her court in particular. Whenever a new project based on a Western example was proposed, opposition would be voiced at once, mostly on ideological rather than factual grounds. These unrealistic outcries often influenced the decision of the court against a proposal and in some cases put a stop to programs already started. As Li frequently took the lead in proposing these modernization projects, he bore the brunt of the conservatives' onslaught. Regarding this problem, he once remarked:²

The present situation is one in which, externally, it is necessary for us to be harmonious with the barbarians, and internally, it is necessary for us to reform our institutions. If we remain conservative, without making any change, the nation will be daily reduced and weakened. . . . Now all the foreign countries are having one reform after another, and progressing every day like the ascending of steam. Only China continues to preserve her traditional institutions so cautiously that even though she be ruined and extinguished, the conservatives will not regret it. Oh heaven and man! How can we understand the cause of it?

Other obstacles in the way of modernization were the traditional administrative practices and the personal ethics underlying them. Any official in charge of a public project would generally "milk" it as much as possible and use bribery to prevent the revelation of his malfeasance. Considering this circumstance, Li's accomplishments were actually rather remarkable. He was probably the least conservative high official of his day.

To undertake all the enterprises he initiated, Li Hung-chang was dependent on men of ability to assist him. Among the large number of his subordinates from 1870 to 1894 and after, some were men of proven integrity, most were given to extravagance, and a few were downright dishonest, but many were recognized for their abilities either in secretarial duties or as administrators. In addition to these two categories, there were under Li's direction army and naval officers, directors of education, and men in business or finance who were connected with his enterprises. There were also a number of Western advisers, some in his employ, some consulted occasionally, and some regularly, as in the case of the Tientsin Customs Commissioner, Gustav Detring.³

The staff members collected by Li Hung-chang compare favorably in intelligence with those of his teacher and predecessor, Tseng Kuo-fan, and those of his junior competitor, Chang Chih-tung. Tseng's staff seems to have included more men of character, used to simple living and devoted to studies; and under Tseng, men of talent, like Tso Tsung-t'ang and Li himself, perhaps, had more chance for individual development. Chang Chih-tung, however, insisted on doing everything himself, and very few of his subordinates went on to high position, although, on the other hand, none of his protégés was notorious for the accumulation of great personal wealth. Compared with these other groups, Li's lieutenants were

more given to extravagant habits. Perhaps he used the chance of personal gain as bait to secure the services of able men. In any case, while his army and navy proved ineffective because of corruption and his industrial enterprises were of indifferent value to China, Li himself left a fortune, as did many of the men connected with his enterprises. This pattern did not disappear during the Republican period. Perhaps we can call it, without tangling with communist terminology, "official capitalism."

Among the more prominent of Li's lieutenants were his personal secretaries, such as Hsueh Fu-ch'eng (see Ch. XV b), Chang P'ei-lun (1848-1903), Yü Shih-mei (1859-1915), and Wu Ju-lun (1840-1903); able administrators, such as T'ang T'ing-shu (1832-1892, founder of the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company and K'ai-p'ing Mining Corporation), Chou Fu (1837-1921), Sheng Hsuan-huai (1844-1916), and Yuan Shih-k'ai (1859-1916); and also men who had studied abroad, such as Ma Chien-chung (1844-1900, in France) and Yen Fu (1853-1921, in England).

Of the men mentioned above (out of a much larger number), one of those with the most influence on Chinese thought in the period ending in 1896, was Hsueh Fu-ch'eng. Hsueh had been a secretary on Tseng Kuo-fan's staff for eight years (1865-1872) before he joined that of Li Hung-chang in 1875. He served under Li until 1884, and later was concurrently minister to England, France, Italy, and Belgium for four years (1890-1894). We devote a later section to his essays on reform (Doc. 40).

b. *The Empress Dowager's Influence*

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, when China was in dire need of intelligent leadership under which to catch up with the West by modernization, the dominant figure at the court was not Prince Kung but a Manchu woman, the famous Empress Dowager, Tz'u-hsi (1835-1908).⁴ A concubine of Emperor Hsien-feng, she had risen to the rank of Empress Dowager in 1861 when her son, Emperor T'ung-chih (1856-1875), ascended the throne at the age of five. She became co-regent with her late husband's principal wife, who was, however, only a figurehead. By allying herself with the deceased emperor's younger brothers, Prince Kung and Prince Ch'un, this able woman staged her first political maneuver and got rid of eight powerful but unpopular grand councillors who had themselves been plotting against her. Prince Kung then joined the regency and was made head of the Grand Council as well as of the Tsungli Yamen, in a position to act both for the throne and for the central government.

When in 1865 the throne had become fairly secure after the victory over the Taiping Rebellion, the Empress Dowager precipitated a quarrel with Prince Kung, removed him from the regency, and left him as head of the Grand Council. In other words, the prince was relegated to the level of a court official, albeit *primus inter pares*. In January 1875, when her son died without issue, the Empress Dowager adopted the son of Prince Ch'un and of her own sister, who was the prince's wife. Thus she resumed her power as regent, ruling for another child emperor, Kuang-hsü (1875-1908), and thereafter she never really relinquished that power. Except for a period of retirement from 1889 to 1898, she remained in effect the ruler of China.

Like most Manchu officials of that time, the Empress Dowager could read and write Chinese as her native language and learned a little Manchu just to get by in routine matters. She had a keen mind and, although not well educated, could grasp enough of the essentials of administration to meet her needs within the court and deal with the high officials, princes of the imperial family, and

others serving within the palace, such as banner men and eunuchs of the Imperial Household. With a dominant will and an understanding of human nature, she controlled high personages through forceful leadership, flattery, money, the delegation of authority, and unabashed power, as might be necessary, and generally succeeded in lining them up to support her. She could play the role of a helpless widow with a young child, and make it hard for men in the society of China to refuse her requests. Alternatively she could be ruthlessly insistent on her wishes and threaten the use of her authority to do away with any opponent.

Under her administration of the imperial bureaucracy, the provincial officials obtained much greater freedom of action than ever before in the dynasty. The more important governors general enjoyed unusually long tenures of office. There was a marked tendency among the Manchus to admit tacitly their own inadequacy and yield the important posts in the provinces to the Chinese. The Chinese officials who received this trust seem to have outdone one another in showing their loyalty to the throne, as of course their class had been sedulously trained to do for two centuries past. But possibly it is to the credit of the Empress Dowager that an atmosphere of Manchu-Chinese coöperation persisted so strongly in the Ch'ing dynasty, even during great crises in its period of decline.

In the realm of foreign affairs, although the Empress Dowager followed the general advice of her officials, there seemed to be always present in her mind a feeling of hatred toward the foreigners. Perhaps the only exceptions were those who worked for the Ch'ing government. It was the foreigners who had forced the court including herself to flee from the old summer palace (Yuan-ming yuan) near Peking in 1860 and who had sacked it in retaliation for mistreatment of allied envoys. The Empress Dowager apparently set her heart on restoring the summer palace and, in spite of opposition from many quarters, she cajoled and browbeat the high officials into rebuilding at least a part of it.

Another less publicized aspect of the Empress Dowager's conduct was her addiction to taking gifts or bribes from her officials. This had been done by every Manchu emperor before her and by almost all the officials throughout the dynasty, but she carried it to an extreme. In the old Chinese government, every superior expected something from his subordinates, while on the bottom layer the lowest officials made exactions from the people. The least corruptible officials — who were rather rare in this late period — were those who lived within their salaries and accepted just enough gifts or customary fees to meet their necessary expenses of office. Bribery, in the form of gifts, became an unwritten institution, and a minimum amount was customarily set for every kind of official transaction. At the pinnacle of officialdom, the Empress Dowager received some remuneration for every official audience, which by regulation was a necessary formality for all newly appointed or promoted officials and for high provincial officials who had held their posts for a number of years. A minimum sum was set for each rank and position, depending roughly on its lucrativeness to the incumbent. The Empress Dowager shared this income with her chief eunuchs and certain courtiers, usually the imperial princes who were supposed to officiate at the audiences. Although this debilitating practice was not new, under the Empress Dowager it had a marked growth in volume, much to the demoralization of the government service. In the case of Li Hung-chang, it is an interesting question how much his long tenure as governor-general of Chihli was due to his generous gifts to the Empress Dowager and her favorites.

Against this background, projects for modernization had to pay their way not only on the books, but in the purses of the officials. At the top, the ruler of China not only condoned "the system" but energetically applied it. The most notorious scandal of the period symbolized China's administrative problem:

millions of taels of silver accumulated for the purpose of building the modern navy were somehow turned over to the Empress Dowager to expend on the rebuilding of the Summer Palace (I-ho-yuan). Whether the Chinese navy could have defeated the Japanese in 1894, even if these millions had been spent on it, may still be open to conjecture. But misappropriation by the Empress Dowager, condoned, however unwillingly, by Li Hung-chang, certainly sealed China's fate. Today, the famous marble barge still stands in the Summer Palace lake as a reminder of this fiasco, its marble paddle wheels carved upon its sides.⁵

In 1874, during the Formosa incident, but twenty years before the dénouement with Japan, the aged Wen-hsiang emerged from retirement to speak plainly to the throne.

DOC. 22. WEN-HSIANG'S WARNING OF DISASTER, 1874⁶

When the peace negotiations were completed [in 1860] everybody spoke of the necessity for self-strengthening, yet during the last ten years or more there has been little achievement [p. 13]. The reason is that those who look down upon and disregard foreign affairs merely have empty discussions without actual accomplishment, whereas those who are accustomed to the peaceful situation are content when nothing happens for fear that if anything is done it may arouse the suspicion of the foreigners. Even those who carefully discuss defense measures are hindered by the insufficiency of funds, and nothing can be done or developed. Now the (Formosa) incident has already taken shape, a war crisis is imminent. If we still do not pay attention to it and suddenly the great enemy (Japan) confronts us, what can we rely upon? It is humbly hoped that imperial orders will be sent to the Ministry of Revenue and the Imperial Household Department to raise plenty of the necessary supplies, to cut off lavish expenditures, to stop public works which are not urgent [i.e., the construction of the Summer Palace], and to plan for the most needed coastal defense; so that the ministers at the capital and in the provinces can all devote their energy to the scheme.

As for the way to make ourselves strong, it lies first in our readiness to accept advice in a humble manner in order to seek out the good and bad points of our administration. One should not take agreeable and soothing words as a source of pleasure and take straightforward and frank advice as distasteful. When Your Majesty is concerned to work diligently and alertly, then your ministers within and without the capital will be stimulated in spirit and not dare to follow their traditional dawdling habits. Otherwise they will remain accustomed to taking things complacently and will never think of reforms, in which case, I fear that internally and externally the country will fall apart, the people's confidence will be shaken, and the disaster will be unspeakable.

CHAPTER XI. TRAINING STUDENTS ABROAD

a. *The Educational Mission to the United States*

The traditional Confucian emphasis on human abilities and the enlisting of talented men in administration, which underlay the classical examination system, led inevitably to the idea of training Chinese in Western countries. As we have seen above, the incompetence and essential illiteracy of the Cantonese interpreters or "linguists," criticized by Feng Kuei-fen (see Doc. 8), and the importance of "foreign matters," especially the need for Western guns and ships, had brought the Chinese government to found the T'ung-wen Kuan, or College of Foreign Languages, at Peking in 1862 as a subordinate office to the Tsungli Yamen, and a school of Western languages and science in Shanghai in 1863, which was annexed to the Kiangnan Arsenal in 1869. A number of foreign instructors had been invited, but their faithfulness was suspected by some conservative scholar-officials, such as Wo-jeu (see Doc. 19). As time went on it became increasingly obvious that if China were to master the secrets of Western technology it would be necessary for the Chinese government to send young men to Western countries for training.

Records of Chinese visitors to the United States go back to 1785; a great deal remains to be done in studying the American end of early Sino-American contact. On the Chinese side attention has been directed chiefly to the project promoted by Yung Wing (1828-1912), the first Chinese graduate of an American university - Yale in 1854 - by which one hundred and twenty Chinese students were brought to the United States in the decade 1872-1881.¹ Somewhat less attention has been devoted to the project which sent thirty Chinese students to England and France for technical training in 1876. Private ventures under missionary auspices and on the part of overseas Chinese may have played a more important role than has been realized - Sun Yat-sen is one such example. Yung Wing has had many successors in the persons of Chinese students in the United States. All in all, the latter have constituted the greatest movement of conscious acculturation in history.

Below we present the key memorial to the Tsungli Yamen, by which Tseng and Li finally got the educational mission of 1872 started; a series of letters dealing with its cessation; and an instructive report from one of Li Hung-chang's bright young men, Ma Chien-chung (1844-1900). (References to Pin-ch'un and other officials sent abroad are explained in the next chapter, on diplomatic missions.)

DOC. 23. THE PROPOSAL OF TSENG AND LI IN 1871²

Last autumn when (I, Tseng) Kuo-fan was at Tientsin, Governor Ting Jih-ch'ang frequently came to discuss with me proposals for the selection of young and brilliant youths to be sent to the schools of various European nations to study military administration, shipping administration, infantry tactics, mathematics, manufacturing, and other subjects. It is roughly estimated that after more than ten years their training will have been completed, and they will return to China so that the Chinese can learn thoroughly the new techniques in which the Westerners are particularly strong, and then we can gradually plan for self-strengthening. In addition he says that the men who can take [p. 20] these young boys to foreign countries - Ch'en Lan-pin [a *chin-shih* of 1853], who is an assistant secretary of the Board of

Punishments, fourth rank, and Yung Wir, who is a sub-prefect of Kiangsu — are both competent for the job. . . After Pin-ch'un³ and two other gentlemen, Chih-kang and Sun Chia-ku, had traveled in various countries by Imperial command, they saw the essential aspects of conditions overseas, and they found that maps, mathematics, astronomy and navigation, shipbuilding, manufacturing, and other matters all give assistance to military affairs. All those who have studied in foreign countries and have learned the superior techniques are to be immediately invited by academies after their return to teach the various subjects and to continue their own scholarly development.

Article VII of the treaty recently concluded with the United States [1868] says that hereafter, if Chinese wish to enter the higher and lower levels of American government schools in order to learn various kinds of literature and sciences, they will enjoy equal treatment with the people of the "most favored nation." It also says that Americans will be allowed to establish schools in China at the places assigned by Chinese for foreign settlement, and the Chinese can also do the same thing in the United States, etc., . . .⁴ The foreign nations allow us to learn their superior techniques together with their own citizens; Chih-kang, Sun, and other gentlemen have already pioneered the way and report that to go aboard a steamer and cross the Pacific Ocean directly to America takes only one month or more. For these reasons it should not be a very difficult matter.

To establish arsenals for manufacturing and to open schools for instruction in China is just the beginning of the struggle to rise again. To go abroad for study, to gather ideas and the benefits of greater knowledge can produce far-reaching and great results. Westerners seek knowledge for actual use. Regardless of whether they are scholars, workers, or soldiers, they all go to school to study and to understand the principles, to practise on the machines, and to get personally familiar with the work. They all exert themselves to the utmost of their ingenuity, and learn from one another, in the hope that there will be some monthly difference and yearly improvement. If we Chinese wish to adopt their superior techniques and suddenly try to buy all their machines, not only is our power insufficient to do this, but also there is no way for us to master either the fundamental principles or the details of the profound ideas contained in these superior techniques, unless we have actually seen them and practised with them for a long time. The ancients said: "He who wishes to learn the Ch'i dialect should place himself in the midst of Chuang or Yü" [names of streets in an old city of Ch'i, modern Shantung] and another proverb says, "To hear a hundred times is not as good as to see once. . ."

But there are two difficulties in the trial period. One is the selection of human talent [p. 21], and the other is the raising of funds. . . Kuo-fan and Hung-chang are deeply aware of these two difficulties. But to make a hill we must begin with one basketful of earth after another, and to raise mugwort we have to wait three years. We lay plans for it now, so that in the future the number of students will steadily increase. . . We plan to send functionaries to Shanghai to establish an office for the selection of brilliant youths from all provinces. The number for each year will be thirty persons, and for four years there will be a total of one hundred and twenty, to be sent in

annual groups aboard ships across the ocean to study in foreign countries. After fifteen years, they will begin to return to China in sequence, according to the year when they were sent. It is estimated that on their return to China all these young men will be in the neighborhood of thirty years of age. Their energies will then be at their prime; they will be able to render their services at their best time of life.

We have heard that, heretofore, the sons of people of Fukien, Kwangtung, and Ningpo also occasionally have gone abroad to study, but they merely tried to get a rough acquaintance with foreign written and spoken languages in order to do business with the foreigners for the purpose of making a living. This time, at the beginning of the selection, we shall be doubly careful; the students being taken to foreign countries will all be controlled by the commissioners. Specializing in different fields of study, they will earnestly seek for thorough mastery of academic knowledge. There will also be interpreters, and instructors to teach them Chinese literature from time to time, so they will grasp the great principles for the establishment of character, in the hope of becoming men of useful abilities. Although not all of them will necessarily become mighty instruments, yet out of a large number of talented men some extraordinary ones will certainly emerge from their midst. This is the theory of obtaining five out of the ten selected. . .

If your honorable Yamen considers this to be practicable, as soon as we receive your reply, our office will immediately submit a joint memorial. The required [p. 22] funds will also be conveyed under a memorial and an Imperial order requested to have them appropriated from the foreign customs duties at Shanghai. . .

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the Educational Mission thus inaugurated (after ten years of agitation by Yung Wing) was the fact that it actually functioned, more or less as planned, for a decade (1872-1881), only to be summarily discontinued at the end of that time with nothing to take its place!

Some of the reasons for the recall of the Mission are stated in detail by Yung Wing, *My Life in China and America*, chapter 18. He puts the chief blame on Wu Tzu-teng, a *chin-shih* of 1852, a compiler of the Hanlin Academy, and a good mathematician, who worked for some time in the Chinese legation at Paris, before he was transferred to the United States as superintendent of students attached to the Chinese Embassy.⁵ Wu was fond of display and prestige, and acted even more autocratically than the old-fashioned Chinese educational commissioners who had preceded him. No sooner was he installed in his new position than he summoned all the Chinese students to Washington to receive his instructions. When the students came for the interview they did not perform the kotow. One of the subordinates of the new superintendent, a Mr. Chin, became very angry saying, "All these students have forgotten their original civilization and disregard their teachers and elders. Even though they might have some success in the academic field [which was then still uncertain], still they could not be of any use to China." Mr. Chin, who turned out to be a favorite of a certain influential noble of the imperial family, prepared a memorial asking to have the students suddenly recalled to China, in 1881. Other staff members of the Chinese Educational Mission disapproved of this action but no one dared to say anything (according to Yung Wing) except Yung Wing, who argued strongly but to no avail. Huang Tsun-hsien, then consul-general at San Francisco, upon hearing of this incident was so affected that he wrote a long sad poem to describe it.⁶

Although Yung Wing says the conservatives in the Educational Mission sent many reports to the Chinese government, slandering the young students, it is difficult to trace any of their original letters or reports. Their positions were low and perhaps their writings were neglected by compilers. Below we present excerpts from Li Hung-chang's correspondence to show the points of view opposed to that of Yung Wing.

DOC. 24. LETTERS OF LI HUNG-CHANG CONCERNING THE END OF THE MISSION, 1880-1881

[To Commissioner Ch'en Lan-pin, Aug. 6, 1879]⁷ The enterprise of sending young people to foreign countries has cost a lot of money and created numerous evils, but after all will have little actual effect. The criticisms of Chinese officials and scholars have been numerous. Recently I received a letter from Tseng Chi-tse [Tseng Kuo-fan's son, "Marquis Tseng"], who considers that since the sending of students from the Foochow Shipyard to England and France has had no great result, those students who have been in the United States likewise will not necessarily show great achievement. . . If all you gentlemen who are in charge of the task still cherish differing opinions and cannot control and manage it seriously, you have certainly failed in the first attempt which was inaugurated by Tseng Kuo-fan; and you and I will also be greatly criticized by public opinion.

[Another letter to Ch'en Lan-pin, May 10, 1880].⁸ Yung Wing has come to see me, saying it is true the students have neglected their Chinese studies. It is due to Yung Wing's obstinacy in not desiring these students to learn much Chinese. Even during the summer when the schools were closed and it was just the time for them to review their Chinese, Yung Wing alone did not think so. . . I hope you will give him advice when it is convenient and not allow him to take too much charge of the Mission, which should be reorganized by Compiler Wu Tzu-teng, in order to concentrate authority so that in the future, when these children have finished their study and return to China, there will still be posts to which to commission them, and we shall not fail in the original idea of sending them to study abroad.

[Li Hung-chang's comment on the withdrawal of a portion of the students, March 29, 1881.]⁹ In recent years there has been considerable criticism of Yung Wing, charging that he has laid too much emphasis upon Western knowledge, with the result that the young boys have neglected their Chinese studies. I have written letters to guide him, not once but many times. . . Two years ago after Wu Tzu-teng went to the office of the Educational Mission, he repeatedly wrote to me saying that there were numerous evils in the Mission's affairs and that it ought to be abolished quickly. . .

I have reviewed the case with a candid mind and feel that, since more than half the students were natives of Kwangtung who went abroad at an early age, it is probably hard for them to avoid indulging in foreign customs. Wu Tzu-teng disciplined them too severely and so compounded the trouble. Consequently he thought that all the students should be withdrawn, an opinion which seems to be too extreme. On a later occasion when he wrote me he said that those students who had deeply indulged in American customs and who were stupid by nature should be sent back to China, while

those who had already entered the universities and whose graduation was near, and whose achievements were comparatively concrete, might be transferred to be under the control of the Chinese Legation [p. 8]. As for the general supervisor, Chinese instructors, interpreters, and other officials, they could all be dismissed. . .

Yung Wing has managed this Mission for a long time. He feels that it concerns his face or dignity and it is imaginable that he does not want to have the Mission cancelled. . .

On June 8, 1881, the Tsungli Yamen memorialized requesting the abolition of the Educational Mission and the return of the students to be employed according to their abilities. The request was granted.¹⁰

b. *Students in Europe*

The flow of Chinese students to Europe, while little studied, has been commensurate with that to the United States. The next item records the impressions of one of Li Hung-chang's protégés whom he later sent to Korea in 1882.

DOC. 25. MA CHIEN-CHUNG'S REPORT ON HIS STUDIES IN FRANCE, 1877¹¹

The last ten days of May were the examination period of the Political Institute. There were eight examination questions. . . The third was on the commercial proceedings of all nations, dealing with the basis of credit for commercial organizations and bank drafts. From this we know that the wealth of Westerners in the last hundred years has not come purely from the creation and development of machines but essentially from the protection of commercial organizations. . . Thus, even though the amount of capital required for railways, telegraph lines, steam engines, and mining is very great. . . and though there is a limit to gold and silver, there is no end to the use of money because, since the currency is represented by paper and guaranteed by credit, one coin may assume the usefulness of several hundred coins. . .

The fifth question was on the differences and similarities of administrative methods, government, and education in the three countries, England, the United States, and France, the methods by which the upper and lower classes cooperate, what are the advantages and disadvantages of each method, and what are the reasons for England being able to maintain herself so long without changing, for America not changing though having many defects, for France repeatedly changing and frequently getting worse. . .

The seventh one was on the similarities and differences of public administration in all nations, some of which are monarchies, some republics, and some partly monarchical and partly republican. The legislative, executive, and judicial powers are divided and are not given to one person. These three powers do not interfere with each other, and so the political situation is in good order, bright and presentable. The collection of taxes is not done by [police] officials, therefore bad officers have no way to fulfil their desires. The verdict for a crime is fixed by local juries; bad judges have no way to

play on words. Everybody has the right to be independent, and seeks to be self-respecting.

The eighth question was on the levy of taxes and the amount of national debt. Western taxes are ten times heavier than those of China and yet the people are not resentful. The national debt is borrowed from the people and yet the people are not suspicious. Why?

For these eight questions the written examination took three days and I wrote more than twenty notebooks. . . I answered them one by one in detail, and all received good grades from the professors, and were announced in the newspaper. They say I have understood these subjects very thoroughly and have grasped the broad outlines. Those who are merely bookworms cannot be compared with me. This praise is also caused by the fact that Westerners have had little contact with us Chinese and usually are scornful of us. Therefore, whenever there is a Chinese student who knows a little and understands half of what he has studied, he is praised as being extraordinary. This "being extraordinary" [as an individual] is just a sign of being despised [as a race]. I can only study hard, with strong determination. How dare I become proud of a little progress? . . .

[P. 2b] I have been in Europe for more than a year. When I first came here, I thought that the wealth and power of all European nations lay exclusively in their fine manufacturing and strict discipline of troops. But when I worked on their laws and antecedents, and read their writings, I realized that their pursuit of wealth is based on the protection of commercial concerns, and that those who seek power consider it important to win the hearts of the people. When they protect commercial concerns, then taxes can be increased and their savings will naturally be more adequate. When popular support is won, then loyalty and patriotism will be doubled, and the people can be expected to unite against a national enemy. Other good things are the increase in the number of intelligent students after the spread of schools, and the communication of the opinions of the lower classes after the establishment of parliaments. As for manufacturing, the army and navy, and these various large items, they are all but unimportant details.

Thus, I thought the government of all Western nations was perfect. When I went to listen to the lectures in the Political Institute and discussed these things forwards and backwards with scholars and officials, I began to realize the truth of the statement [p. 21] that "It would be better to be without books than to give entire credit to them." England has a king and besides has an upper and lower house. It seems that all policies must originate there, but we know that the king only gives an endorsement and the upper and lower houses merely have empty discussions, the handle of policy is wielded by the premier and two or three chief ministers. Whenever they have to face a difficult matter, they use the parliament as a cover. The president of the United States is elected by the people themselves, and this seems to be just, without being selfish, but whenever it is time for an election, bribery is publicly practised. When the president is changed, the whole list of government personnel is changed, and all officials are members of his party. How can they expect good administration? France is a republican nation where it appears that those who become officials need not come from aristocratic

families, but we know they organize political factions among themselves, and except for those scholars such as Tien-yeh [Adolphe Thiers, 1797-1877, President of the Third French Republic, 1871-1873] and others whose wisdom and ability are outstanding, it is very difficult for men who do not belong to the same faction to find a good job or get into a fine position. . .¹²

CHAPTER XII. DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS ABROAD

Considering the efficiency and skill of many Chinese diplomatic representatives in the twentieth century, it seems amazing that the Ch'ing dynasty should have delayed so long in dispatching envoys abroad. The first semi-official venture in this direction was the mission chaperoned by Robert Hart in 1866. Headed by "an elderly Manchu official of low rank," Pin-ch'un,¹ this mission of investigation included three students from the T'ung-wen Kuan. It visited nine European countries, but had little effect on its return. The famous "Burlingame mission," which visited the United States and Europe in 1868-1870, appeared to the West to be primarily the achievement of the former American minister at Peking, Anson Burlingame, but the Chinese records make it clear that two Ch'ing officials, Chih-kang and Sun Chia-ku, were sent as his co-envoys with equal status. The Tientsin massacre of 1870 necessitated the sending of a special mission of apology to France, under the Manchu Ch'ung-hou; but this still did not constitute the establishment of a regular diplomatic legation. After much discussion and some false starts, a mission was finally established in England only in 1877; even then its immediate occasion was to present China's apology for the murder of a British representative, A. R. Margary, on the Burma border in 1875. The first Chinese legation in the United States was established in 1878 by Ch'en Lan-pin and Yung Wing, who had been in charge of the Educational Mission. Legations were also established in Germany (1877), France (1878), Russia and Spain (1879), and Peru (1880).

The following chapter presents first an account of the Tsungli Yamen's discovery of the efficacy of international law — a Western device of considerable value for defense against the West. This is followed by a long analysis (Doc. 27) written by the first envoy in London, Kuo Sung-tao (1818-1891), a highly competent, respected, and orthodox Chinese official who nevertheless called spades "spades" as soon as he saw them in England and later did not mince words over China's ineffectual handling of her relations with France. Marquis Tseng's dialogue with the Empress Dowager (Doc. 28) is the nearest thing to a press conference recorded from this period.

DOC. 26. PRINCE KUNG'S DISCOVERY OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, 1864²

Your ministers have found that the Chinese spoken and written language is learned with care by foreigners in China without exception. Among them, the cleverest go even further and immerse themselves in studying Chinese books. When a case is argued or discussed, they can usually base themselves on Chinese legal codes. . . Unfortunately the regulations of foreign countries are all written in foreign languages and we suffer from being unable to read them. And it will still take some time for the students in the T'ung-wen Kuan to master the foreign languages thoroughly.

We have learned that there is a book called *Wan-kuo li-li*,³ "Laws and precedents of all nations." Yet when we wanted to seek it directly, and entrust its translation to the foreigners, we were afraid that they might wish to keep it confidential and not have it shown to us. At this juncture, the American minister P'u-an-ch'en (Anson Burlingame) came and told us that various countries have had the *Ta-ch'ing li-li* ("Laws and precedents of the Ch'ing dynasty") translated into foreign languages. Also he said that in foreign countries there are laws and by-laws in general circulation which recently have been translated into Chinese by a scholar named Ting-wei-liang [W. A. P. Martin, later president of the Tung-wen Kuan], and which are worthy of reference. Shortly thereafter, in October of last year, Martin was brought for an interview and presented four volumes of the *Wan-kuo li-li*, saying that it should be read by all countries having treaty relations with others.⁴ In case of dispute it can be taken for reference and can be quoted. But his style is not very smooth or clear, and so he asks us to do some editing for him, in order to have it printed. Your ministers forestalled his attempt to get us to follow the book, by telling him at once that China has her own laws and institutions and that it is inconvenient to consult foreign books. Martin, however, points out that although the *Ta-Ch'ing li-li* has now been translated by foreign countries, China has never compelled foreign countries to act by it. It cannot be that when a foreign book is [p. 26] translated into Chinese, China should be forced to follow it. Thus he has pleaded repeatedly.

Your ministers think that his purpose is two-fold, first to boast that foreign countries also have laws, and secondly, to imitate men like Matteo Ricci in making a name in China. Upon examination, the book seems to deal generally with treaties, laws of war, and such matters.⁵ Particularly there are laws that govern the mutual controls and restrictions imposed on each of the belligerent parties at the outbreak of hostilities. Unfortunately the wording was in disorder and unless he had explained it to us personally, it would not have been clear. . . We dispatched four secretaries of the Yamen . . . to discuss his translation carefully with him and edit it. . . During the past half year the draft manuscript has been finished. Martin regrets that there is no money to publish it, and he says if he could get five hundred taels he would be able to complete the project.⁶

Your ministers find that the contents of this book of foreign laws do not entirely agree with the system in China, but there are occasional passages which are useful. For instance, in connection with the case this year of the Danish ship captured by Prussia outside of Tientsin, your ministers used as arguments some sentences from this book without expressly saying so. The Prussian minister immediately acknowledged his mistake and said nothing further. This seems conclusive.⁷ Your ministers have deliberated and decided jointly to grant Martin five hundred taels of silver according to his request. It is agreed that after the book has been printed, he will present 300 complimentary copies to your ministers' Yamen. Thereafter a copy will be distributed to each of the treaty ports. In this book there are laws which can to a considerable extent control the foreign consuls, and this is certainly a useful thing. The amount of silver will be paid by your min-

isters' Yamen out of the three per cent received from the customs funds. [Vermilion endorsement:] "Let it be as proposed."

The following letter from Kuo Sung-tao to Li Hung-chang reports his personal observations while head of the Chinese legation in London. It gives a comprehensive summary of the political and social development of England, which we largely omit, and draws a sharp contrast between Chinese conservatism and the rapid changes in Western society.

DOC. 27. A LETTER OF KUO SUNG-TAO FROM LONDON, 1877⁸

Here in England the circumstances of administration, education and the social customs are changing every day. To trace the whole history of the nation — at first the king and the people struggled for political power and slaughtered one another. Great confusion lasted for several decades or a hundred years until the time of Jo-erh-jih [i.e., George I, 1714-1727] when the situation became settled. Originally there was no time-honored accumulation of absolute virtue and excellent education (as there had been in China). . . Their attainment of wealth and strength really began only after the Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795). Steamships were first built at the beginning of the Ch'ien-lung period, but at first they were not very profitable. Then in 1801 they began using them on the ocean. The method was again followed in the building of locomotives, which had its beginning in 1813. Thereafter the study of electricity was pursued. Letters and messages were transmitted by a machine of magnetic-iron, until in 1838 a telegraph was first established in their national capital. . . From the beginning of England's rise, it has been only several decades; while China was weak and declining they covered a distance of 70,000 *li* in the wink of an eye. . . Chinese scholars and officials are presumptuous in their sanctuary and are trying to obstruct the changes of the universe; they can never succeed.

After several months here, I have actually seen the convenience of the railway train. A round trip of 300 or 400 *li* takes only half a day. In this country the local gentry strongly advise China to build railways; they say that the power and might of England are really based on them. At first they were also suspicious [like the Chinese populace] and tried to stop their construction [p. 2]. To speak first of the road between London and the seaport of Southampton — the coach transportation back and forth formerly used more than 30,000 horses, and the people concerned were afraid that this railroad would be detrimental to their livelihood. But when the railroad was opened as many as 60,000 or 70,000 horses were used. This was because the convenience of the railroad daily attracted more traffic and, since the train could run on only one route, those who were several tens of *li* away and came to take the train had to make use of more horses.

Last winter when I passed through Shanghai I saw a railroad map in the Academy of Natural Sciences⁹ on which there was shown a railroad from India directly to Yunnan; a branch . . . going eastward to Canton, etc., . . . Upon seeing it I was greatly surprised, saying that no sooner had trade relations with Yunnan been opened than the routes of railroads were immediately planned. . .

When the Japanese minister saw me, he said that the natural resources of the universe can be developed by Westerners. They do the hard part — we do the easy part; can we waste more time in idleness? The vastness of China's territory and the number of her people are envied by all nations, but he has learned that until now not a single thing has been developed in China, which is a great pity. I was so embarrassed that I could make no reply. . .

The foreigners' power is daily becoming more oppressive, and we suffer increasingly from their disturbances. We should investigate carefully their entire history and itemize [p. 3] the actual causes of their becoming rich and strong and uncover their ambitions. . . I have had a plan to compile a book and submit it to the Tsungli Yamen for distribution among the schools of the empire. . . But, when I reached the capital, I was frustrated by the clamorous opinion there and I refrained from expressing myself.

Personally I think there is something in the minds of the Chinese which is absolutely unintelligible. Among the injuries that Westerners do us there is nothing more serious than opium. Even the British gentlemen feel ashamed of having used this pernicious thing as a pretext for hostilities with China, and they are making a strong effort to eradicate it. Yet Chinese scholars and officials are willing to indulge complacently in it, without any sense of remorse. For several decades it has been the national humiliation, it has exhausted our financial power and poisoned and injured the lives of our people, but there is not a single person whose conscience is weighed down by it. Now clocks, watches, and toys are owned by all families, and woolen and cotton cloth and the like are prevalent in poor districts and the isolated countryside. The practice in Kiangsu and Chekiang even goes as far as to put aside the national currency for the exclusive use of foreign bank notes. . . Nevertheless as soon as these people heard of the building of railroads and telegraph lines they became sorely disturbed and enraged, and arose in multitudes to create hindrances and difficulties. There are even people who regard foreign machines as an object of public hatred. Tseng Chi-tse, on account of a family funeral, took a small steamship [instead of walking home with a sorrowful face, according to custom] from Nanking to Changsha; this caused a great uproar among the local officials and gentry that lasted for several years. All this means they are willing to accept the harm from others and let the latter squeeze the marrow from their bones, but they use their whole strength to choke off the source of profits. I do not know what is in their minds. There have been foreign relations for thirty years, but the provincial authorities are entirely ignorant of them. They impose their ignorant ideas on the Court under the guise of public opinion. The latter encourages them to do this and itself uses "public opinion" as a gloss for its own purposes.

[P. 4] There are more than 200 Japanese learning technology in England, scattered in all the seaports. There are ninety of them in London. I have met more than twenty, and all can speak English. There is one by the name of Nagaoka Ryōnosuke who was originally a feudal lord governing a kingdom by himself; he is now degraded to be a noble of hereditary rank and is studying law here. . . The telegraph office which was established in Japan

was also first learned from London; as soon as the technique was mastered, a telegraph office was set up to provide the same service. There are very few who are studying military methods, probably because military science is but a practical detail, whereas the establishing of various kinds of institutional systems is the foundation for establishing the nation. The Grand Secretary [Li Hung-chang] is just now advocating military strengthening; therefore he is devoting his mind to the investigation of military methods. As far as my humble observation can reach, there is absolutely no reason to reorganize the military system in the various provinces. As for the recruiting of soldiers, it is impossible to keep it up constantly. For several decades to come we should not worry about the West taking up arms against us but simply try to decide everything with them by reasoning and by the force of circumstances. . .

[P. 5] There is a Mr. [Sir MacDonald] Stephenson here who says that all countries are building more railroads. He particularly and indefatigably advises China to do this with dispatch. Herewith I carefully submit to you the general plan which he has drafted.¹⁰

However, my idea is that if everything must be done by foreigners it cannot last long. We should first make the Chinese thoroughly familiar with their methods. The state of Egypt is in Africa, and when she builds railroads she first sends some people to England to study and then build them by imitation. This is the best example. . .

There is nothing more urgent than to plan earnestly for better domestic administration, in order to lay a foundation of wealth and strength. . . The area of China is more than 10,000 *li*. The postal transportation to a distant place takes several tens of days. . . If the two things (railways and telegraphs) are carried through, then 10,000 *li* will be like the hall or threshold of one's house. If suddenly one morning there were a flood, or news of drought or a bandit uprising, the Court could be informed in the evening. Then there would be no anxiety over treacherous people's secretly starting an outbreak of rebellion. This is the first advantage. The condition of the Chinese officials and people is that they are too distant from each other; in addition, both are trying to cover the eyes and ears of the Court in order to facilitate the pursuance of their selfish purposes. For this reason the people's ideas are frequently and miserably suppressed and never reach the Emperor. If the two things (railways and telegraph) are widespread. . . [p. 6] there will be no anxiety over having covetous officials suppress the opinion of the people or carry on their mischievous work for gain. This is another advantage. . .

The critics merely say that wherever the machines of foreigners reach, the local geomantic harmony [*feng-shui*, lit., "wind and water"] is injured. This is a great error. Railways and telegraph lines are always built on level ground following the state roads. There is nothing to dig up or to destroy. As for the machinery used in opening coal mines and pumping water, it is for the purpose of making the mine deeper. The deeper one digs the better the quality of coal. When Chinese dig coal they like to penetrate from the sides; when foreigners dig coal they like to get it in depth. Both are opening the mine. The shallow method and deep method actually have the same

result. What harm is there? Take for instance the natural resources in Hunan: the iron mines are mostly in Pao-ch'ing and the coal mines mostly in Heng-chou, and yet the people who are famous in passing high literary examinations are particularly numerous in these two districts. . .

After several decades foreigners will arrive and then they will gradually build railways and develop (natural resources) for us. Their influence will be sufficient to control the people and the profit will be enough to bribe the wicked, the unruly, and the trouble-makers, who will be employed in their service. Then both the ownership and the profits will fall into the hands of foreigners and China will have nothing to depend upon. Mencius says: "when heaven produced these people, it made those who know beforehand teach those who know afterward, and those who perceive earlier inspire those who perceive later." The responsibility for foresight and perception must lie in the great ministers of the Court.

Another able and outspoken Chinese envoy was Tseng Kuo-fan's son, Tseng Chi-tse (1839-1890), known to the West as "Marquis Tseng," who had some grasp both of Western science and of the English language. He has usually been considered a good diplomat, not so much because he was minister to England and France in 1878-1886, as because he signed on February 24, 1881, the Treaty of St. Petersburg by which Russia was obliged to return to China certain strategic territory in the Ili region, after it had been ceded by Ch'ung-hou's ill-advised signature of the Treaty of Livadia in 1879. While Tseng's success on this occasion was partly due to Tso Tsung-t'ang's military victory in Sinkiang and the bellicose support of Tso and others during the negotiations in Russia, it was also due partly to Tseng's quick-witted disputation with the Russian authorities.¹¹

After living in Europe, Marquis Tseng became not only a zealous advocate of Westernization, but a practitioner of Western ways, devoted to foreign clothes, utensils, and medicine, for all of which he was criticized by Chinese conservatives.¹²

In 1878 he was appointed to succeed Kuo Sung-tao as minister to England and France. Before he sailed from Shanghai on November 22, 1878, he had an interview with the Empress Dowager Tz'u-hsi at Peking, after which he recorded in his diary the naive and interesting conversation translated below. (Her declarative sentences were recorded as imperial decrees.)

DOC. 28. TSENG CHI-TSE'S ACCOUNT OF HIS AUDIENCE WITH THE
EMPERESS DOWAGER, 1878¹³

On August 25, 1878, I received a decree granting me the privilege of wearing the peacock feather and appointing me Imperial Commissioner to England and France. . . On the 26th, at the beginning of the *ch'ou* period [1-3 a.m.],¹⁴ I went to the Court. . . At the beginning of the *mao* period [5-7 a.m.], I entered the Ch'ien-ch'ing gate and sat for a long time in the room for intracourt interview. At the beginning of *ch'en* [7-9 a.m.] the grand councillors came out from their audience and the throne summoned me to the eastern apartment of the Yang-hsin Hall, which I entered by lifting up the curtain. I knelt on the ground to give thanks for celestial grace. I took off my hat and kotowed. Then I was ordered to put on my hat

and stand up and to proceed to the front of the cushion where I knelt to listen to the sacred instruction. The Empress Dowager Tz'u-hsi asked, "When do you plan to start the trip?" The Empress Dowager Tz'u-an also asked the same question.¹⁵

I replied, "Because there are public and private affairs that your minister must prepare well in Shanghai, it is necessary for him to leave the capital earlier. Now he plans to start the journey on the 29th of September."

Question: Are you going by way of Tientsin?

Answer: It is necessary to go via Tientsin and also to stay for some ten days to discuss various matters with Li Hung-chang.

*Decree:*¹⁶ Li Hung-chang is familiar with foreign affairs. You may take up the various matters with him in detail.

Answer: Yes.

Question: Are you going to spend some time in Shanghai?

Answer: It's a long way to go abroad. All the arrangements and all the things to be taken along must be well prepared in Shanghai. Moreover, the retinue which your minister is going to take along cannot be appointed until he has arrived at Shanghai, and therefore he will spend a considerable time there; probably he will have to stay for more than a month.

Question: Will you memorialize again about the staff members you are going to take along, after you have arrived in Shanghai?

Answer: Of your minister's retinue, some of them are going to travel with him from the capital, some are going to be transferred and appointed from the provinces outside the capital. As to the latter who are going to be appointed from outside provinces, whether they can go or not cannot be known in advance. [P. 2] He has to wait until the assignment is made and then he will assemble the information and submit a memorial for your approval.

Question: How many days will it take to go from Tientsin to Shanghai?

Answer: The speeds of the vessels of the China Merchants Company are not the same. The fastest from Tientsin to Shanghai takes only three and a half days.

Question: Are you going to England first or to France first?

Answer: Your minister plans to start the journey from Shanghai on November 22 aboard a French ship for Marseilles, where he will go ashore to take a train for Paris. Paris is the capital of France. When the French see the arrival of a Chinese minister they will certainly have someone perform ceremonies of welcome and entertainment. If your minister goes straight on without taking a look at Paris it will not be proper. He intends to send a telegram from Shanghai to Kuo Sung-tao asking him to come to Paris and hand him the seal. Your minister will receive the seal in Paris, and will immediately present his credentials to France first. Then he will go to London to present his credentials to England. London is the capital of England.

Question: Have the credentials been prepared and given to you?

Answer: He has already received them.

Question: How are you going to decide upon your living quarters?

Answer: Kuo Sung-tao has rented a house some time ago. When your minister goes there everything will be the same as before. Recently he has discussed with the princes and great ministers in the Tsungli Yamen whether

in the future, if we have sufficient funds, it may be necessary to purchase a house in each country to be used as an embassy. The houses of foreign ministers in China are all purchased or built by themselves. It is indeed not a long-term plan for China's ministers to live in rented houses. Moreover, the rent is exorbitant and in the long run it is not economical.

Decree: The things which you have to attend to abroad should be discussed with the princes and high ministers from time to time.

Answer: Yes.

Question: After you are abroad how will you send us memorials and reports?

Answer: In regard to important matters which should be memorialized and explained, Kuo Sung-tao has been sending them in care of the Tsungli Yamen. As for ordinary affairs, about which he should consult the Tsungli Yamen, either in the form of an official dispatch or as a letter, they were all sent through the Office for the Transmission of Government Correspondence in Shanghai. Your minister plans to handle the matter in the same way as before. . .

Decree: The members of your retinue should all be carefully controlled and not allowed to cause trouble in foreign countries and thus incur the contempt [p. 3] of foreigners.

Answer: Your minister will reverently obey the sacred instruction and be particularly careful in regard to the matter of his retinue. At present it is not easy to find those who are familiar with foreign affairs and who can be deeply trusted. He has no candidates in mind. It would be best for your minister to make a selection from scholars whom he has known for a long time, who are clear-minded and careful in everything. . . Now the second councillor, Ch'en Yuan-chi, who is to be taken along, is the brother-in-law of your minister. Your minister dares to follow the precedent of the ancients who "did not avoid the use of relatives in their intimate employment" and take him abroad, because the duties and responsibilities are extremely heavy. Were he not an intimate friend of your minister, who knows his background thoroughly from former days, your minister would not take a chance on appointing him. . .

Question: How old is this relative of yours?

Answer: Thirty-six years old.

Question: Can you understand a foreign written and spoken language?

Answer: Your minister reads a little English and understands a little spoken English. He learned it from books and so it is comparatively easier for him to read the language but more difficult for him to understand it, because his mouth and ears are not accustomed to it.

Question: Is the common language English or French?

Answer: English is a commercial language. Foreigners stress business, therefore the people of the various countries can speak English. As for the language of France, it has been handed down for generations; therefore, in documents and official dispatches among various nations French is frequently used. For instance, the international treaties, ratifications of treaties, and so on, are often written in French.

Question: Since you understand both the spoken and written language,

it is much more convenient. You do not need to rely on the translations of interpreters [do you?].

Answer: Although our minister can understand and read a little, he is not very familiar with it and he still has to depend upon interpreters. . . Understanding of a foreign written or spoken language and management of foreign affairs are two entirely different things [p. 4]. It is essential for those who manage foreign affairs to be familiar with treaties and with official procedures. It is not essential for them to concern themselves with the duties of interpreters. In the future when your minister discusses official business with foreigners even though he understands the language he still would wait for the restatement by the interpreter, partly because the procedure of the Court ought to be so, partly because during the interval of restatement by the interpreter he can take advantage of the pause to give thought to the language with which he should answer. The British Minister, Thomas Wade, can understand the Chinese written and spoken language. When he discusses official business he has to use interpreters to convey the meaning to him. That is the same idea.

Question: I have learned that Wade is going to come here soon. Have you heard about it?

Answer: During the summer your minister read a newspaper which said Wade would start his trip in the autumn; since then no exact news about him has been heard.

Decree: Wade is a very cunning person.

Answer: Wade can understand the Chinese written and spoken language. As a person he is very cunning and his temperament is very harsh. Foreigners also say that he is bad tempered.

Decree: It is very difficult to manage foreign affairs. I have heard that in Fukien there are again cases of the burning and destruction of churches and houses; in the future, there will be trouble again.

Answer: The difficulty in handling diplomatic affairs lies in the fact that foreigners are unreasonable, while Chinese are ignorant of current events and circumstances. Chinese ministers and people usually hate foreigners, as goes without saying, but we must plan gradually to make ourselves strong before anything can be done. The destruction of one church or the killing of one foreigner by no means avenges our grievances or wipes out our humiliation. At present many Chinese do not understand this principle and so there has been the Margary incident in Yunnan [Feb. 1875],¹⁷ which caused the Empresses Dowager and the Emperor work and worry day and night.

Decree: It is true indeed. How can we forget our grievances for a single day? But we must gradually make ourselves strong, as you just stated very clearly. The killing of one person or the burning of one house definitely cannot be considered as having avenged our grievances.

Answer: Yes.

Decree: Very few persons understand this idea. If you manage such matters for the nation, there are bound to be times when people will scold you. You, however, should bear the toil and blame.

Answer: When your minister formerly studied the classics and came to

the sentence, "To serve the ruler one must be able to offer one's life" [p. 5], he thought that a loyal minister would have reached the extreme point of loyalty if he devoted his whole life to it. After observing the recent situation and the course of negotiations between China and foreign countries, he has found that sometimes it is necessary to consider his life a secondary matter; and in the last analysis he even has to risk considering his reputation unimportant, before he can make the general situation secure on behalf of his country. For instance, at the time of the former Tientsin incident [June 1870] ¹⁸ your minister's father, your deceased minister, Tseng Kuo-fan, before he started his trip from Pao-ting, was then on his sickbed and immediately he wrote his last will and testament to bid his family make arrangements as though he had already discarded his life. After he arrived at Tientsin and saw that the matter was so serious that it could not be satisfactorily concluded even by [the sacrifice of] his life, he made concessions and secured the best arrangement to obtain a peaceful settlement. At that time many scholars and officials in the capital condemned him. Your minister's father accepted the responsibility and blamed himself. In sending letters to his friends he frequently wrote the eight characters: "Outwardly I am ashamed of public criticism and inwardly I cannot live with my conscience." This shows how he struggled to protect the general situation by disregarding his own reputation. As a matter of fact, at that time there was no other way to deal with the case, apart from what had been done by Tseng Kuo-fan.

Decree: Tseng Kuo-fan was really a just and loyal man who took the nation into consideration. (Note: I took off my hat and kotowed, but did not make any reply.)

Decree: It is also bad luck for the nation that before long Tseng Kuo-fan departed from the world. Now there are many great officials in various places who are cowardly.

Answer: Li Hung-chang, Shen Pao-chen, Ting Pao-chen and Tso Tsung-t'ang are all loyal and sincere ministers.

Decree: All of them are good but all are old troopers. The new ones all fail to equal them in ability; they have not kept abreast of new ideas.

Answer: Kuo Sung-tao is certainly an upright and straightforward person. This time he also risked damage to his reputation in order to manage affairs for the nation. In the future it is hoped that the special grace of the Empresses and the Emperor will protect him in every respect.

Decree: Up above [*shang-t'ou*, i.e., by the rulers] it is thoroughly understood. Kuo Sung-tao is a good man. Since his mission abroad he has managed many affairs but he has also received plenty of scolding from people.

Answer: Kuo Sung-tao is vexed by the fact that China cannot become strong immediately and he has frequently argued with people and therefore he has been scolded. After all he is a loyal minister. Fortunately the Empresses Dowager and the Emperor understand him. Even though he has lost his reputation in the fight, still it is worthwhile. [p. 6]

Decree: We all know him. The princes and great ministers also understand him.

Answer: Yes.

Question: Are you now living in the Tsungli Yamen?

Answer: The affairs of the Tsungli Yamen must be kept confidential. Formerly your minister and others dared not participate. Now, since he has received the order to go abroad on a mission, he must thoroughly investigate the old and new documents in cases concerning England and France, and he must jot down some essential points. Even though the complete cases are now in the hands of Kuo Sung-tao, yet when your minister is on his journey, there are certain to be some foreigners who will meet and entertain him. If during the course of conversation he is ignorant of the facts of the case, it will be somewhat embarrassing.

Decree: You are really quite careful in handling public affairs. (Note: Reverent silence, no reply.)

Question: Are you going to take some students along from the T'ung-wen Kuan?

Answer: Your minister is going to take an English interpreter, a French interpreter, and a clerk. This will be reported when he reaches Shanghai.

Question: Are all of them good?

Answer: Your minister understands English only slightly. The English interpreter, Tso Ping-lung, your minister knows can be employed. The French interpreter, Lien-hsing, has not yet been carefully investigated by your minister, because your minister does not understand French. . .

Question: Will the date for presentation of credentials be decided by you or by the foreigners?

Answer: We must wait until (your minister's) arrival in their country; then both sides can discuss the matter and deal with it.

Question: Is there also a Tsungli Yamen in foreign countries?

Answer: In foreign countries it is called a *Wai-pu* [or ministry of foreign affairs]. The matters it deals with are the same as the public business of the Chinese Tsungli Yamen. I have heard it said that recently England also changed the name to Tsungli Yamen, but in reality the name in a foreign language is entirely different; it is called neither "Wai-pu" nor "Tsungli Yamen." Only, if the work they do is the same, it is the same office.

Question: When can you arrive there?

Answer: If the Empresses Dowager and the Emperor wish him bon voyage [*I-lu-p'ing-an*] and if there are no delays en route, he should be able to reach the capital of France near the end of the year.

Question: You have never been in foreign countries. I presume you must have heard about these routes and their circumstances.

Answer: Some information has been obtained by consulting books [p. 7] and maps and some by inquiry.

Question: Is your ship going to cast anchor at Hongkong or not?

Answer: Your minister is going to board a French Company's steamship. The steamship must have cargo to be loaded or unloaded, passengers to embark or disembark, and so on. There will be delay in every harbor throughout the journey, but everything will be decided by the captain.

After a long pause there was a

Decree: Now you kneel for greetings. (Note: I withdrew to my original

position, knelt and said) Your minister Tseng Chi-tse kneels and prays for the good health of the Sage.

Raising the curtain I withdrew. It was already the *ch'en* hour [9:00 A.M.]



CHAPTER XIII. PROBLEMS OF THE INDUSTRIALIZATION EFFORT

From preceding sections it is evident that Chinese thinking on the problem of defense against the West went through a progression from the idea of "using barbarians to control barbarians" and employing Western arms, to the realization successively that Western arms must be made in China, that they must be produced by Chinese, that Chinese must be instructed to make them, and that therefore Chinese must be trained in Western sciences in general and that institutions must be established for their training and for the practice of the new skills so acquired. All these successive ideas stemmed from the basic desire for defense, which certainly continued undiminished as a dominant motive in the 1860's.

As the 1870's wore on, both Li Hung-chang and other provincial authorities sought to establish industrial enterprises and the transport facilities to accompany them. This involved them in the problems of balanced industrial development already familiar to the West. For example, the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company, founded in 1872 to compete with British shipping in China, needed a Chinese coal supply independent of foreign imports. The Kaiping coal mine, forerunner of the Kailan Mining Administration north of Tientsin, was opened to meet this need in 1878. The earliest surviving railway in China was later built to connect with the Kaiping mine.¹

Li Hung-chang expressed the new recognition that China's strength must rest on industry: "In the various European countries mineralogy is the basis on which they can fight for supremacy. England, as a nation, is established on three islands in the sea, where the natural resources are not very abundant, and yet her annual production of coal and iron is very prosperous, and so her wealth and power are the first in the world."²

In 1872 it was found that the original plan to build sixteen steamships at Foochow in five years for three million taels had produced only half the number of ships (six built and three building), but had more than exhausted the funds. The ships completed were still inferior to foreign ships. Some officials suggested abandoning the enterprise, to which Li Hung-chang replied in the following vigorous memorial.

DOC. 29. LI HUNG-CHANG'S DEFENSE OF BUILDING STEAMSHIPS, 1872³

We have seen with admiration the Sacred Emperor's vigorous striving for self-strengthening and for laying down broad far-reaching plans. Our admiration is beyond telling. Your minister has been thinking that the various European countries in the last several decades have advanced from India to the southern oceans, from the southern oceans to the northeast, and have invaded China's frontiers and interior land. Peoples never [p. 45] recorded in previous histories, who have had no contact with us since ancient times, have come to our points of entry (*kuan*) to ask for trade

relations. Our Emperors have been as generous as the sky and have made treaties with all of them for international trade in order to control them. People from a distance of ninety thousand *li*, from the cardinal points of the globe, are gathering together in China; this is the greatest change during the last three millennia and more!

The Westerners particularly rely upon the excellence and efficacy of their guns, cannon, and steamships, and so they can overrun China. The bow and spear, small guns, and native-made cannon which have hitherto been used by China cannot resist their rifles, which have their bullets fed from the rear opening. The sailing boats, rowboats, and the gunboats which have been hitherto employed cannot oppose their steam-engined warships. Therefore, we are controlled by the Westerners.

To live today and still say "reject the barbarians" and "drive them out of our territory" is certainly superficial and absurd talk. Even though we wish to preserve the peace and to protect our territory, we cannot preserve and protect them unless we have the right weapons. They are daily producing their weapons to strive with us for supremacy and victory, pitting their superior techniques against our inadequacies, to wrangle with and to affront us. Then how can we get along for one day without weapons and techniques?

The method of self-strengthening lies in learning what they can do, and in taking over what they rely upon. Moreover, their possession of guns, cannon, and steamships began only within the last hundred years or so, and their progress has been so fast that their influence has spread into China. If we can really and thoroughly understand their methods — and the more we learn, the more improve — and promote them further and further, can we not expect that after a century or so we can reject the barbarians and stand on our own feet? Japan is just a small nation. Recently she has begun to trade with Europe; she has instituted iron factories and built many steamships. She has changed to the use of Western weapons. Does she have the ambition to plot to invade the Western nations? Perhaps she is merely planning for self-protection. But if Japan seeks only self-protection, she is nevertheless oppressing and looking down on our China. Should not China plan for herself? Our scholars and officials have confined themselves to the study of stanzas and sentences and are ignorant of the greatest change of the last several thousand years; they are accustomed to the temporary security of the present, and so they forget why we received the heavy blow and deep suffering of twenty or thirty years ago [the Opium War], and how we can obtain domestic security and control the foreigners within several centuries. That is how this talk of stopping steamship construction has originated.

Your minister humbly thinks that all other expenditures of our nation can be economized, but the expenses for supporting the army, establishing defense measures, drilling in guns and cannon, and building warships should by all means never be economized. If we try to save funds, then we shall be obliged to neglect all these defense measures, the nation will never have anything to stand upon, and we shall never be strong. . . . The amount which has already been spent will, in turn, become a sheer waste. Not only

will we be a laughing stock to foreigners, but we will also strengthen their aggressive ambitions. . .

[The rest of the memorial explains why the expenditure has surpassed the original estimate — because it was roughly estimated by Frenchmen who were not experts, and because the price of machinery subsequently and unexpectedly rose. The progress of English and French warships is described, and a small type of warship for defense purposes is suggested. According to Li, China has “more land than water; it is more urgent to train an army than a navy.” (p. 47b) Li also discusses the difficulty of converting warships to commercial use, but he recognizes the need of commercial vessels for grain transportation and commercial competition with foreigners. Then he continues (p. 49):]

Furthermore, the building of ships, cannon, and machinery will be impossible without iron, and then we shall be helpless without coal. The reason for England's power and influence over the Western lands is only her possession of these two items (iron and coal). The various arsenals in Foochow and Shanghai daily need a huge amount of imported coal and iron, because the Chinese product is most unsuitable. Even foreign ships coming to our ports have to carry foreign coal. Suppose there is a time when the points of entry to China are closed by boycott; then not only all our iron factories would have to suspend work and stand distressingly in idleness, but also the steamships which have been built would be unable to move a single inch without coal. What deserves more anxious thought than this! . . .

[P. 50] Recently Westerners have frequently requested permission to open coal and iron mines in the Chinese interior, pointing out that it is a great pity that China's natural resources cannot be developed by herself. We have heard that now Japan is adopting Western methods of opening coal and iron mines to gain a great profit, and this has also helped her ship-building and machinery. . . If we can really make plans to persuade the people, by means of the system of “government-supervision and merchant-operation” [*kuan-tu shang-pan*], to borrow and use foreign machines and foreign methods only, but not allow foreigners to do the whole job on our behalf, then these articles of daily necessity, when produced and processed by proper methods, must have a good market. A source of profit will naturally be opened. Taking the surplus funds from the new source we can even use it to maintain our ships and train our soldiers.

In 1880, through military necessity, Li Hung-chang also recognized the importance of the telegraph: “In mobilizing troops,” he writes, “speed is of the essence. . . A telegram from Russia to Shanghai takes only one day, whereas from Shanghai to Peking. . . a Chinese mail steamer requires six or seven days. . . In 1874, when Japan invaded Taiwan, Shen Pao-chen and others repeatedly spoke of the advantage of the telegraph and an Imperial decree was issued to institute it, but the matter was only perfunctorily carried out and thus far there has been no achievement.”⁴ Accordingly, Li urged the construction of two telegraph lines: from Nanking to Peking, and from Hankow to Peking. Trunk railroad construction still remained suspect, however, partly on the ground that it would enable foreign invaders to penetrate the interior too easily — as the Japanese were to demonstrate in a later generation.

Textile production had less obvious strategic value and moved more slowly. Tso Tsung-t'ang had set up a woolen mill in Lanchow, Kansu, in 1878 with the help of German technicians and machinery, but it did not flourish after his death. In 1882, Li Hung-chang planned to establish a cotton mill at Shanghai, and called for merchants' share-capital to help finance it. He proposed to exempt its products from transit or *likin* taxes en route from Shanghai to other parts of the country, which would have set a precedent for giving special protection to “national goods.” His plan, however, was not carried through until 1891, and the new Shanghai cotton mill, the first in China, burned down in 1893 after one year of successful operation. Li soon reorganized it on a larger scale. At Wuchang, Chang Chih-tung also established a cotton mill in 1891, and another one in 1894.⁵ Li set up a paper mill in Shanghai in 1891; a cement factory was attached to the Kaiping coal mine; and a match factory and flour mill were also opened.

Heavy industry got started even more slowly. Chang Chih-tung opened the Ta-yeh iron mine and the Hanyang Iron Works in Hupei in 1890, employing German technicians, but these projects never developed into the big industrial complex that their founder had hoped for.

The variety and yet the ineffectiveness and slow development of some of these projects, many of them sponsored by Li Hung-chang, may be indicated in a list:

- 1863 A foreign language school was established at Shanghai.
- 1865 The Kiangnan Arsenal was established at Shanghai, with a translation bureau attached.
- 1867 The Nanking Arsenal was established.
- 1870 A machine factory, first established by Ch'ung-hou in 1867 at Tientsin, was enlarged.
- 1871 A foreign-style fort was planned for Taku, outside Tientsin.
- 1872 Students were sent to study in America.
Officers were sent to Germany to learn military sciences.
The China Merchants Steam Navigation Company was organized.
The opening of coal and iron mines was requested.
- 1875 A plan was made to build steel warships.
- 1876 A request was made to open a bureau to study foreign sciences in all provinces; also to add a new subject on foreign affairs in the civil service examinations.
Students and apprentices from the Foochow shipyard were sent to study in England and France. Seven army officers were sent to Germany for advanced training.
- 1878 The Kaiping coal mine was opened.
- 1879 A telegraph line was opened from Taku to Tientsin.
- 1880 A plan for a modern navy was launched, beginning with a program to purchase warships from foreign countries.
A naval school was established at Tientsin.
Telegraph land lines were requested and sanctioned.
- 1881 Li supported Liu Ming-ch'uan's request to build railways.
North of Tientsin the T'angshan railroad (about six miles) was completed.
The first telegraph line, Shanghai-Tientsin, was opened and merchants were invited to develop the telegraph service in all provinces.
- 1882 A dockyard was built at Port Arthur (completed in 1891).
A cotton mill was planned at Shanghai.

1885 A military preparatory school (an army school) was established at Tientsin.

The navy yamen was inaugurated.

1887 Mints were established at Tientsin and Paoting.

1888 The Peiyang Army was organized.

1889 The Mo-ho gold mine, in Kirin, was planned.

1891 The Lung-chang paper mill was founded at Shanghai.

A review of the new navy was held at Port Arthur.

a. *The Principle of "Government-supervision and Merchant-operation"*

The explanation of this poor record, compared to contemporary developments in other countries, lies only partly in the pressure of commercial competition exercised by the imperialist powers in China. The real key, as we have suggested in Chapter I, lies in the nature of Chinese society — its "oriental" features, whereby merchant capital was not easily available for industrial investment except under the wing of official patronage. This close merchant-official connection was exemplified by the system called "official-supervision and merchant-operation" or management (*kuan-tu shang-pan*), under which many of the early enterprises were set up. While it is beyond our scope to analyze the economic and social characteristics of this system, it is plain that it met China's needs quite inadequately: officials unversed in business held the whip hand over managerial personnel of inferior social status, who were, therefore, in no position to use modern entrepreneurial methods of capital accumulation and reinvestment.

The *kuan-tu shang-pan* system was an adaptation of a traditional Chinese device in economic administration; it seems in fact to have been patterned after the Chinese government salt monopoly, in which the government appointed official overseers but the production, distribution, and retailing of salt were farmed out to different groups of salt merchants. A number of enterprises were set up on this new basis: merchants contributed part of the share-capital, but the manager usually had official status as an expectant taotai or magistrate who could deal with the local government to secure exemption from taxes or other facilities. At the same time he was the business manager. Sometimes there were two managers: one to deal with the government and the other to look after the business. The function of the manager was thus half-official and half-commercial, and his enterprise as a whole was also halfway between the two. While the original purpose of the system was to raise funds from the public, in practice the officials invested money in the government-sponsored enterprises under the names of merchants, and placed their relatives in charge as managers in order to make a great profit. For example, Sheng Hsuan-huai was summoned by Li Hung-chang to manage the China Merchants Company, which bought its ships from the American firm of Russell and Company for 2,200,000 taels of silver. Sheng on behalf of Li Hung-chang asked the governor-general of Liang-chiang to contribute one million taels from official funds and he made up the rest by calling for public purchase of capital shares.⁶ At the beginning of 1880 a memorial impeached the company for spending money lavishly and for "squeezing" official funds to fill the pockets of its officers, who had been appointed by the government.⁷ Li Hung-chang, the sponsor of the company, was ordered by the emperor to investigate this charge. The result was a complete whitewash.⁸

The evils which resulted from the mixing of Western commerce and industry with Chinese bureaucratism were vividly described by a scholarly comprador, Cheng Kuan-ying, who wrote an influential and eloquent book on China's problems.

Cheng Kuan-ying was a man of obscure origin, but from his own writings we gather that he started his career by working as a comprador in foreign firms (Dent & Co., and Butterfield and Swire) for about thirty years. He joined the enterprises of Li Hung-chang in 1882 and served in various directorial capacities in the Chinese Telegraph Company, the China Merchants Company, and Li's cotton mill company. From 1892 to 1902 he was associate director and then director of the China Merchants Company and traveled widely in China and East Asia. During the Sino-Japanese war he served concurrently as a government purchasing agent for ammunition. For a brief period in 1896 he became the manager of the newly reorganized Hanyang iron foundry.

During the 1890's Cheng became a patron and enthusiastic reader of the *Wan-kuo kung-pao*, a journal sponsored by foreign missionaries which contained articles on science, history and social problems, and had wide influence. According to Timothy Richard, Cheng bought a hundred copies of the translation of Mackenzie's *Nineteenth Century* (*T'ai-hsi hsien-shih lan-yao*) and distributed them to his Peking friends. The book which he wrote, "Warnings to the seemingly prosperous age" (*Sheng-shih wei-yen*), had a vogue before 1898 and merits attention.⁹ Eventually this "warning" was presented to the Emperor Kuang-hsü, who ordered the Tsungli Yamen to publish and distribute it to officials. It was popularly read in the decade after its publication, although its influence on the 1898 reform movement was probably limited by the fact of the author's comprador background.

According to the communist writer Hsiao San, *Sheng-shih wei-yen* was one of the books Mao Tse-tung liked to read in his boyhood;¹⁰ Mao has not mentioned Cheng in his own writings, where he writes of K'ang Yu-wei and Yen Fu.

As a comprador-scholar with wide contact among foreigners and an acquaintance with missionary writings, especially those of Timothy Richard, as well as with contemporary Chinese literature, Cheng Kuan-ying was in a position to advance ideas. He demanded a higher public status for the merchant class and argued that if greater freedom were given them in their commercial activities, it would be an effective defense against foreign exploitation of China. Accordingly he urged that merchants should be admitted to the civil service examinations at the local level, and should have access to the officials.

One amazing thing about Cheng's book is its humanitarian sentiment — not only his thesis that the government is for the people, but also his moving descriptions of the social abuses of the time. He was especially grieved by the inhumanity of penal practices and prison conditions, by the suffering of women from foot-binding, and by the general misery of the countryside. He therefore offered many suggestions for reform, relief for the poor, agricultural improvement and the like, including the idea of using an alphabet for writing Chinese so that "all the people could read and write."¹¹

DOC. 30. THE CRITICISMS OF CHENG KUAN-YING, c. 1892¹²

In recent days, although the court has ordered the governors-general and governors to develop commerce and open all kinds of manufacturing bureaus, and has authorized the inviting of merchants to manage them, yet the officials and merchants have habitually been unable to get along together and have distrusted each other for a long time. Even though the officials are capable and brilliant and willing to protect them [p. 8], the merchants are afraid, since it is unpredictable whether their successors will be wise or not. . . Who would like to have his interests and rights taken

away by officials? For this reason, rich merchants and great businessmen who have undertaken many affairs, although they understand clearly that there are profits to be made, nevertheless hesitate to accept the invitation to manage government enterprises. Even if some accept the invitation, they still fear that the officials will deceitfully entrust affluent merchants with the charge of certain enterprises, while actually having some other selfish scheme in mind. During the last ten years or more, there have frequently been bad officials who allied themselves with cunning merchants. The latter either ask the authorities to give them charge of tax collections in certain lines (Note: The tax for building forts, contributed by all trades in Kwangtung province, was handled by inviting merchants to collect it), or they imitate Western methods of inaugurating enterprises; in order to secure more shareholders they may falsely claim that a certain amount of stock has been sold and a license received, before they even establish an office. Thus they work for their private ends on the pretext of a public enterprise. They are neither affluent merchants, nor have they any special training. Such enterprises can hardly be successful, and many people have suffered by involvement in them.

According to Western custom, a bureau is established by the government to handle state affairs, while a company is established by respectable merchants to conduct a business. No matter who establishes it, a business company need only act entirely according to the company law drawn up and enacted by the state. The chief manager is elected by the trustees of the shareholders and the affairs of each branch are decided by the chief manager. If the chief manager is not thoroughly familiar with commercial affairs, nor versed in the advantageous and disadvantageous aspects of business, even though he has many shareholders and holds high official positions, he is not allowed to venture carelessly into an undertaking. . .

Now in China when companies are founded through a petition to the higher authorities, even though the shares are sold to merchants, they are called bureaus. The chief managers, whose duties are only slightly concerned with government matters, are appointed and given orders by high officials, who disregard whether they are competent or not and look only for men whose rank is comparatively high and who suit their own ideas. Then they are considered qualified to fill the posts. Consequently, most of the chief managers of the various bureaus are people with the rank of taotai (Note: What they have learned cannot be used for what they are doing, and that is always ridiculed by Westerners). After the official seals and stationery have been received, item by item, then the business is carried on entirely in an official [i.e., bureaucratic] manner. Those whose positions are dignified and who have great authority can dominate the business and can achieve their private ambitions at the cost of the public enterprise. Those whose positions are low and who have little authority generally take orders and dare not say much. If a surplus or profit is made by the company, all the local officials request some contribution and overstep their proper duty to meddle in the company's affairs. The managers of small companies, even though they have not been appointed by high officials, also indulge in embezzlement and malpractices; the shareholders are afraid of their power and, on account of the lack of commercial law, they

dare not appeal to higher courts. Therefore, during the last several decades there have been few shareholders who have made a profit, and many who have lost their capital. . .

Now if we wish to reorganize our commercial affairs, we must imitate the Western practice and compile a commercial code quickly. . . [P. 9] All those who organize a commercial company ought to state in a petition who the trustees of the shareholders are, how large the capital is, and what business they are going to do, and they ought to send these details for registration with the local government. If a company is not registered, the official will not take care of it when anything happens. Thus . . . the officials will not dare to squeeze the merchants and the latter will not practice fraud. As to the people employed by the company, whether in high or low position, they must be thoroughly familiar with the business before they are given employment. The authorities should not recommend people to the company at random; all the old inveterate malpractices should be entirely wiped out.

In another passage, Cheng Kuan-ying gives an eloquent summary of the injustices and humiliations suffered by Chinese at the hands of foreigners in Shanghai:

The Westerners frequently take advantage of the differences in language and in law to profit themselves at the cost of others, and do as they please without regard for reason. . . . When a foreign ship collides with and destroys a Chinese boat, the latter, contrarily, is blamed for being slow in avoiding the collision or is falsely charged with having a dim light on its mast. . . . When a foreign stagecoach hurts a Chinese, the latter is, contrarily, charged with not knowing how to yield the right of way, so that he incurred the disaster himself. Even if the driver is taken to court, he only pays a small fine. Furthermore, Chinese employed by foreign companies or as sailors on foreign ships frequently have their wages cut on some pretext or are even beaten to death. Cunning Westerners ally themselves with local rascals to kidnap and sell the foolish country fellows, whose grievances and miserable lives are like those of the dark ages. Again, for example, when a Chinese merchant owes money to a foreign merchant, as soon as he is accused his property is confiscated and his relatives and friends are disturbed; whereas when a Westerner is in debt to a Chinese, even though he has abundant private savings, by following the regulations for declaring bankruptcy, he is entirely free from obligation. . .

[P. 48] Our treatment of Westerners has been so magnanimous, and their treatment of the Chinese so poor. Where is justice and where is humanity? Their steamboats sail as fast as if they flew through our harbors, and their stagecoaches rush along our thoroughfares, they carry weapons in time of peace, they reduce the wages of their employees, they speculate and go bankrupt, they protect Christian converts, they control the customs duties, they kidnap and sell our people — all these various kinds of wrongdoing should be forbidden by Western law and not tolerated by international law. . .¹³

To make his complaint specific, Cheng lists ten grievances: (1) the Shanghai foreign settlement is taking over land outside its boundaries; (2) Chinese stagecoaches are differently taxed and not allowed to pass foreign stagecoaches; (3)

Chinese are fined for hunting out of season; (4) Westerners go hunting as they please at any time; (5) the paper chases of Western horsemen destroy the fields without compensation; (6) the Mixed Court at Shanghai issues blank warrants which are misused by the municipal police who prey upon the populace; (7) no Chinese representatives are allowed in the Shanghai municipal council; (8) Chinese are excluded from the Shanghai public park and race course, although they pay sixty or seventy per cent of the taxes to the municipal government; (9) Chinese are excluded from the park along the river; (10) land for roads is expropriated from farmers without proper compensation.¹⁴

b. *The Debate over Railroads*

The term *t'ieh-lu* (lit., "iron road") for "railroad" probably first appeared in Chinese literature in 1864 when an English engineer, Sir MacDonal'd Stephenson, traveled to China by way of India. He suggested that a railroad be built from Shanghai to Soochow, but there was no response from Chinese circles. In the following year an English merchant built a short railroad of more than one *li* outside the Hsuan-wu Gate of Peking and tried to run a locomotive on it. This appears to have been the first introduction of the railroad in China,¹⁵ but because the spectators were greatly alarmed, the railroad was soon removed. In 1866 British merchants, including Jardine, Matheson and Co., again began to build a railroad by preparing a carriage road thirty-eight *li* in length between Shanghai and Wusung. In May of 1876, rails having been laid, service was formally opened. However, because it was built by foreigners and the Chinese populace were greatly irritated by the new invention, local public opinion turned against it. After a Chinese soldier was killed on the railway, and officials and people had become more clamorous, Shen Pao-chen, then governor-general of Liang-chiang, in September 1876, negotiated with the British consul-general, Thomas Wade, purchased the railroad, and had it destroyed in 1877. The superficial reason for this destruction lay in superstition and conservatism of the type that had also appeared in England and the United States at the beginning of railroad construction — such as the idea that the roaring locomotives would startle the cattle and prevent them from grazing in safety, that hens would not lay, that the poisoned air from locomotives would kill the wild birds and destroy vegetation, that farm houses would be ignited by sparks, etc.¹⁶ Behind this lay the real reason, that the British merchants had built the Shanghai-Wusung railroad without the consent of the Chinese government, which was averse to foreign control over so powerful an instrument of economic exploitation.

After this incident it took some time for Chinese leaders to promote the construction of railways in China. Among these promoters Feng Kuei-fen, Li Hung-chang, Liu K'un-i, Tso Tsung-t'ang, Liu Ming-ch'uan and others wrote long memorials to call the attention of the court, as well as the populace, to the need of railroads both for defense and for commerce.¹⁷ Li Hung-chang and Liu Ming-ch'uan in particular conducted vigorous campaigns for the introduction of railways, while T'ang T'ing-hsing, Wu T'ing-fang and Sheng Hsuan-huai became the chief supervisors and administrators of railroad construction.

DOC. 31. SHEN PAO-CHEN'S PURCHASE OF THE SHANGHAI-WUSUNG RAILWAY, 1876¹⁸

We have found that during the spring of this year the British merchants in Shanghai built a railroad without authority, in the leased territory, and on it ran a locomotive train and directly reached Wusung. Your ministers

Shen Pao-chen and Wu Yuan-ping sternly ordered the customs taotai to communicate with the British consul-general in order to stop it. Consul-General Meadows adamantly refused. We also wrote to the Tsungli Yamen to send a communication to stop it. The envoy of the said country, Wade, was also very obstinate and he put it off for several months. . . The British envoys at first wished to have the railroad operated jointly by Chinese and foreigners, each side contributing some money. Then they wished, after the purchase of the railroad by China, to have it still managed by foreign merchants. . . We immediately explained in detail that in Chinese territory foreigners should not build a railway without authority. We accommodated them with a price, which is already a special consideration. If there is still more trouble, then it is not China's fault but the Westerners'.

After repeated discussions between the (Shanghai) customs taotai and others, an agreement has been reached on October 24 that China has full freedom to buy the line, to stop operation, and to take other action concerning the railroad. Foreign merchants have no right to make further inquiries. But during one year, until the purchase price has been entirely paid, the foreign merchants shall manage it. They are only permitted to take passengers back and forth and not to take goods, as it is against the regulations. In addition, they cannot purchase more land for extending the railroad. . .

DOC. 32. HSUEH FU-CH'ENG'S SUPPORT OF RAILROAD BUILDING, 1878¹⁹

Now all the European countries are competing with one another for wealth and strength and their rise to prosperity is rapid. What they rely upon are steamships and railroads. The manufacture of steamships has been imitated by China with visible effect. I think if the system of railway trains is not used [p. 10], China can never be rich and strong. . . In England railroads have been studied and steadily improved and a large amount of profits has accrued. The price of coal and iron has been reduced three-fourths. Accordingly, England could exert her power in manufacturing and expand into other matters, and thereby become the strong leader of Europe. Shortly afterward, the railroad was extended to Russia, France, Germany, Austria, the United States, and other large countries.

The United States is a newly created country, and forty years ago there was no railway. Now a general estimate of the whole country shows the railroads, spreading out on all sides, amount to as many as twenty-one hundred thousand *li* [*sic.*, i.e., 70,000 miles?]. Wherever a new city is founded or untilled land is opened, railroads are always built to lead the way, and as soon as the population becomes numerous and business prosperous, then the railroads are increased to improve things still further. The nation has been established only a hundred years, its daily progress is like rising steam, and it is almost an equal of England and Russia. I have heard that from San Francisco in America to New York by train the distance is eleven thousand *li*, and the journey does not exceed eight days; that is, ten thousand *li* takes the same time as several hundred *li* in China. The traveling expense is but little more than a hundred dollars; that is, the cost of ten thousand *li* is like the cost of one thousand *li* in China. Thus, if China should adopt the railroad, then distant areas could be brought near, the stagnant

could be made to flow, expense could be saved, and the scattered could be concentrated. . .

[P. 11] The new tasks on which China is now trying to make a start are numerous, yet all must have railroads to relieve their difficulties. Why? . . . The more goods are imported or exported, the more extensive will be the transportation and trade by steamship. This shows that railroads and steamships are mutually helpful [lit., like outside and lining]. Coal, iron, and other mines far away from a river can use a railway for transportation, and then the capital expense will be lightened and sales will be facilitated. When distribution is easier, the mining industry will become more prosperous, and thereafter coal and iron mines will be more extensively opened, and accordingly the cost of building and managing railways will be further reduced. This shows that railroads and mining are mutually helpful. The speed of a train is more than a thousand *li* a day, and the velocity is double that of the fastest horse of the military post stations. Thereafter, official dispatches will be speeded up, and regulations will be established for people to send mail by Western methods, so as to make the mail an appendage of the railroad company. . . This is the railroad's help to the postal administration.

CHAPTER XIV. THE ATTEMPT AT A POSITIVE FOREIGN POLICY

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, China's foreign policy and the modernization movement were both geared to foreign aggression. When a Japanese expedition to Formosa, sent to punish the murder by Formosan savages of shipwrecked Liu-ch'iu islanders, revealed China's military incompetence in 1874, Li Hung-chang had already realized that China's backwardness in the matter of armament, communications, and modern machinery placed the country at the mercy of stronger powers. Hence, in 1872, as we have noted above, the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company had been formed. In 1880, Li Hung-chang vigorously supported the resumption of railway construction, and he recommended the establishment of the first telegraph lines in China. In addition, he sponsored a number of schools for technological training. The French naval destruction of the Foochow shipyard in 1884 further stimulated the Chinese government to carry out its plans for a modern navy. Li was made Associate Controller of the Board of Admiralty, and he was able to secure enough funds to build a number of ships. Unfortunately, the new Chinese army and navy, which represented the result of a generation of effort at modernization, were crushed by Japan in the war of 1894-95. After this fiasco, Li Hung-chang almost gave up hope for rebuilding a strong China, with modern industries and communications, that would be able to fight against Japan. Instead, he sought an alliance with Russia, thus continuing China's traditional foreign policy of using one barbarian to fight another.

China's foreign relations were handled in considerable part by Li Hung-chang in the period after he became governor-general of the metropolitan province of Chihli in 1870, and particularly after the Empress Dowager removed Prince Kung from the Tsungli Yamen in 1884. The study made thus far of late Ch'ing foreign

affairs reveals that there were various policies at different times, but no overall strategy. Since Li formed at least one principal center of policy formation, his writings have special interest.

In general, Li Hung-chang seems to have kept his eye on Japan as China's major foreign threat, rather than on Russia. In his view the Restoration of 1868 in Japan and her aggression in Formosa in 1874 were both a menace and a stimulus. Wen-hsiang had been one of the earliest officials to recognize Japan's probable ambitions, and Li Hung-chang had a similar foresight. In 1872 he wrote to a friend:

In Japan the emperor above and the people below have identical minds. They believe in the Western countries — in machinery, guns, artillery, warships, railways, and everything. They have patterned all these after France, England, and the United States. Hereafter Japan will certainly be a source of anxiety for China, as near as elbow and armpit. While our own weakness remains chronic, our strong neighbor daily becomes a threat to us. What technique can we employ to cope with her? ¹

One of Li's memorials, written on December 10, 1874, reads:

Japan recently has changed to the practice of Western military methods, has imitated the West in building railways, setting up telegraph lines, opening coal and iron mines, and coining foreign-style currency, all of which is not without benefit to her national polity and to her people's livelihood. She has also sent many students to foreign countries to acquire learning and practice in the use of machinery and technology; she has raised many foreign loans, and has secretly made an alliance with England. Her power is daily expanding, and her ambition is not small. Therefore she dares to display her strength in eastern lands, despises China, and takes action by invading Taiwan. Although the various European powers are strong, they are still seventy thousand *li* away from us, whereas Japan is as near as in the courtyard, or on the threshold, and is prying into our emptiness or solitude [i.e., weaknesses of our defense measures]. Undoubtedly she will become China's permanent and great anxiety. ²

After the settlement of the Formosa incident, Li Hung-chang wrote a very serious letter to Shen Pao-chen, part of which reads:

Hereafter I hope our Emperor, officials, and the upper and the lower classes alike will "sleep on firewood and eat gall," to seek vigorously for methods of self-strengthening. . . As an earlier letter of the Tsungli Yamen says, "When something happens, we hurriedly plan to make up our deficiencies; but after the incident, we again indulge in pleasure and amusements." ³

Li recognized the administrative ability and statesmanship of the great Japanese leader, Itō Hirobumi (1841-1909), about whom he made a secret report to the Tsungli Yamen in 1885. Itō, he says, "has traveled long on the continents of Europe and America and is strongly imitating them. He really has the ability to govern his country. He pays particular attention to these policies: to encourage trade and to be harmonious with neighboring nations, to enrich the people and strengthen the troops. . . In about ten years, Japan's wealth and power will be

considerable. She is China's future disaster, not our present anxiety." ⁴ Obviously Li's prophecy was all too accurate. (For the conversation between Li and Itō in 1895, see Doc. 35.)

Over Russian expansion in Central Asia, Li had fewer misgivings than the bellicose group of high officials represented by Tso Tsung-t'ang. Li at least was more painfully aware of China's genuine weakness. In 1880 while Tso was demanding war, Li wrote to a subordinate:

Ili was seized by Russia, who took advantage of the Mohammedan rebellion. The local people really do not wish to return to our jurisdiction. To me this seems to be an extremely distant encroachment on our frontiers, and it may be unnecessary to request the return of Ili immediately. Those within and without the capital who are in charge of national plans suddenly feel boastful and take pleasure in meritorious deeds; again and again they have urged the recovery of Ili. Our key officials [of the Tsungli Yamen and the imperial court], without consulting the opinion of many persons, suddenly chose a weak and ignorant individual [Ch'ung-hou, who signed the unfavorable treaty of Livadia in 1879] and granted him authority. Again, suddenly, the whole country shouts madly like the barking of dogs to rescind the treaty which has already been signed. Can we say this is fair?

After the suppression of the Taiping and Nien rebellions, the demobilization of [Chinese] officers and soldiers has caused further exhaustion of the sources of provisions, because every year we have to supply six or seven million taels to the Western-style troops [to take their place] and there is no time limit to this expense. After the Formosa incident [of 1874] we began to deliberate about coastal defense, for which the nominal appropriation was four million. Actually, the amount given each year is less than one million. The appropriation for the Peiyang coastal defense is only three or four hundred thousand. When there is no money, there are neither crack troops nor effective weapons. The subsidies for the Huai Army have also been reduced forty per cent. Last year I received the decision of the Ministry of War ordering me to disband more than ten thousand soldiers and the remaining force still has to defend the two oceans in the south and in the north. In our military forces, can we be said to be strong? ⁵

During the negotiations with Russia in 1880-81, China mobilized many troops in the north to back up her envoy, Tseng Chi-tse, in St. Petersburg. Li Hung-chang doubted the soundness of Tseng's judgment; in a reply to him on April 12, 1880, Li wrote:

You also say . . . that the Russians, in their own country, fear a rebellion by the people and, abroad, have to defend themselves against invasion by the English, so that they are not in a position to start a large-scale frontier war with China. Your estimation of the enemy is certainly very clear and thorough; however, although you say that the English would not permit the Russians to fulfill their ambitions in China, have you really a fundamental basis for this assertion? If the Russians are to fulfill their ambitions in China, the first place of invasion must be in Sinkiang, next in Heilungkiang and Kirin. All are areas beyond the reach of the power of the British people. If there is harm to England, then the English may create some obstruction.

If there is no injury to England, then the English merchants will take advantage of the situation to plan for profit. Can they really show sincerity in rendering help to us Chinese? ⁶

After Tseng Chi-tse's rearrangement of the Ili settlement in 1881 (usually considered a great success because it compelled Russia to disgorge territory she had already swallowed), Li remained unimpressed. To a friend he opined that the settlement gave "after all, no actual advantage to China, while the Russians have fulfilled their desires. The stupidity and confusion of our scholar-officials, and the lack of men of ability in the court are really ridiculous." ⁷

Kuo Sung-tao was another diplomat who remained sceptical of warlike policies on the part of China. During the protracted and confused course of the fighting and negotiation with France in 1884, he submitted the following summary of his views.

DOC. 33. KUO SUNG-TAO ON THE FUTILITY OF A WAR POLICY, 1884 ⁸

The European countries have concentrated on trade relations. . . The areas they have occupied are as far away as several tens of thousands of *li*, all occupied on the pretext of commerce. At first they had no intention of resorting to war, but after [the local people] had repeatedly gone back on their promises, the foreigners inevitably took offense and so used military force. Nor had they any preconceived idea of fighting for territory; but the more they fought, the further they advanced and thereupon they took the opportunity to usurp territory. The various islands in Southeast Asia are almost completely invaded and occupied, and all by this process. Therefore, in negotiating with the European nations on commercial affairs, we can use reason to overcome them but should absolutely not resort to force in a dispute; we can inspire their confidence by sincerity and good faith, but should by no means gloss things over; we can make use of their power to plan to make ourselves strong, but we must not on any account be envious of their strength and so seek to challenge them.

Your minister once held that, of the requests the Europeans have made, whether trifling or serious, large or small, with hundreds of variations and changes, there is none that cannot be settled by compromise according to reason; whereas, if war is resorted to, then they will not be easy to settle. This is because . . . [p. 38] their purpose is no more than to trade with us for profit; they cherish no hatred or grudge in their hearts. We have noticed that they do not speak lightly of war but argue with us back and forth, leaving themselves ample leeway to seek in each instance some advantage. If, on account of the fact that they do not speak of warfare easily, we goad them into acting with outrageous violence, then there will be a great deal of harm. Once warfare has been resorted to, the military expense they incur will eventually be sought from us as an indemnity. This is the principle by which the various European countries try to dominate one another. We simply have no argument with which to deny their request. They may eventually suffer a defeat and run away under full sail, but . . . after a year or two they will be sure to come again. They may overrun us as arrogantly as they like and the catastrophe they bring will be even more

serious. Wars among the European countries last ten and sometimes twenty years. In each battle the cannonading on both sides may not cease for several days. . . China's coastline is 8,000 or 9,000 *li*. By what means can we oppose them?

This is why your minister has said that the various European countries are surrounding and gathering together against China so that she has no chance to fight, no power to fight, and simply no reason to fight. The French barbarians have frequently made private treaties with Annam exclusively for the purpose of trade with Yunnan. After the British initiated trade at T'eng-yueh [Yunnan], the French were even more fearful of being left behind and cherished the idea of competing with them. This is seen in the book by T'e-la-ko-erh, *T'an-ti-chi* [Doudart de Lagrée, *Investigation of the Routes*, 1865]. The ambition they cherish has been long and deep. . .

When the French barbarians caused trouble in Annam we should have sent an envoy to the capital of France and should also have sent an envoy to Saigon to investigate the opportunities and observe the changes in the situation, and yet we sent no one. When the French caused trouble in Annam, one place it started was in Saigon. In the Saigon area were more than 300,000 Chinese [p. 39] and a consul should have been established there to take care of their affairs, and yet it had not been possible to do so ahead of time. Important strategic opportunities of this sort have been idly lost!

At first the French barbarians thought that if they had 500 soldiers stationed at Saigon, these would be more than enough to overrun Annam. When they were assaulted on the flank by Liu Yung-fu [1837-1917, leader of the "Black Flags," Chinese irregulars], they were surprised at the unexpected attack and were in a dilemma. We might have taken advantage of this situation to settle the dispute, but again we lost this opportunity.

Of all the officials in and outside the capital, there is not a single one who is versed in foreign affairs. All they do is cautiously watch the intention of the court and show their zeal for war. The officials in charge of frontier troops are also accustomed to the old habits of military camps and make falsely exaggerated reports, which are all mere fabrications that avoid mentioning defeat but report success without a single sentence that can be verified. . .

When the French barbarians had caused trouble in Annam and had not yet reached China, the ministers at court favored war to resist them. . . When they came, our troops had withdrawn beforehand. When they withdrew, a retaking of the place was reported. . .

The cost of the shipyard at Ma-wei, Foochow, and the installation of machinery amounted to several millions. Whenever a battleship was built the maximum for one ship was a million and several hundred thousand dollars. Even the minimum was several hundred thousand. In a single engagement [with the French, 1884] all have been entirely destroyed. The loss is ten or twenty million. Thus we ourselves vainly destroyed our only ships and manufacturing machinery in order to make the warmongers happy. . .

During the last two or three years, since the start of the border war,

Western merchants have withdrawn their capital in China and ceased to trade; our coastal merchants have all become bankrupt and their original strength has been greatly drained; the populace in turn are moving away [p. 40] and becoming vagrants — in one day they may be frightened several times without being able to protect their own lives. Our merchants have suffered even more. In this war we merely cause ourselves trouble. . .

At present the number of levies and transfers of funds, and the broad extent of conscription, far exceed those of the period of Hsien-feng [1851-1861] when military force was used to quell the rebels. We are showing off our military might in places where it cannot be applied and are seeking to do battle with an enemy who is not responsive [to our strategy]. Along the several thousand *li* of our coastline, defense works are laid out everywhere, merely to the exhaustion of our own strength, and yet there is no end to it. . .

Your minister has heard that since ancient times in fighting foreign wars it has been necessary first to make secure the domestic administration. The Westerners have occupied our seaports and have penetrated deeply into the interior. There is therefore nothing for us to say about fighting a foreign war, but we should instead quickly attend to security within the country. If military action is taken everywhere and the frontiers are disturbed, we shall lose control on both fronts — neither expelling the foreigners nor having security within the country. . .

These divergent views on policy and the inefficiency of China's projects for self-strengthening are both illustrated in the case of the continued Chinese efforts at naval development.

a. Building a Modern Navy

The old-style naval and marine forces in the Ch'ing Dynasty, as part of the territorial Chinese "Army of the Green Standard" (*Lü-ying*), were traditionally divided into provincial commands. The land-minded Manchus had not paid much attention to the development of a navy and used their "water forces" only to patrol the coasts and certain commercially important inland waterways. Except in the 1680's, during the conquest of Formosa, and in the years 1795 to 1805, during the suppression of large pirate fleets off the South China coast, the programs of shipbuilding and naval training had been perfunctorily maintained as matters of routine.

During the Opium War the English fleet, using artillery of superior fire power and auxiliary steam-powered gunboats, played havoc with the Chinese fortifications and war junks all the way from Canton to Nanking, and practically destroyed everything that confronted it. Yet the Chinese officials of the day, as we have seen, developed no real doctrine of sea power. In spite of some discussions about the purchase of foreign war vessels for coastal defense, the Kwangtung squadrons of war junks were rebuilt along the same old lines as before. The new naval force which resulted was no match even for the pirates that became rampant in the late 1840's in the Canton estuary and along the waterways into Kwangsi. Some of these pirates later joined the Taiping rebels and manned their boats on the Yangtze when the Taiping horde overran Hunan and Hupei and descended on Nanking. It was mainly to deal with the Taiping fleet that Tseng Kuo-fan began to build up his Hunan militia army (*Hsiang-chün*), a large part of which was a marine force transported on long boats powered by oars. Foreign-built steamers

were bought and rented in increasing numbers for use against the Taipings in the lower Yangtze valley after about 1853.

In the early 1860's, the value of Western-style gunboats in Chinese waters was signalized by the famous Lay-Osborn flotilla project, under which a powerful fleet was built for China in Britain, only to be disbanded in 1863 following a dispute over the manner in which Chinese official control of the squadron was to be exercised.⁹ The subsequent shipbuilding efforts of Tseng Kuo-fan at Shanghai and Tso Tsung-t'ang at Foochow have already been noted (see, respectively, Doc. 13, Ch. IX, and Doc. 29), but it was not until 1867 that an organized Chinese navy was proposed, when Li Hung-chang, accepting the suggestion of Ting Jih-ch'ang (1823-1882), memorialized urging the appointment of three admirals who would take charge of the northern, central, and southern squadrons, respectively. In 1881 Hsueh Fu-ch'eng drafted regulations for the northern squadron and in 1882 a dockyard was begun at Port Arthur by Li Hung-chang. In 1884 Tso Tsung-t'ang memorialized proposing the establishment of a modern navy, and at the same time Chang P'ei-lun (1848-1903) submitted the memorial translated below, which urged the establishment of a central office in charge of the navy. As a result the Hai-chün Yamen, or Naval Office, was created on October 13, 1885. Prince Ch'un (1840-1891) was appointed controller of this board and Li Hung-chang was made one of the associate controllers.¹⁰

In the Naval Office, Li Hung-chang and Tseng Chi-tse were the responsible policy makers, but they were unable to keep the Empress Dowager from using the money originally appropriated for the development of the Chinese navy to rebuild the Summer Palace.¹¹ Although the northern squadron was organized in 1888 to consist of 28 ships of various sizes, it was a navy only in form, its organization and equipment being poor¹² — a situation which forecast the disaster of 1894. Near the end of the dynasty the naval administration was reorganized, but even in the twentieth century China has failed to develop a navy on Western great-power lines.

DOC. 34. CHANG P'EI-LUN'S PROPOSAL OF 1884¹³

The reason for the European countries' overrunning the seas and the difficulty of contending against them lie in their possession of solid ships and effective guns. During the last twenty years, trade relations between China and foreign countries have been established and treaties concluded. . . . The intentions of these nations, standing like birds of prey and covetous as wolves, with watering mouths and eyes staring at Asia, are understood by everyone. Even if our nation, right now, greatly develops its navy, we fear that we cannot rival them. If we are again hesitant, wondering what to do, and do not work on the fundamental plan for self-strengthening, I really fear that the menace from the sea will be unlimited. . . .

After the suppression of the Taiping and the Nien rebels, China gradually built shipyards and bought machines to establish a new navy with steam warships. That was the beginning of our navy. Funds were insufficient, men of ability were not forthcoming, flood, drought and other catastrophes frequently occurred, and opinion within and without the capital was not unified; so, until now, the old regulations for naval ships in the outer seas have not yet been changed, nor has a definite system yet been established for a steamship fleet of all the provinces. When there is no alarm, the funds

for the southern and northern squadrons are never delivered in full by any of the Maritime Customs offices; when there is an alarm, every province retains for its own use the subsidy for the navy. If this situation continues without change and we still wish to have a coastal navy sufficient for attacking or coming to the rescue, or to be adequate for offensive war as well as for defense, it will obviously be very difficult. . . .

[P. 3] Your minister has studied the European military systems. Concerning their navies, they all establish a special ministry of the navy with very great powers. The Englishman Robert Hart has made a suggestion to the Tsungli Yamen regarding the establishment of a bureau in general charge of coastal defense. We have seriously considered the plans of two or three veteran statesmen and consulted the new systems of five or six sea powers. We can see the advantages and disadvantages in the proposal that the naval forces should be combined in one unit, not divided and scattered. Thus, if we wish to seek a method to control our enemies, we cannot do it unless we create a navy with steam warships for the outer seas; and if we wish to accomplish the overrunning of the seas, we cannot do it unless we establish an Office (*ya-men*) of the Navy. The important functions of the navy are in general four: namely, the investigation of coastal topography, the training of officers of ability, the building of naval vessels, and the study of various operations. Coastal defense is of concern to the governors general and governors, but since there are boundaries between provinces, they cannot entirely disregard each other's spheres of jurisdiction. If we have an important minister take full charge, then the relative importance of all seaports along the entire coast line can be distinguished; also where iron ships should be anchored, where forts should be built, where shipyards may be prepared, and where mines may be laid; the generals and the admirals will be like one family, the water and land defenses will be well coordinated. . . .

b. *The Failure at Self-Strengthening*

The collapse of the Chinese empire is as complex a subject as the decline and fall of ancient Rome. A similar multiplicity of factors contributed to the general debacle and many years of study will be necessary before we can generalize about it, or compare China's failure with Japan's success in a few well-chosen words.

One thing is worth noting, however. While many writers in contemporary China now stress the deleterious impact of Western imperialism upon the old Chinese state and society, the Chinese leaders of the nineteenth century maintained a rather different view of their problem. Through all their writings, as noted above, runs a constant emphasis upon the need for men of ability (*jen-ts'ai*, "human talent") who could deal with the crisis. This concern stemmed from the ancient ethnocentric assumption that the Chinese empire's foreign relations were only a subsidiary function of domestic administration — of the twin evils, "internal rebellion and aggression from without" (*nei-luan wai-huan*), the former was assumed to open the door for the latter. A dynasty that could handle its domestic problems need have little fear of foreign aggression.

Whether or not this analysis took adequate account of the bite of modern imperialism, it at least threw the moral blame for the failure at self-strengthening upon the Chinese leaders, not upon foreign imperialist scapegoats. This traditional Chinese concept that government is indeed a personal matter, that history

is made by the ruler and his ministers, not by impersonal social and economic "forces," may well have contributed to the demoralization of Chinese officials who saw things going steadily from bad to worse.

Li Hung-chang's awareness of the Meiji reforms in Japan has been evidenced in many preceding documents, as well as his specific recognition of Itō Hirobumi as the great protagonist of Japan's self-strengthening. In 1885 the two men had negotiated the Li-Itō convention to stabilize the Sino-Japanese rivalry in Korea. A decade later, after China's complete and sudden defeat and the destruction of Li's plans and hopes of many years, they met again to negotiate the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Part of their conversation on March 20, 1895, was as follows:¹⁴

DOC. 35. LI HUNG-CHANG'S CONVERSATION WITH ITŌ HIROBUMI, 1895

Li Hung-chang: In Asia, our two countries, China and Japan, are the closest neighbors, and moreover have the same language. How could we be enemies? Now for the time being we are fighting each other, but eventually we should work for permanent friendship. If we are enemies endlessly, then what is [p. 262] harmful to China will not necessarily be beneficial to Japan. Let us look at the various European countries which, even though their military forces are strong, do not lightly start hostilities. Since we Chinese and Japanese are on the same continent, we should also imitate Europe. If the diplomatic ministers of our two countries mutually and deeply understand this idea, we ought vigorously to maintain the general stability of Asia, and establish perpetual peace and harmony between ourselves, so that our Asiatic yellow race will not be encroached upon by the white race of Europe.

Itō: I am very much pleased with the idea of the grand secretary [Li Hung-chang]. Ten years ago when I was at Tientsin, I talked about reform with the grand secretary. Why is it that up to now not a single thing has been changed or reformed? This I deeply regret.

Li: At that time when I heard you, sir, talking about that, I was overcome with admiration, and furthermore I deeply admired, sir, your having vigorously changed your customs in Japan so as to reach the present stage. Affairs in my country have been so confined by tradition that I could not accomplish what I desired. At that time you advised me and said, "China is large and populous, the reform of various policies ought to come gradually." Now in the twinkling of an eye ten years have gone by, and everything is still the same. I am even more regretful. I am ashamed of having excessive wishes and lacking the power to fulfill them. The soldiers and generals of your honorable country are excellently trained on the model of Western methods; in all kinds of policies and administration, you are advancing daily to newer and more prosperous planes. This time, when I went to Peking and talked to scholars and officials, I found that some of them have also thoroughly realized that our country definitely should undergo reform before we can stand on our own feet.

Itō: "The providence of heaven has no affection, except for the virtuous." If your honorable country wishes to exert itself to action, Heaven above would certainly help your honorable country to fulfill its desires. It is be-

cause Heaven treats the people below [i.e., mankind] without discrimination. The essential thing is that each country should do its own best.

Li: Your honorable country, after it has been so reorganized by you, sir, is very admirable. . . [The conversation then turned to other topics.]

c. *The Alliance with Russia*

As Lin Tse-hsü and Wei Yuan had pointed out more than fifty years before, the barbarian menace could be met partly by borrowing the superior military methods of the Western powers or, alternatively, by using one power against another. For a whole generation, from 1860 to 1894, China's leaders had aimed at self-strengthening with Western help, chiefly the help of Britain in the customs administration as well as in the naval program. By 1895, Japan had blown this program to pieces. British opinion had suffered disillusionment over China and was beginning the shift that led eventually to the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902, while the other powers, especially Germany, were developing the tendencies that soon led to the scramble for concessions and the threatened partition of China in 1898. In this situation China turned to Russia as a potential ally to check Japan. Without attempting to explore the complex diplomacy of the period, we quote memorials of two influential provincial leaders and present also the text of the secret treaty of 1896, which has not been widely available in English. While Li Hung-chang performed the act of "inviting the Russian bear into the parlor" in China's northeastern provinces, it is apparent that other high officials, not of his camp, supported the step. Thus the Chinese people's potential base for future industrial development was drawn irrevocably into the vortex of power politics.

DOC. 36. LIU K'UN-I'S SECRET PROPOSAL, JULY 1895¹⁵

Liu K'un-i, Imperial Commissioner and Governor-general of Liang-chiang, submits a secret report of a great plan to ally with Russia for opposing Japan, in order to consolidate the defense of the second capital [Fengtien, whither the Court had fled] and to strengthen the whole situation:

Your minister notes that diplomatic relations between Chinese and foreigners have continued for thirty years until the present day, when the matter is even more difficult to handle. China's use of hard and soft policies should stress their modification according to the times. The chances of all countries being friendly or hostile to us are guided by circumstance. After the war in Annam, when China failed to handle the issue properly, we were considerably despised by all countries. This time, when we negotiated peace with Japan, we made too many compromises which encouraged the gradual inception of a waylaying policy — glaring at us like tigers, all the various powers seek to find a plump spot to bite into us. We estimate that our power is inferior to theirs, so we must quickly make an international alliance as a means of seeking assistance.

According to your minister's humble understanding, the impending disaster from other countries is still slow in coming, but that from Japan is imminent. This is because she is close to us; after she has obtained Taiwan and Liaotung, the way for her entrance will be even more convenient, as if her army could start directly from our pillow and mat — it can invade any part of our territory at will. . . But Russia does not want Japan to be strong,

and Japan's invasion of our Three Eastern Provinces [Manchuria] makes Russia even more jealous. Thus, by the Sino-Japanese peace treaty [of Shimonoseki] we had already ceded Liaotung to Japan, but Russia, France, and Germany compelled her to return it to China. Is Russia doing this especially for us? She is, at the same time, working for herself. If we take this opportunity to establish close relations with her, for mutual assistance, and also give her some concessions, Russia will surely be glad to comply. Even though this move cannot protect our various coastal provinces, Japan certainly will not dare to covet the territory of the Three Eastern Provinces, which are close to Russia. . . . If these provinces were lost, how could the dynasty maintain its foundation, and how could our Emperor face his ancestors? That is why, whenever your minister thinks of this, he cannot keep his heart from palpitating and his muscles from twitching.

Some people say that Russia is adjacent to the widest stretch of Chinese territory and that in the future she will certainly do harm to China. Heretofore, your minister was also of the same opinion. Now he is inclined to think that this statement is wrong. It also depends upon how we are going to console or control her. Russia's territory is already very large and, moreover, she is well known for her good faith and righteousness. She has had good relations with us for two hundred years and several decades, during which time there was no war at all. This is really a rare thing in all times. Formerly [1881] she returned Ili [p. 21] to us, and this time she coöperated with France and Germany to struggle against Japan for the return of Liaotung to China, an even greater favor than before; and yet some suspect her of having other ambitions, and would no longer associate with her in sincerity. That is, the nation which is coöperative with us, we keep at a distance; and toward the nation which is magnanimous to us, we are stingy. Soon they will say that it is not worthwhile to help China, and our position will become even more isolated. . . .

As long as Sino-Russian relations are permanently solid, Japan and other countries will have scruples and will not go to the extreme of considering China non-existent, and cunningly seek to start trouble. . . .

DOC. 37. CHANG CHIH-TUNG'S MEMORIAL OF AUGUST 1895¹⁶

To save the critical situation today, nothing is better than the conclusion of a secret treaty of alliance with a strong power for assistance. From ancient times, whenever nations have opposed each other, as if with horns, they usually have used the policy of allying with a distant country to attack an enemy nearby. With regard to the Sino-Japanese situation today, this policy is even more suitable. China's power today [p. 36] can never oppose simultaneously all the nations in the East and West. . . .

I understand that the tendency of foreign countries in recent years has been to establish particularly close relations with one or two others among all the countries which have general relations. In time of peace they make secret treaties in advance, and in wartime they aid one another with military provisions and armaments. If there is no secret treaty, then when something happens they remain neutral and will not interfere.

Now if we wish to make a treaty, and to have a bond for mutual assistance, naturally Russia is most convenient for us, because England uses commerce to absorb the profits of China, France uses religion to entice the Chinese people, Germany has no common territorial boundary with us, and the United States does not like to interfere in others' military affairs. It is difficult for all of these nations to discuss an alliance with us. It is known that Russia, as China's neighbor, has kept treaty agreements with us for more than two hundred years, and that she has never embarked on hostilities; she is different from other countries who have frequently resorted to warfare with us. Moreover, her behavior is grand and generous, and cannot be compared with that of the Europeans. For example, in the church case at Tientsin in 1870, in which all the countries were busy making a clamor, Russia did not participate; and in the treaties over Ili [1879 and 1881] our nation completely refused and then modified the eighteen articles, and Russia generously consented. This time she has demanded the return of the territory of Liaotung for us; although she did it for the sake of the general situation in the East, yet China has already actually received the benefit. Japan's spearhead has been slightly blunted by this. In comparison with other countries who acted as bystanders, putting their hands in their sleeves, and covertly planning for commercial profits, Russia shows a great difference.

It is just the right time for us to take this opportunity and work vigorously for an alliance, deepening our friendship and making a secret treaty with her. In everything concerning Russian commercial affairs and boundary matters, we should make some compromises. If Russia resorts to warfare in the East, we should aid her navy with coal and food, permitting her war vessels to enter our dockyards for repairs. On land we must permit her to use our roads, supply her with resources, food, vehicles and horses; in accordance with her reliance on our supplies we should offer her coöperation and subsidy according to our means. But we should have it settled in the contract that in case China is attacked, Russia will have to help us with armed forces, of which the most important is the navy. We must also make a decision during our conference with Russia concerning the method of compensating her, because Russia is very suspicious that England dominates the situation in the East. If China and Russia form an alliance, English influence will be considerably curbed; and Russia would be willing to accommodate us.

After all, it is not easy for China to train a navy. If we have the Russians to aid us, in the future, regardless of what country may start hostilities with us, after a few weeks several tens of Russian warships could be sent to patrol the Eastern seas. Thus we can prepare only the strategy of war on land, and our enemy cannot plan to invade the interior deeply. This is the crucial point in our international relations and the most important policy for saving the critical situation.

With regard to the foreign countries, China has always treated them on the same level. Thus, during the last time [presumably, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894] there was no one to help us. Such matters must be prepared in advance [p. 37] during days of peace, and at present our plan for alliance should absolutely not be delayed. It behooves us to request an Imperial

decree to order the princes and high ministers to deliberate secretly and conclude the matter carefully. But by no means should we ever let Robert Hart [the British Inspector General of Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, 1863-1908] hear of it, lest he be jealous, impede us, and spoil the matter. Reverently memorialized, August 8, 1895.

The treaty concluded by Li Hung-chang on his visit to Russia to attend the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II was reported at the time by British correspondents, evidently on a basis of rumor. In 1922 its content was briefly announced by the Chinese delegation at the Washington Conference, but we have not found an exact translation of the Chinese text in previously published works. Judging by the memorials of Liu and Chang just quoted, China got the military agreement they desired, but at the price of strategic, if not indeed territorial, concessions which set an almost disastrous pattern for the future.

DOC. 38. TEXT OF THE SINO-RUSSIAN SECRET TREATY OF 1896¹⁷

His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of China and His Imperial Majesty the Tsar of Russia, desiring to maintain the present situation of peace in the Far East, and to prevent future aggression by other powers upon the territory of Asia, have determined to conclude a treaty of mutual assistance. Therefore, His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of China has specially appointed His Excellency Li Hung-chang, Imperial Commissioner and Plenipotentiary of the first class, Grand Tutor of the Heir Apparent, Grand Secretary of the Wen-hua Palace, Stern-and-resolute Earl of the first rank, and Superintendent of Trade for the Northern Ports; and His Imperial Majesty the Tsar of Russia has specially appointed Prince Lobanov, Imperial Commissioner and Plenipotentiary, Foreign Minister, member of the Cabinet and of the Imperial Council and Privy Councillor, and (Count) Witte, Imperial Commissioner and Plenipotentiary, Finance Minister, member of the Cabinet and Privy Councillor, as their respective plenipotentiaries, who, having exchanged and examined their credentials and found them in proper form, agree to the following stipulations:

Article I. In the event of a Japanese invasion of the territory of Russia in Eastern Asia, or the territory of China, or the territory of Korea, the present treaty shall be considered as having been involved, and measures shall be taken according to the treaty. In such an event both contracting powers promise to dispatch all the military and naval forces that can be mobilized for mutual assistance; they shall also supply each other with munitions and provisions as far as possible.

Article II. Having entered into the present treaty of mutual defense, neither contracting power can conclude a separate peace agreement with the enemy without mutual consultation.

Article III. Should an emergency arise during the war, Russian warships shall be allowed to enter all ports on the coast of China; in case of need, the local authorities shall give aid to the best of their ability.

Article IV. In order in the future to facilitate the rapid and safe transportation of Russian troops for opposing the enemy, and for the supply of

munitions and provisions, the Chinese Government agrees to let Russia construct a railway through the territory of Heilungkiang and Kirin to connect with Vladivostok. However, the construction of this railway is not to be used as a pretext for the infringement of Chinese territory, or for encroachment on the lawful rights and privileges of H. I. M. the Emperor of China. The Chinese Government will entrust the Russo-Chinese Bank with the management of the (railway) matter. The Chinese Minister to Russia and the Bank shall consult on the spot and decide upon the terms of the contract.

Article V. When Russia is engaged in the defensive measures against the enemy provided for in Article I, she may use the railway as provided in Article IV for the transportation of troops, provisions, and munitions. In peace time Russia may also use this railway for troops and provisions in transit. Apart from temporary stops due to changes of trains, they shall not be allowed to stop over for any other reason.

Article VI. The agreement shall be effective for fifteen years, beginning with the date on which the contract mentioned in Article IV shall have been ratified and put into effect. Six months before the expiration of this treaty, the two contracting powers shall negotiate for its extension.

Special provision: The plenipotentiaries of both contracting powers agree that the Sino-Russian treaty concluded on this day¹⁸ shall be rendered into the Chinese and French languages in duplicate copies, to be signed and have seals affixed. The Chinese and French copies have been compared and found to be without error. In case of dispute the French text shall be the decisive version.

Concluded on the 22nd day, 4th month, and 22nd year of Kuang-hsü, which is May 22, 1896 (o.s.) [June 3, 1896], at Moscow.