

CHINA KNOWLEDGE SERIES

A SHORT HISTORY
OF
CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

HOU WAL-LU

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
PEKING

Written for popular reading *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* outlines the development of Chinese philosophy from the ancient to the modern times. It describes the controversies between materialism and idealism, and between dialectics and metaphysics, which run through the history of Chinese philosophical thought. It discusses the important philosophers of each period and their materialist or idealist, their progressive, conservative or reactionary standpoints. The book also gives a brief analysis of the historical and economic background from which the various schools of thought sprang.

A great deal of space is devoted to contemporary Chinese philosophy with emphasis on the works of Mao Tse-tung during the past period of democratic revolution and the present period of socialist revolution.

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HOU WAI-LU
IN COLLABORATION WITH
CHANG CHI-CHIH, LI HSUEH-CHIN,
YANG CHAO AND LIN YING



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Translated by
WANG CHENG-CHUNG

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Foreword

Chinese philosophy has long been omitted from the histories of philosophy written by Western bourgeois scholars. At the same time there are "national characteristics" groups¹ of both traditional and modern type in China who vaunt the superiority of Chinese philosophy, making no distinction between its merits and defects and enshrouding it in an air of mystery. Those who omit it entirely and those who claim the superiority of Chinese philosophy appear to belong to two opposing camps, but they actually complement each other — they are in short all idealists. This is at once apparent when we see that in dealing with the problem of accepting our cultural heritage the imperialists and the feudal reactionaries form a close alliance and support each other in their views. The real polarity is between these idealist distorters of the history of Chinese philosophy and those who have tried to make a really scientific analysis of its development.

In the course of its continuous development over a period of some four thousand years, there have been, in Chinese philosophy as in the philosophies of other nations, two different national cultures and two opposing

¹The name given to several groups who advocated a revival of feudal culture. In their blind worship of ancient things, they in fact extolled the past at the expense of the present. Being against the course of historical development their views were not progressive. Such dregs of the historical heritage could only lead people to look backwards and divorce themselves from practical realities.

schools of thought constantly warring with each other: the feudal, bourgeois, reactionary culture and the democratic, socialist, revolutionary culture; the idealist, metaphysical theory and the dialectical, materialist theory. Revolutionary culture with its materialism grew and matured in its struggle against the reactionary one with its idealism.

In the realm of philosophy the Chinese people have a heritage, varied and rich in content and no less praiseworthy than that of any other people. Engels told us that to improve our theoretical and speculative ability we must study the history of philosophy. He also pointed out that to enable ourselves to wage a more effective struggle today we must draw on the experience gained and lessons learned in the struggle between materialism and idealism in the past.

The great materialist thinkers of China have shown marvellous courage in their stormy struggles against the hostile idealists as may be seen from the historical records. They dared to destroy superstition, raise new problems, seek the truth, and through their creative thought they achieved remarkable progress. They skillfully used the methods of their forerunners and gave new content to old forms making them accord with the spirit of their times. In this respect they may be said to have both inherited from the past and bequeathed to the future. Using philosophy as an instrument they expressed the ideals of the progressive class and held high the torch of a glorious tradition. With an open mind, they absorbed the good elements of foreign cultures and combined them with the realities of Chinese history. Such effort becomes especially noteworthy as we come to more recent times.

With the spread of Marxism in China Mao Tse-tung, inheriting the excellent tradition of Chinese philosophy, developed Marxism in the practice of the Chinese revolution. The philosophy of Mao Tse-tung is the culmination of the wisdom of the Chinese people. It is the one and only correct theory by which the Chinese proletariat and the entire body of the Chinese working people effected their liberation.

This book is an attempt to write a brief history of Chinese philosophy in line with the above.

Hou Wai-lu

Peking,
June 11, 1958

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1. The Origin and Development of Philosophy in the Yin and Chou Dynasties; and the "Hundred Schools" of the Warring States Period

We are as yet unable to say for certain when class society began in China. Archaeological researches have shown, however, that as early as the 16th century B.C., i.e. at the end of the Hsia and in the early years of the Shang dynasty, the people of the Shang tribe in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River left traces of their advance towards a civilized society. Practically no written records of the Hsia and the earlier period of the Shang dynasty are yet available. The earliest written materials we possess now belong to the latter part of the Shang dynasty, commonly known in history books as the Yin dynasty (13th-12th century B.C.). This is the reason why this review of the development of Chinese thought has to start with the Yin period.

In the Yin dynasty, the early period of slave society, religion and witchcraft occupied a dominant place in man's world outlook. The Yin people believed in the existence of two worlds: An "upper" world of the gods and a "lower" world of man. Using the ruling body of their own society as a model, they conceived of an image of a "ruler,"* who was the supreme power in the "upper"

*In this book an asterisk indicates that Chinese names with transliteration are given in the index.

world, with a host of deities, who were his subordinates. The King of Yin called himself a descendant of the "ruler" and his agent on earth. By means of religion he initiated the idea of a super-social power, i.e. the power of a ruler. The people of Yin were also worshippers of nature. The sun, the wind, the Yellow River, and the big mountains were all objects of their devotion.

The Yin people did have a certain amount of scientific knowledge but it was inextricably mixed up with religion. During the Yin dynasty astronomy, mathematics and the art of calendar-making were fairly well developed and the classification of natural phenomena was also fairly detailed and accurate. The arts of metallurgy and bronze-casting reached a high level of excellence. But so far as materials are available we have as yet found no definite indication of a moral code, nothing relating to rights and duties.

Towards the end of the 12th century B.C. there emerged in the valley of the Wei River a group of tribes known as Chou the members of which had hitherto been culturally backward. These tribes were originally subordinate to the tribe of Yin. Both under King Wu and King Cheng, the Chou tribes launched expeditions to the east against the Yin conquering and making the latter and their allies their tribal slaves. The Kingdom of Chou was founded and an early form of slavery was adopted. The Chou rulers inherited but reformed the various institutions of Yin. This resulted in major political changes which in turn resulted in some changes of ideology.

The reason why the Chou inherited the culture of the Yin was because their own cultural level was lower in many respects. But in some ways they retained their own characteristics and made changes in the Yin culture

adapting it to their own needs. This was shown by the historical tradition that the Duke of Chou, younger brother of King Wu, and Regent during minority of King Cheng after King Wu's death, formulated rites* and music.* The Chou rulers continued to make use of the concept of the "ruler" in the hope of maintaining their own power. They created new concepts of "virtue"* and "mandate of heaven,"* stating that the Yin rulers were overthrown by order of heaven because they had forsaken virtue, and that the Chou rulers were given mandate of heaven because they were virtuous. So the fall of Yin and the rise of Chou was a decision made by the "ruler's" will. Virtue means "to worship heaven" and "care of the people." The rulers were required to discipline themselves by strict class "rites," so as to consolidate their rule. These "rites" were the earliest moral concepts of the ruling clan and were exclusively aristocratic codes reflecting the political system of a slave-owning autocracy.

By the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. when the Western Chou¹ was nearing its end the clan-slavery system had become an impediment to the productive forces causing a crisis in labour power. Owing to a process of social differentiation a stratum of people known as freemen* appeared. Gradually through struggle these people acquired the right to own property and participate in political affairs. A form of slave system was then in the process of developing. From the viewpoint of the de-

¹Historians usually divide the Chou dynasty into two major periods: the Western Chou (c. 11th century to 771 B.C.) when the national capital was at Haoching (now Sian) and the Eastern Chou (770-221 B.C.) when it was at Loyi (now Loyang).

clining clan aristocrats society was going to the dogs. Through their poems and songs they expressed sharp complaints and doubts about heaven, gods, and their ancestors, who were unable to protect them any longer from losing their rights and privileges. Hence, scepticism and humanism prevailed in their thinking.

With the old religious world outlook tottering, rudimentary materialism based on the already accumulated knowledge of natural science found expression. Thus during the reign of King Hsuan towards the end of the Western Chou dynasty Po, the official historian, taught that metal, wood, water, fire and earth were the fundamental elements of which the world was made. It was from this that the later Theory of the Five Elements* originated. Kuo Wen Kung,* a minister of King Hsuan, and Pai Yang Fu,* official historian to King Yu, believed that there were two natural forces, the positive* and negative,* opposite and at the same time complementary to each other. All natural calamities, according to them, were due not to supernatural powers, but to the loss of balance between these two forces. This idea later gave rise to the Theory of the Positive and Negative Forces.* Both this theory and the Theory of the Five Elements were much elaborated during the period of Spring and Autumn (770-475 B.C.). The initiators of these two forms of rudimentary materialism were mainly the official historians, who were in charge of divination and witchcraft and the official physicians. They had a certain amount of knowledge of the natural science but they could not separate their scientific knowledge from religion and mythology.

With the gradual development of such rudimentary materialism, the simplest form of atheism came into

being. It denied the existence of a heavenly mandate, of gods and spirits. In the early stages of its development the terms "heaven" and "gods" were still used though no longer in their former sense. "The way of heaven is far and the way of man is near," said Kung-sun Chiao,* a statesman of the Cheng State. "The people are the masters of the gods," said Chi Liang* of the Sui State. These atheistic views, expressed in a round-about way, attached importance to the role of man and treated lightly that of the gods. There was something revolutionary about them as compared with the all-pervading religious world outlook of the Western Chou dynasty.

From the last years of the Western Chou dynasty to the Spring and Autumn Period the landownership and political power monopolized by the Chou rulers gradually slipped into the hands of their subordinates. In their efforts to break the barrier of the clannish patriarchal social system the freemen stepped on to the stage of history. In 770 B.C. nomadic tribes from the west invaded the Kingdom of Chou. King Ping was forced to move his capital to the east and to seek help from the vassals of his own clan. Most of the cultural objects of the Western Chou dynasty were lost in the turmoil. This signified the decline of the Chou rule. Education and knowledge, which had hitherto been a monopoly of the clan aristocracy, gradually spread and was shared by the lower classes. Towards the end of the Spring and Autumn Period private education was given to the hereditary official scholars of the Lu State which retained a part of Western Chou culture. The pioneers of private education were the Confucians* and a little later the Mohists*

whose teachings were known as the Confucian and Mohist "illustrious learning."

The founder of the former school of thought was Confucius* (c. 551-479 B.C.), who tried to preserve the interests of the declining clan aristocracy. Owing to the rising power of the freemen, however, he was forced to make certain concessions to them. There were, therefore, also some progressive ideas in his teachings. This resulted in a series of contradictions in his thought which manifestly expressed themselves in his Doctrine of the Mean, which was full of compromises. Confucius' world outlook was rehashed mainly from the world outlook prevalent in the Western Chou dynasty. He too was a believer in heaven, a ruler with will-power, though endowed with certain natural attributes and he was a defender of the traditional patriarchal system of the Western Chou dynasty. He added, however, a moral and spiritual content to the prevailing "rites" and "music," which by then had become quite formalistic. The highest moral concept Confucius dwelled upon was "love" or "benevolence,"* a moral standard attainable by all men, which he even extended to the freemen. But he also associated "love" with "rites" which were formerly a monopoly of the aristocracy. In his theory of knowledge Confucius believed in innate knowledge though he also stressed experience and practice. Confucius was, however, an innovator in the theory of education. It was here that he showed a certain degree of progressive thinking. He believed that, except for the most and the least wise who could not change, men closely resembled each other in their original natures but in their acquired practices they grew widely apart.

After Confucius, came a rival school, the Mohists. The Mohist school of thought was founded by Mo Ti (c. 480-397 B.C.), who represented the interests of the rising class of freemen. He was against the despotic rule of the clan aristocracy and stood for the democratic system of ancient times. He opposed the idea of a heavenly mandate by which the ruling class deceived the people. Although he also used the terms heaven and spirits he stripped them of their religious connotation. In his theory of knowledge, he put forward a materialist principle that the world of reality should be taken as the point of departure. He seemed to respect the sage-kings¹ but these were actually his own creations which he used as a means of argument. Mo Ti was a stern critic of Confucianism because it represented the interests of the clan aristocracy, especially with regard to the theory of knowledge. He pitted his materialist theory against the idealism of the Confucians. He laid stress on perceptions and impressions which he considered to be the foundation of knowledge. In declaring his philosophical theory he frequently drew illustrations from actual human experiences such as hunger, cold, warmth, satiety, poverty, wealth, nobility, lowliness, communication, etc. Mo Ti and his followers formed a political body with rigid organization and discipline.

The efforts of the early Confucians and Mohists represented the primary stage of private schools. They reasoned about moral institutions governing human rela-

¹ During the Western Chou dynasty, the clan aristocrats worshipped their ancestors, principally King Wen and King Wu. This tradition was followed by Confucius. It was a reflection of the rule of the clan aristocrats.

tions by their knowledge of nature. But they lacked the ability to carry on full philosophical deliberations.

During the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.), especially during the third century B.C., the use of iron implements became more general. With the rapid progress made by the productive forces, agricultural and handicraft production methods were reformed. This led to private ownership of land and drastic changes in class relations. These political and economic changes, however, were reflected ideologically in the emergence of the "Hundred Schools" contending with one another.

Let us take up the more important of these schools one by one. First, the Taoists. The book called *Lao-tzu* or *The Way and Its Power*,* probably written in the Warring States Period, is the earliest piece of Taoist literature. Lao Tzu,* believed to be the author, is usually considered as belonging to the Spring and Autumn Period though the book bearing his name was a much later product. Taken as a whole, the philosophy of Lao Tzu was an idealist one. He considered "the Way" or "truth"* as a transcendental absolute. However, he discussed natural laws governing the growth and development of all things in combination with "power"* and thus showed that he accepted some elements of materialism. Lao Tzu rejected the worship of the sage-kings and opposed the crude form of belief in the existence of gods. As such, his was a development of the criticism of the Confucian and Mohist theories. But in many other ways he was still a mystic. "The Way," he said, "produces oneness, oneness produces duality, duality produces triplicity, and triplicity produces everything." In his theory of knowledge Lao Tzu was an intuitionist. In his book *The Way and Its*

Power he disclosed and analysed the antagonistic contradictions between various things. This shows that his philosophy contained rudiments of dialectics but he attempted to resolve contradictions by subjective methods. He also taught men to take humiliation with a good grace and be pliant in their outlook on life. This is clearly seen in his political theory. He stood for the restoration of a primitive form of social life to relieve the existing social strife and conflicts. This reflected the feelings of the peasants of the recently collapsed tribal communes and their naive attitude of non-resistance.

Chuang Chou (c. 360-280 B.C.), better known as Chuang Tzu,* was the second greatest Taoist after Lao Tzu. His philosophy was a form of subjective idealism. He believed that matter was merely an illusion or unreal and that the final cause of matter was the indescribable "Way." He was an agnostic and denied the knowability of the material world, saying that the reflections of the material world in man's mind are nothing but hypotheses freely affirmed. Therefore, a knowledge of the real nature of things may be acquired only if the mind is in a state of absolute tranquillity, as still as water and as clear as a mirror. Starting from the principle of relativity, Chuang Tzu inferred that there was equality of all things and he opposed the transformation of nature. His philosophy of life — satisfaction with the things as they were — inevitably leads to pessimism and philistinism.

Another group of Taoists was represented by Sung Chien* and Yin Wen.* They held that "the Way" is really innate in man. The human mind is identical with "the Way" and so long as the mind is pure it is able to know "the Way" in its entirety. The difference between Sung Chien and Yin Wen on the one hand and Lao Tzu

and Chuang Tzu on the other was that the former supported benevolence, justice,* rites and law* and believed that the metaphysical, natural qualities are superseded by moral qualities. Thus, they endowed themselves with the colours of objective idealism.

The doctrines of Yang Chu* have a close connection with the Taoist School, especially with that of Chuang Tzu. We know little about the life of Yang Chu but from the scanty material now available we know that he was an egoist. He and his followers stressed the importance of life and self-interest. This, however, with regard to the relation between thought and existence, is a materialist principle, by which they actually meant that man is an organ of senses and simply remains such. Accordingly, they said that all man cared for were material benefits for his senses upon which they based their moral code. Yang Chu's ethical theory was directly opposite to the "heaven-inspired" ethical theory of the idealists. It was in a certain sense progressive in that it reflected the desire of the freemen of that time to seek personal interest.

During the Warring States Period both the Confucian and Mohist Schools of thought were split into a number of minor ones. Among the Confucians the Schools of Mencius* (c. 390-305 B.C.) and Hsun Ching* were most famous. Mencius inherited the teachings of Tseng Sen,* one of the best-known disciples of Confucius and Kung Chi,* the grandson of Confucius. He was much influenced by the teachings of Sung Chien and Yin Wen and believed in the mystical theory that human nature was essentially good, without offering any convincing proof. He thought that every man has the innate power to distinguish right from wrong. It followed, therefore, that in acquiring

knowledge man need not make an effort to know the objective reality, but he should rather separate himself from it, in order to restore his sense of right or wrong. With a "perfectly pure mind," he said, it was possible to acquire the true "understanding of human nature" and then, a man was capable of "knowing heaven" and becoming one with it. In his idealist reasoning Mencius used a logic which savours of strained sophistry.

During the middle and latter part of the Warring States Period a sophist school came to the fore, known as the School of Names,* represented by Hui Shih* (c. 365-310 B.C.) and Kungsun Lung* (c. 320-250 B.C.). The theory of Hui Shih was close to that of the Taoists, especially the School of Chuang Tzu. He combined relativism with his sophistic reasoning. He exaggerated the identity of things and ignored their difference. Kungsun Lung held an entirely different view: he exaggerated the difference of things and ignored their identity. He was therefore an absolutist. Although Hui Shih and Kungsun Lung held opposite views, nevertheless they were idealists. They both ignored objective reality and laid undue emphasis on one aspect of subjective knowledge. It is true that they had a little knowledge of natural science but they made that knowledge serve the cause of their own mistaken views.

Using the sophist's methods of reasoning Hui Shih and Kungsun Lung put forward many absurd propositions. Hui Shih, for instance, said that "white dogs are black" (because both white and black dogs are dogs) and "dogs can be sheep" (because both dogs and sheep are quadrupeds). This kind of reasoning violated the law of identity and the fundamental rules of logical reasoning. Hui Shih was really trying to derive a uni-

versal and definite conclusion from two particular propositions. That is to say, it is utterly impossible to reach the conclusion that "dogs can be sheep" from the two premises: "dogs are animals" and "sheep are animals."

Kungsun Lung also wrote certain sophist theses. Two of his better known discourses are: "white horses are not horses" and "chickens are three-legged." He explained that the concept of "horse" embraces brown and black horses while that of "white horse" does not, and that chickens are three-legged because they have two actual legs and an additional quality of leggedness. In this way abstract concepts are made to contrast with concrete things.

The later Mohists, who also flourished in the Warring States Period, had some elementary knowledge of several sciences including mechanics and geometry. They did away with the earlier Mohists' concepts of "heaven," "spirits," and "sage-kings," and further developed the materialist doctrine of the Mohist School. In their theory of knowledge they believed that the material world is knowable and that objective reality is the direct source of knowledge. They pointed out, however, that the process of acquiring knowledge is not entirely a passive one but has its more important active aspect, which is man's initiative. Perceptual knowledge is only possible through the contact of sensory organs with objective reality, and perceptual knowledge must undergo the process of being thought about and analysed before it becomes rational or real knowledge. The later Mohists divided knowledge into five kinds: hearing, inference, personal experience, correspondence of names with actualities, and action. They regarded action, or practice as a most reliable source of knowledge and indeed the basis of all knowledge.

In accordance with their materialist principles the later Mohists sharply criticized the sophistry of the School of Names. The sophists' propositions, they said, were merely a play on concepts and violated the fundamental principle of logic, i.e. propositions must tally with facts. They also used the law of contradiction in formal logic to show that the sophists were playing with words and trying to obliterate the distinction between right and wrong. The later Mohists made great contributions to the development of logic in ancient China.

After the middle of the Spring and Autumn Period the conflict between the concepts of "rites" and "law," both being forms of ancient rights, began to come to the fore. "Rites" differentiated between the class status of the aristocracy and the rabble according to the clan division, while "law" denied the inherited privileges of the aristocrats and protected the equality of freemen. Some of the states had already inscribed their laws on bronze as early as the middle of the Spring and Autumn Period. These laws recognized the equal social status of the freemen though the aristocracy was strongly opposed to them. The Legalists,* who stood for the rule of law, represented the interests of the freemen. Most of them came from the three states of Han, Chao, and Wei. Their most famous representatives were Li Kuei,* Shen Pu-hai,* Wu Chi,* and Shang Yang* (c. 390-338 B.C.), the last mentioned serving the state of Chin as a minister. There were also a number of Legalists in the state of Chi, Peng Meng* and Shen Tao* being two of the better known, who combined the Taoists' concept of "the Way" with their own concept of "law" and "statecraft."* These new concepts were named "the Way and the law"* and "the Way and statecraft."*

In the later years of the Warring States Period Chinese society began to change from slavery to feudalism. In the intellectual circles a tendency emerged to synthesize the multifarious doctrines of the "Hundred Schools." The scholars at this time who tried to summarize the various ideas of ancient Chinese philosophy were Hsun Ching and Han Fei.*

Hsun Ching (c. 340-245 B.C.) belonged to the School of Confucianism. He raised sharp criticisms and passed general judgements on all the schools of thought of the Warring States Period including some of the minor schools of Confucianism. He was against idealism. His attacks on the idealism of the Mencius School constituted the climax of the conflict between materialism and idealism in the Warring States Period. His theory of "the way of heaven" was materialist and atheist. He absorbed the naturalism of the Taoists and considered "heaven" as a material product of natural law. He stood for the conquest and exploitation of nature by man. His theory of knowledge was also a gem in the treasury of materialism. He said that man possessed the reflective ability which gave him power over the objective world. Real knowledge meant the correct use of this power in finding out the laws of the objective world.

Regarding human nature, Hsun Ching believed that men were born equal. He criticized the Mencius theory that "man is good by nature," and advocated that man naturally "loves profit and dislikes the unpleasant" and therefore "the real nature of man is evil." His theory was progressive from the historical viewpoint, and was easier to combine with practice. In his political theory Hsun Ching opposed the traditional worship of the "sage-kings" and held that "later kings" should be held up as

models. He partially accepted the teachings of the Legalists on "law and statecraft" and enlarged the Confucian concept of "rites" to include the concept of "law." In criticizing the Sophists he pointed out that names should tally with facts, and thus made some contributions to the development of Chinese logic.

Han Fei (c. 280-233 B.C.), a disciple of Hsun Ching, further developed the doctrine of "law and statecraft" of his master's teachings and summarized the concepts of the Legalist School. While inheriting the teachings of the Legalists of the three states of Han, Chao, and Wei, Han Fei also borrowed freely from the Taoists, Mohists, and Sophists. However, he critically improved Lao Tzu's naturalist concept of "the way of heaven" and expanded the materialist elements in philosophical thinking. He stressed the importance of practice in testing the correctness of theories and considered knowledge from a simple evolutionary viewpoint to be a developing process.

Representing the interest of the freemen, Han Fei said that human nature is selfish and human society a battleground of calculating minds. In political affairs he stressed the importance of the absolute predominance of "law" and "statecraft" and advocated the establishment of a social system based on centralization and social contract which was a combination of the two. This was the doctrine of social contract in its earliest embryonic stage.

Late in the Warring States Period there appeared another school of thought known as the Diplomatists.* They represented the merchants and usurious money-lenders and most of them succeeded in entering the political arena. They prided themselves on being the cleverest

men. They were practically all idealists and were skilful in the sophist art of being equivocal and double-tongued. Taking advantage of the confusion in society they put forward all kinds of catchy policies, such as "active co-existence" and "attack the nearby countries and make friends with those far away."

With the advance of the feudal social system in the later Warring States Period thought tended to deteriorate into philistinism. Tsou Yen* (c. 305-240 B.C.) was the representative of the School of Positive and Negative Forces,* which was the last to appear during that period. He picked up the Theories of Positive and Negative Forces and the Five Elements of unadorned materialism, combining them in a fantastic way into a cosmic structure with heaven, a God possessing human personality at the top ruling over all the people below. This school perpetuated the Mencius doctrines, advocated the unity of heaven and man and believed in their mutual influence. It declared that the course of history was cyclical and predestined. During the period of the Warring States and between the Chin and Han dynasties its idealist system had a great influence on the thought of a certain school of Confucians whose philosophy was based on the *Appendices of the Book of Changes*.* Later in the Han dynasty it became a source of inspiration to believers in divinations and distorted commentaries.¹

There is another important aspect of the history of philosophy in this period.

During the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States Periods Chinese society was developing rapidly and the people lived in continual turmoil. Attempting to rid

¹ See Chapter 2.

themselves of the serious contradictions which arose in their class society, they dreamed of and hoped for a "cosmopolitan society" free from class conflict and their thinking was reflected in the writings of certain schools of thought.

The Mohists, for instance, had put forward the idea of "similarity" in an ideal society. In it men were not differentiated by close or distant relationship. People loved what was beneficial to them and everyone worked and divided all their gains. There was no exploitation and no war of plunder.

Lao Tzu's philosophy also contained imaginary Utopias similar in nature to the primitive communes. He spoke of a selfless society in which people "worked but did not own."

Hsu Hsing,* a representative of the School of Agriculturists* and a contemporary of Mencius, advocated that products derived from toil should belong to the toilers and that those who did not work should not eat. This represented the thought of the poorest peasants in the rural communes. The Agriculturists were against exploitation and class distinction. They were an acute headache to the ruling class of their time.

The latest and most complete system of "cosmopolitanism"* in ancient China appeared in the chapter on the "Evolution of Rites"* in *The Book of Rites*.* This chapter was probably the work of Confucian scholars about the end of the Warring States Period or sometime between the Chin and Han dynasties. The following passage deals with a "cosmopolitan" society:

When the Great Tao ("the Way" or "truth" — *Tr.*) prevailed, the whole world was one community. Men

of talents and virtue were chosen (to lead the people); their words were sincere and they cultivated harmony. Men treated the parents of others as their own, and cherished the children of others as their own. Competent provision was made for the aged until their death, work for the able-bodied, and the young. Kindness and compassion was shown to widows, orphans, childless men and those disabled by disease, so that all were looked after. Each man had his allotted work, and every woman a home to go to. They disliked to throw valuable things away, but did not mean that they treasured them up in private storehouses. They liked to exert their strength in labour, but that did not mean that they worked for private advantage. In this way selfish schemings were repressed and found no way to arise. Thieves, robbers and traitors did not show themselves, so the outer doors of the houses remained open and were never shut. This was the period of the Great Togetherness.¹

This passage is notable as being a typical description of the "cosmopolitan society" or "world of Great Togetherness." It has always been a popular one and greatly appreciated. It may be pointed out here that the principles of this imaginary "cosmopolitan world" are as follows: (1) In this "cosmopolitan society" the main principle was to make the whole world one community. This society was entirely different from one in which the world is described as belonging to a private family when the Great

¹English translation is taken from Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Cambridge University Press, 1956, Vol. 2, p. 167.

Way had been consigned to oblivion. (2) In the "cosmopolitan society" no wealth or goods were privately owned; they were public property, owned and enjoyed by all. (3) Everyone had to work for the good of all but to work for personal gain was not allowed. (4) Every member was charged with the responsibility of bringing up the young and supporting the old. All able-bodied people worked while those who were disabled were supported at public expense. (5) Human relations transcended formal equality in rights and responsibilities. People loved and helped each other. Throughout such society there was no scheming or cheating nor plundering by robbers and thieves. Life was peaceful and there was no war. (6) All kinds of public welfare work were done by collective effort. Wherever division of labour was advisable, men who had the confidence of the people were chosen for positions of responsibility.

From the theoretical and imaginary "cosmopolitan world" as outlined in this chapter we have a summary of the ideas of "cosmopolitanism" in ancient China. In the description of the excellence of this ideal society in which the whole world was one community, it is obvious that the author of the chapter had absorbed Mohist and Taoist ideas, but he had not gone beyond the confines of Confucianism. He was mainly concerned with how to attain "fairly prosperous conditions"* through the cultivation of the rites; but he was unable to show how to turn such "fairly prosperous conditions" into a life of "Great Togetherness." At the beginning of the chapter the writer pretended that he was quoting Confucius who said: "I, Chiu (i.e. Confucius), am unable to see the time when the Great Way prevailed, nor am I able to see the great period of the Three Dynasties, but I aspire to work for

the attainment of such an age." The writer evidently thought that the society of Great Togetherness in which the whole world was but one community was merely an aspiration, an ideal, a dream, which was so transcendent that it could not be realized.

2. Philosophy in the Middle Ages: Heresy Versus Orthodoxy; Materialism Versus Idealism

After the middle of the Warring States Period the village communes declined, accelerating the development of slavery. But in time the release of the peasants from the village communes, as Marx had pointed out, paved the way for the beginning of the feudal serfdom. During the period between the Chin and Han dynasties the administration of China was divided into prefectures and counties, the countryside becoming the dominant factor in the nation's economic life, of more importance than the cities. Throughout the country the combination of agriculture and handicrafts laid the economic foundation of the feudal system. Feudal ownership developed partly as a result of the emperor rewarding meritorious military services. The big landowners had large numbers of completely dependent serfs toiling for them, who because of their dependence gradually became and remained as the lowest stratum of society. During the reign of Emperor Wu Ti in the Han dynasty the system of feudalism was legalized.

The period from the Chin (221-206 B.C.), through the Han (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), to the middle of the Tang dynasty (618-907) may be called the first period of feudal society in China. During these decades the feudal system of ownership was largely bound together with the mili-

tary system and land rent was to a great extent paid by corvée. The main conflict in society was between the peasants and the feudal ruling class. Intolerable conditions of serfdom and exploitation drove many of the peasants to a life of vagabondage. Many large-scale uprisings were organized but the aim of these did not go beyond a struggle for the right to live and have some personal rights. Meanwhile conflicts also arose in the ranks of the ruling class. The feudal system of landownership allotted manorial estates of various sizes to the aristocratic families among the ruling class, by law, according to their political status and rank. Some of these families, however, gradually appropriated more land and serfs than they were entitled to until the emperor, the biggest landowner in the country, intervened and a sharp political conflict arose between him and the aristocratic families. But since these two had similar interests and were really dependent upon each other for their power, they often settled their differences by compromising.

During the Chin and Han dynasties the philosophy of the Confucians and that of the School of the Positive and Negative Forces merged producing certain philosophical ideas tinged by mysticism and eclecticism. Their basic doctrines were those of historical determinism and the interacting influences of heaven and man. Persons who professed this philosophy frequently used it as a means of flattering the ruling class. In the Han dynasty this philosophy was further elaborated and a type of teleological theology (a doctrine according to which all developments are due to the purpose or design of a supernatural power) veiled behind Confucian Classics

came into existence. This became the orthodox philosophy of the Han dynasty.

The founder of theology in the Han period was Tung Chung-shu* (2nd century B.C.). He was a clever man and knew how to pander to Emperor Wu Ti. He advocated the doctrine that heaven and man (meaning the ruler) influenced each other. "Heaven does not change nor will the Way" — this was his favourite dictum. By this he implied that the feudal order would last for ever. Through theological doctrines concerning the power of heaven he advocated and bolstered the supreme centralized power of the emperor and his absolute patriarchal authority. About the same time Liu An, Prince of Huainan* (?-122 B.C.) called together a group of alchemists and with their help he compiled a book called *The Writings of Huainan** explaining a philosophy which was a mixture of Taoism and the doctrines of the School of the Positive and Negative Forces. Its mystic content was closely related to theology. In politics Liu An attacked the government for its extravagance in spending and for the severity of its penal law.

Ssuma Chien* (c. 145-90 B.C.) was a great historian and materialist thinker of the Han dynasty. He severely criticized the various kinds of mysticism of his day. Conversant with astronomy and the art of calendar-making he was most proficient in the science of history. He hated the predatory rulers and sympathized with the people. Consequently he aroused the enmity of the ruling class which persecuted him cruelly.

Ssuma Chien left to posterity an immortal work called the *Historical Records**. This book reveals the author's keen insight and sympathy with the people. Its analysis of contemporary events was realistic and pro-

found, sparkling with the wisdom of a great materialist thinker. He thought man should study the "reason of things," i.e. natural laws. He was against their mystification and did not believe in the theory of the theologians regarding the mutual influences of heaven and man. He had grave doubts concerning the doctrine of the eternal ways of heaven and did not hesitate to denounce it.

Ssuma Chien's views of history were strongly materialist. He believed, for instance, that the production of the material means of sustenance did not depend upon the government's political power but was merely a natural process of development, as natural as water always flowing to a lower level. The stratification of society into wealthy and poor classes naturally engendered the phenomenon of enslavement. There was no such thing as "heavenly will" or "heavenly mandate," He went so far as to say that the ruling class had a moral code which they taught the people but the ruled also had a moral code with which they asserted their rights and that this was in perfect harmony with natural laws.

The large-scale peasant uprisings in the period between the Eastern and Western Han dynasty shook the very foundations of feudal rule. Facing an ever deepening crisis the ruling class resorted to religion to maintain its power. Divinations and distorted commentaries¹ were widely practised. The confusion of the period was shrouded in the obscurity of religious superstition. The study of the Classics was divided into two schools: the

¹The former contained oracles while the latter was an interpretation of Confucian Classics, making Confucius a god and containing other absurdities.*

Modern Text Classics* and the Ancient Text Classics.* The former used texts written in contemporary characters while the latter used an archaic style, hence their names. The Modern Text School, combined with divinations and distorted commentaries, became orthodox theology while the Ancient Text School tended more or less in their work of editing the Classics towards humanism though they did not reject the main principles of theology. Siding with the Ancient Text School were scholars who came out openly in opposition to the so-called orthodoxy. Their opinions were, of course, branded as heresy. Among these scholars were Yang Hsiung* (53 B.C.-A.D. 18) and Huan Tan* (33 B.C.-A.D. 39). Although Yang Hsiung wrote a book based on the principles of *The Book of Changes** and built up a rather fictitious cosmological system, he was nevertheless strongly against theology and stood for the "natural order." Huan Tan was at first an opponent of the "orthodox" school of thought and later became a materialist. As such he may be said to be the precursor of Wang Chung* (27-107), a great materialist thinker of the Han dynasty.

Huan Tan was the most vigorous in opposing the divinations and distorted commentaries. He was considered as an apostate having no respect for the sages and their teachings. He wrote a book called *New Discourses** which unfortunately was lost. But we know from other sources that it was imbued with a fighting spirit. Starting from the natural principles he opposed the teleology of the theologians. He exposed the myth of the mutual influences of heaven and man, illustrating his argument with facts. He discussed the problem of the growth and development of plants and animals, up-

holding the ancient materialist world outlook which made matter* the basis of all things in the universe. He pointed out the dependence of mind on body, comparing the latter to a candle and the former to the flame. He said that death is like the extinguishing of a candle. Huan Tan's materialist theory later became the cornerstone of anti-religious and atheistic thought in the Middle Ages. In the teachings of Wang Chung, to whom we shall come presently, it was further developed and greatly elaborated.

Wang Chung came from a poor family without social prestige or influence, and the traditional spirit of his family, somewhat like that of the Mohists, had always been antagonistic to the powerful clans, generous, just, and sympathetic with the underdog. Many notable characters in history came from humble origins and Wang Chung is one of the glorious examples of such men in the sphere of philosophy. In his youth he led a wanderer's life in Loyang, then the capital of China. He had no money and could not afford to buy books, so he roamed the bookstores and received his education through the generosity of the book-sellers. Later he held several posts as a petty official. "I own not a single plot of land," he once said, "and hold no office with even such a small salary as a single picul of grain." He remained poor to the end of his life when, as a refugee, he suffered greatly from hunger and cold. But his spirit never flagged. He was a fighter for truth. He would admit no greater authority than truth and even the name of Confucius, then the most respected authority, did not overawe him. "Is it wrong," he asked, "to doubt something said by Confucius if it is a point which you do not understand? Is it unreasonable to refute a doctrine held

by Confucius if you possess the wisdom of the sages yourself?" This shows Wang Chung's rebellious spirit and determination to struggle against idealist authoritarianism.

Some bourgeois scholars have said that Wang Chung's work *Critical Essays** is more destructive than constructive. This is not so. It is true that he attacked theology in a most thorough manner. But materialism has always developed through struggles, and in his controversy against theology he did succeed in establishing a materialist world outlook. Just at the time when his *Critical Essays* was being written, Emperor Chang Ti convened a council of scholars and ordered the compilation of the book *Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall*,* a general treatise on theology. This book was a rehash of Tung Chung-shu's theory and was closely associated with divinations and distorted commentaries. Wang Chung's criticisms were flung directly at this book in fact at the entire concept of theology since Tung Chung-shu's time.

From the time of Tung Chung-shu down to the compilation of the *Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall*, "heaven" had always been regarded by the theologians as having a will, intelligence and personality. Basing themselves upon the feudal moral order, they put forward the theories that "heaven is superior to earth" and that the relation between heaven and man consists of the interaction of influence between them. This strengthened the doctrines of Three Bonds (the relationships between ruler and subjects, father and son, and husband and wife) and Five Virtues (benevolence, righteousness, propriety in demeanour, wisdom, and good faith) of the feudal order and gave them an air of eternal

sanctity. In criticizing the world outlook of the theologians Wang Chung picked out their theory of heaven as the principal target and put forth his own brilliant theory. He said that heaven and earth both consist of material bodies and that they are not, as the theologians would have it, a mysterious spiritual "force." Developing his own line of reasoning, he arrived at the following conclusions: (1) Heaven and earth were material bodies. (2) Both being material, there was no difference between them in status, neither was superior. The first point restores the spiritual heaven to a natural one, ruling out its will, intelligence and personality and consequently its spiritual qualities. The second point denies the theoretical basis for the theology of the feudal order.

Wang Chung's remarkable criticism of theology reflected the opposition of the toiling people and those of the lower strata to the prevailing social order. He also conceived of "force" as subordinate to and included in material body, as not being mysterious but having nevertheless its own material existence. He discussed in detail how various things are the natural products of a combination of the positive and negative forces. He may be said to have defended and developed the materialism of the ancient philosophers.

He also pointed out that heaven and earth are concrete, corporeal things, the same as anything else. They are in constant motion and are subject to development and change. The universe as a whole, however, has no beginning or end. Wang Chung believed that the material world could be compared with a ball of fire burning at a distance the appearance or disappearance of which was quite beyond man's will. Here we can see

that he meant to attack the idealist theory that heaven and earth had a beginning and had a creator.

However, according to Wang Chung, individual things within the universe did have a beginning and an end. They were born and they died. Death was the natural result of life. Spirit or mind depends upon the body for its existence. Man's intelligence has a physiological basis, i.e. the internal organs. As long as the internal organs remain uninjured, man is intelligent and wise. But when the internal organs become diseased, he becomes dim and confused, stupid and dull. When a man dies his internal organs rot and his consciousness ceases. Death is like the extinction of fire. The body of a man who is dead is like a candle the flame of which has been blown out. No flame can burn without a candle or some other kind of inflammable material. Likewise no mind can exist without a body. With arguments like these, Wang Chung thoroughly refuted the theory that the soul can survive the body and become a ghost.

In his theory of knowledge Wang Chung said that perception by the sense organs is the basis of all knowledge. He recognized the importance of rational thinking but denied the existence of innate knowledge. It is true, he said, that some things are known and some are unknown. But just because some things are still unknown we cannot say that the world is unknowable. "In studying truth or falsehood in a statement, in judging the honesty or dishonesty of a man's conduct," he said, "we must go to the facts for verification." It should be pointed out that to verify knowledge by facts is the materialist test of truth. He also criticized the Taoists because they were too much engrossed in their study of

heaven and were ignorant of human affairs, thus denying man's active intellectual powers.

Wang Chung was one of the most outstanding materialists in the history of Chinese philosophy. His thought had a great influence on that of later materialist thinkers.

In the latter period of the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220) two thinkers, Wang Fu* and Chung Chang-tung,* while criticizing contemporary politics, law, and moral order, also criticized theology. Their philosophy may be said to be a continuation and to a certain extent an expansion of Wang Chung's teachings. Chung Chang-tung, for instance, distinguished between "the will of heaven" and the laws of nature and said that belief in one is incompatible with belief in the other.

From the last years of the Eastern Han, through the Wei (220-265), to the Tsin (265-420) dynasty the struggle between those who ruled and those who were ruled as well as between members of the ruling class became very sharp. At the end of the Han dynasty there were large-scale peasant uprisings. Drawing upon certain theories of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu which expressed dissatisfaction with the present and a longing for the primitive past, the peasant leaders set up a primitive form of Taoism. They used it as a weapon in their ideological struggle against the prevalent belief in the divinations and distorted commentaries of the ruling class. They protested against its great wealth and its idleness. In his *Book of Peace** Yu Chi,* founder of the "Peace Religion,"* listed six kinds of crimes. Among them the third one was "to accumulate wealth by the millions and give no help to the poor and needy" and the fifth one was "not to use the muscles

which heaven has given a man with which to produce his own food and clothing." This new moral standard had an unmistakable class character and reflected the peasants' demand for their right to life and subsistence. From the last years of the Warring States Period to the Chin and Han dynasties the slogans of the peasants in their struggle against the ruling class were always derived from the Mohist "public law" that those who kill others must die themselves. The slogans of the peasants at the end of the Han dynasty were raised to an even higher level. They said that "to be wealthy oneself but not let other people live was a crime."

After the social upheavals towards the end of the Han dynasty and during the period of the Three Kingdoms (220-280) materialism gained ground. Classicism and theology of the Han dynasty were shaken to their very foundations and lost their dominant position in the world of thought. To counteract the peasants' primitive form of Taoism, the scholar-officials of the feudal ruling class had to change their tactics. They revised their old theology of the divinations and distorted commentaries and put forward a new theory known as "Mysterious Learning" or Metaphysical School* to deceive the credulous. This was one of the scholastic philosophies combining idealism and sophistry and in form it followed the traditions of Taoism and the School of Names, interpreting Confucian classics in terms of the philosophy of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. It took three books, *Lao-tzu*, *Chuang-tzu* and *The Book of Changes*, as its "Three Classics."

This Metaphysical School went through three stages of development. The representatives of its first stage were Ho Yen* (c. 193-249) and Wang Pi* (226-288) of the

Three Kingdoms Period. They developed the doctrines of idealism in Lao Tzu's philosophy of "the way of heaven." They said that Being* is a product of the mysterious Non-being* which they considered to be the more important. The representative of the second stage was Pei Wei* (267-300) of the Tsin dynasty. He was against Ho Yen and Wang Pi's doctrine of Non-being. He was of the opinion that Non-being cannot produce Being. In the third stage Hsiang Hsiu* (227-?) and Kuo Hsiang* (c. 252-312) were the chief representatives. They synthesized the doctrines of Being and Non-being. The doctrine of Non-being attempted to show that the world of Being takes Non-being as its substance. This suggested that the state might be governed by non-activity and that morals and institutions, such as the relations between ruler and subjects in the feudal order, might be relegated to positions of secondary importance. The doctrine of Being, however, supported the morals and institutions and denied that Non-being can produce Being. Hsiang Hsiu and Kuo Hsiang while accepting the latter view endowed the theory of Non-being of Ho Yen and Wang Pi with the "real nature" of Being. Thus, they linked up morals and institutions with Nature and made the feudal order a natural phenomenon. But although they supported the doctrine of Being, they were no materialists and it would be a mistake to regard them as such. It is true they denied that Non-being can produce spirit. But they held that ghosts and gods are spirits in their own right. Another one of their theories was that a wise man may either serve the ruler or retire to the mountains. In the former case he will be a great minister and in the latter a good hermit. This is idealism pure and simple and is aimed at a compromise between

the classes. The development of metaphysics reflected to a certain extent the intricate relations between the landed aristocracy and the imperial house which by now had buried the hatchet between them.

With the progress of metaphysical thought the ruling class revised the early and popular Taoist religion and promoted the quest for immortality through alchemy in which only this class could afford to indulge. Ko Hung* of the Tsin dynasty was the most famous representative of this cult.

Meanwhile Buddhism, a foreign religion, was also gaining considerable influence. It was first introduced into China during the Eastern Han dynasty. During the transitional period between the Han and Wei dynasties there were two schools of Buddhism: one laid stress on theoretical problems and the other on meditational exercises. During the Wei and Tsin dynasties the Buddhist scholars joined ranks with the metaphysicians and interpreted Buddhist teachings in a metaphysical way. Later, more Buddhist doctrines were imported from abroad. By the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties there were many Buddhist sects, each one having its own special doctrine, method of teaching, and sphere of influence. Although these sects held different doctrines their common tenet was a type of religious idealism which made the world of objective reality a fantasy. The Buddhists of these schools all fancied that they could, by conscious efforts at self-cultivation, free themselves from the world of reality and by so doing attain a mysterious, spiritual world of eternal bliss. Buddhist teachings included a most elaborate idealist world outlook as well as many ridiculous superstitions and myths. Beliefs in incarnation, trans-

migration of the soul, retributive justice, and many kinds of supernatural phenomena emasculated the will of the people and helped to protect the existing feudal order. Generally speaking, the ruling class of ancient China mostly patronized Buddhism and never stinted in support to maintain its popularity.

The development of Chinese philosophy was influenced by Buddhism to a large degree. Its idealist method of thinking influenced both Neo-Confucianism* and Taoism in the Sung (960-1279) and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties. Its methods of reasoning containing some logical ideas have also been adopted by certain progressive thinkers of later times though critically and with modifications.

The mutual influence and finally the blending of the Metaphysical School with Buddhism and Taoism was the main characteristic of the orthodox school of thought among the ruling class from the Tsin dynasty to the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589).

Side by side with the rapid dissemination of religion and idealist philosophies, atheism, following the tradition of Huan Tan and Wang Chung, also enjoyed further growth. During the transitional period between the Wei and Tsin dynasties, Fu Hsuan* drew upon the teachings of Huan Tan, Yang Hsiung, and Chang Heng.* The latter was an astronomer who believed in the "Celestial Globe" theory that heaven surrounds the earth, and who built up a materialist world outlook of his own. He taught that the universe is made up entirely of matter which is derived from water. He was against religion and superstition, believing that no soul or mind can survive the body after death. He severely criticized the idle metaphysical discussion among the landed aristocracy. Another philosopher, Pao Ching-yen* of the Eastern Tsin

dynasty, took the stand of the peasants, startling the world with his theory of a Utopian society without kings or rulers. He was also an atheist. Ho Cheng-tien* (370-447), a mathematician of the early Southern Dynasties, expounded views on atheism and a theory of "the extinction of the soul," and engaged in theoretical controversies against Buddhism no less than five times. In the period of transition between the Chi (479-502) and Liang (502-557) of the Southern Dynasties, Liu Chun* (462-521) taught the natural philosophy of Wang Chung. He said that the universe was not created or developed by gods and spirits but by natural laws which are entirely mechanical.

During the Chi and Liang dynasties the idealist philosophy of Buddhism dominated all others and belief in transmigration, retributive justice and other superstitions was almost universal. Under such circumstances the appearance of Fan Chen* (c. 450-515), a materialist philosopher who came from a poor family, is noteworthy. Summarizing and developing the atheist and materialist philosophies from the Han to the Tsin dynasty, Fan Chen attracted wide attention by his theory of the "extinction of the soul." He launched two strong attacks on Buddhism which was on the way to becoming a national religion. In 489, during the reign of Emperor Wu of the Chi of the Southern Dynasties, Hsiao Tzu-liang,* Prince of Chingling, gave a party in his West Mansion. Fan Chen was among those present. During the discussions he mercilessly attacked Buddhism and the theory of retributive justice, debating with Hsiao Tzu-liang who was a devout Buddhist. Later, many famous Buddhist monks joined Hsiao's side in the debate but none of them could defeat Fan Chen in argument. Then Hsiao Tzu-

liang resorted to a trick. He sent a man to persuade Fan Chen to relinquish his materialist views and to tell him that if he did so he would be rewarded with a high position in the government. Fan Chen was, however, adamant. He replied that he would not sell his convictions for an official position. In 504, Emperor Wu of the Liang of the Southern Dynasties issued an edict making Buddhism the national religion. In 507 Fan Chen published his *Essay on the Extinction of the Soul** which was a penetrating critique of Buddhism. Emperor Wu issued a special edict ordering Fa Yun,* a high Buddhist priest, to muster the noblemen and government dignitaries, sixty-four in all, to refute the arguments contained in Fan Chen's book, and no less than 75 essays condemning his views were subsequently published. But in spite of the pressure of the emperor, the Buddhists and public opinion, Fan Chen did not budge. He held to his materialist doctrine firmly and refuted the views of his adversaries with powerful arguments.

The Buddhist theory of transmigration and retributive justice is founded on the hypothesis that body and soul are different entities and that the soul can survive the body after death. Life means only temporary union of soul and body. When the body dies the soul does not die with it but continues to exist by itself. This fallacious theory of the Buddhists, i.e. the continued existence of the soul, was forcefully refuted by Fan Chen in his *Essay on the Extinction of the Soul*. He said that body and soul are dependent on each other: body being the substance of soul and soul being the function of body. Fan Chen illustrated his point by the example of the sword. He compared the relation between soul and

body to that between sharpness and the sword. As sharpness cannot exist independently of the sword nor can soul exist independently of the body. "Soul exists if the body exists and soul dies if the body dies" — this in short was the conclusion at which Fan Chen arrived.

Stated briefly Fan Chen's main argument was that: the universe is a unity of substance and its attributes. Attributes are derived from substance; without substance there can be none. The two always unite; neither can exist as a separate entity. This principle is the basis of all Fan Chen's arguments and sums up his materialist philosophy.

In his theory of knowledge Fan Chen made a penetrating analysis of the term "substance." He pointed out in his *Essay on the Extinction of the Soul* that different concepts have different contents. The error in the logic of his opponents, he said, was in confusing the contents of the concepts. The substance of man and that of the tree, for instance, are different. It is only man's substance that has consciousness while that of the tree has not. He also showed the difference between a dead body and a living body; only the latter having the substance of man, but not the former.

After Fan Chen, an atheist in the south who also severely criticized Buddhism was Chu Shih-ching* of the Chen dynasty (557-589). In the north Fan Hsun* and Hsing Shao* of the Northern Chi dynasty (550-577) held atheist views and believed in the extinction of the soul. We possess little material regarding their life and work. We only know that they generally carried on the philosophic tradition of Fan Chen.

In the early Tang dynasty there was a great atheist scholar Lu Tsai* (c. 600-665). Encyclopaedic in learning

he was conversant with astronomy, geography, military science, logic, and music, and especially well read in history. He used his historical knowledge to refute the philosophy of determinism and various religious theories prevailing in his time.

From the Sui (581-618) to the middle of the Tang dynasty feudalism gradually entered its last period of development. In 780 the Tang court issued an edict proclaiming the "two-tax" system by which properties were taxed in proportion to their value, twice a year, in the summer and autumn. The edict made no attempt to conceal its aim, which was to curtail the power of the aristocratic families and lessen the burden of taxation on the peasants and thus prevent their emigration. Owing to the collapse of the "land equalization" system, which permitted the peasants to reclaim and own waste land and the expansion of "landlord" holdings, the system of landownership by the feudal state and the system of distributing land according to official rank was also somewhat modified. Land rent was largely paid in kind. Through uprisings the peasants gradually demanded equal opportunity in landownership. During the intervening period between the Sui and Tang dynasties the Han and minority peoples began to mingle together. The economy of South China expanded and the productive forces increased because of improved labour skill, which in turn stimulated commerce. This was a serious threat to the patriarchal system of society. Meanwhile, among the members of the ruling class there arose a new class of landowners, i.e. the plebeian landlords. The plebeians were defined by law as a lower stratum than the great aristocratic landowners and were similar in status to the free peas-

ants. They had, however, a dual character. While they differed from the aristocratic landowning families in having no social prestige, they gradually acquired political influence through their legalized economic status. A conflict gradually arose between these plebeians and the old aristocratic families. The emperor took advantage of this conflict and gained control over both groups himself. The transition from the "nine-grade" system of official preferment¹ to the system of competitive examination was a reflection of this policy. Such a situation continued from the Tang to the Ming dynasty with slight differences in different regions.

During the Sui and Tang dynasties Buddhism continued to flourish. At the beginning of the Tang dynasty, the imperial court, feudal, tyrannical and despotic in character, wanted to increase the prestige of the "new dignitaries." It had created a number of plebeian landlords so as to curtail the power of the famous old families and big clans which had existed since the time of the Southern and Northern Dynasties. Once it actually raised Taoism to a higher position than that of Buddhism. But in spite of this Buddhism was still greatly respected. In those days three Buddhist sects, the Trisastra, Tientai and Dharmalaksana, were most popular. During the reign of the Tang Empress Wu Tse-tien, Buddhism was further linked up with political interests and enjoyed much greater prestige than Taoism.

¹A system of official preferment devised by the big landlords during the third century A.D. Under this system officials were divided into nine grades and were selected among candidates recommended by the big clans. It was abolished during the reign of Emperor Wen Ti (589-604) of the Sui dynasty.

Two more sects, the Avatamsaka and the Dhyana, arose at this time.

The appearance of these sects varied, but in reality the same basic idea ran through them all though with minute differences. According to Buddhist idealism the objective world was initially derived from a supreme spiritual cause. The Buddhists thought that it was necessary to try and understand this spiritual cause by mystical intuitive reflection, through the process of subjective thinking. The Buddhists considered knowledge of the world of phenomena to be "common" and that gained through intuition and contemplation "absolute truth."

About the time of the proclamation of the "two-tax" system there arose a new scholastic philosophy of the Neo-Confucians.* This was the orthodox school of thought during the last period of feudalism. The Neo-Confucians were strong protagonists of Confucianism and openly opposed all the religious ceremonies of the Buddhists and Taoists though they had practically plagiarized much of their philosophy.

By far the greatest influence on Neo-Confucianism came from the Dhyana Sect of Buddhism. This sect was supposed to have been transmitted during the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589) by an Indian patriarch called Bodhidharma (?-536). Around the time of the reign of Empress Wu Tse-tien (684-701), Shen Hsiu* (c. 600-706), a Buddhist worthy, was the head of the northern school of this sect. He was known as "the most famous Buddhist preacher in the two capitals (Changan and Loyang) and the teacher of three emperors." After the revolt of An Lu-shan and Shih Szu-ming (755-763), the southern school of the sect, founded by Hui Neng* (638-

713) and Shen Hui* (683-760) in Kwangtung, came to the fore replacing the influence of Shen Hsiu. The philosophy of this school which became the main trend of Buddhism was that of subjective idealism. Members of this school taught that all things originate in the mind and that mind is the sole reliable source of true knowledge. True knowledge, they said, is "instantaneous enlightenment." It cannot be taught through written texts. It can only be gained from a mysterious revelation, a "mind-to-mind" transmission. The line of succession transmitting the teachings of the sect consisted of twenty-eight patriarchs in India and it was continued in China through some others who were Chinese. This line of succession had no historical basis and was purely an imaginary invention.

Han Yu* (768-824) and Li Ao* (?-846?) were pioneers of Neo-Confucianism. They thought that Buddhism, owing to its doctrine of other-worldliness, was inimical to feudal morality which laid emphasis on the relationships between ruler and subjects, father and son; and, for this reason, it was not the best weapon for the defence of the feudal system. Although on the surface they stood against Buddhism, they actually adapted Buddhist idealism to their own philosophy and allowed themselves to be influenced by the Dhyana and Tientai sects.

Han Yu stood firmly for an idealist world outlook. He even said that the destruction of human lives is the will of heaven. In his theory of human nature, he divides inborn human nature into three grades: superior, medium and inferior. Therefore by nature men are not equal. In this way he found a theoretical basis for the

system of ranks and grades which prevailed in feudal society.

Imitating the spiritual lineage of the Dhyana School Han Yu invented a line of sages in succession: Emperors Yao, Shun, Yu, and Tang; Kings Wen and Wu; Duke Chou; Confucius and Mencius. This fictitious line of succession for the Confucian School, of course, has no historical basis whatsoever. Li Ao even sought inspiration from the meditational exercises of the Buddhists and put forward a Confucian form of meditation, a kind of mysterious intuition. "If the mind is absolutely at rest all improper thoughts will disappear," he said.

Among the contemporaries of Han Yu and Li Ao, Liu Tsung-yuan* (773-819) and Liu Yu-hsi* (772-842) represented the materialist school of thought. These two opposing groups of thinkers not only differed in philosophy but also in politics. At that time the rule of the Tang dynasty was very unstable. Owing to the imposition of heavy taxes and exploitation many peasants fled from their homes. Meanwhile the struggle between the landed aristocracy and the new plebeian landlords became increasingly acute. In 805 during the reign of Emperor Shun Tsung, Wang Shu-wen* and Wang Pi,* who represented the interests of the plebeian landlords, were in power. They carried out a number of political reforms and abolished various kinds of taxes and imposts frowned upon by the plebeians. They also tried to take from the eunuchs their control over the army. This reform movement was, however, short-lived. Strongly opposed by both the big landed aristocracy and the eunuchs it ended in failure in less than one year. Liu Tsung-yuan and Liu Yu-hsi, both protagonists of the movement, were deprived of their offices and exiled, to

the great satisfaction of their conservative opponents Han Yu and Li Ao.

In his writings Liu Tsung-yuan criticized Han Yu for his belief in the power of heaven to reward the good and punish the bad. He believed that the world is material and that the development of things is all in accordance with laws. In his essay entitled "Heaven Answers" he replied to questions concerning the universe and history posed by the famous ancient poet Chu Yuan in his prose poem "Heaven Asks." From a materialist standpoint he pointed out that the universe is made of original matter, it is presided over by no monstrous creature of any kind and there is nothing mysterious about its beginning. Liu Tsung-yuan quoted the achievements in natural science in his time. He said that natural laws are knowable and denounced all the false theories of theology and idealism. With great insight he also saw that the interaction between positive and negative forces is the sole cause of motion in nature, which was an elementary form of dialectics. Liu Yu-hsi analysed the cause of idealist thought and said that it was due to ignorance. When man knows the laws of the material world, he pointed out, he will be able to control nature and predict future development, and then idealism will lose its foundation. Like Hsun Ching, the great philosopher of the Warring States Period, Liu Yu-hsi believed in man's ability to conquer and exploit nature.

The philosophy of Liu Tsung-yuan and Liu Yu-hsi was of a popular character. The conflict between the materialism of these two philosophers and idealism of the conservatives was an outstanding one in the history of philosophy of the Tang dynasty.

China was a divided country during the period of the Five Dynasties (907-960) but with the founding of the Sung dynasty it was united again. Owing to the further development of peasant skills and to a greater exploitation of natural resources both in the south and north, feudal economy prospered under Sung rule. The dynasty also revised the laws concerning the class system to bring them into conformity with the changing economic conditions. The economic status of the plebeian landowners of the south was elevated. The demands of the peasants in their struggles increased with time as can be seen from the changes in their slogans. When Wang Hsien-chih* led a peasant uprising, his title was "Great General of Equality Conferred by Heaven." Later when Wang Hsiao-po* and Chung Hsiang* were leaders, their slogan became: "Let the high and low, rich and poor be equal!" It was also a period of scientific progress. China's three great inventions—gunpowder, the compass and printing.—were perfected during the Northern Sung dynasty (960-1127).

Materialism in the Northern Sung dynasty was ably represented by Wang An-shih* (1021-1086), chief minister of state during the reign of Emperor Shen Tsung. He stood for the interests of the plebeian landlords. The reform, which he carried out with great severity, aimed at two things. First, relying on the despotic power of the imperial government which maintained the system of "official land," a form of feudal state ownership of land, as a basis of its power, he tried to unite the members of the royal family with the plebeian landlords to strike at the landed aristocracy. Secondly, he tried to carry out a policy intended to ease the contradiction between classes so as to increase production and strengthen na-

tional defence. In fighting against the conservative forces of the landed aristocracy, he showed a dauntless spirit. "Heavenly portents," he said, "need not be feared, the examples of our ancestors need not be followed, and pay no heed to what most people say."

Wang An-shih's theory was that matter was the primary substance of the universe and that all things were composed of the five elements of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. These five elements existed eternally in the universe and were in constant motion. There is change and motion in the universe because there are contending forces within it; in other words, there are contradictions. Wang An-shih said that motion in the material world follows definite laws (he used the term "the Way"*) and this does not change by man's will. If man knows the natural laws he can control the greatest and largest number of things. In Wang An-shih's opinion all things in the universe were determined by natural laws and nothing happened by accident. Although his theory tends towards mechanism, it deals a strong blow to idealism.

With regard to human nature Wang An-shih thought it to be the same as man's powers of perception, such as seeing, hearing, etc.; all these powers were nothing but functions of the physical body. Thus Wang An-shih's theory of human nature and, of course, his theory of knowledge, too, had a materialist basis.

Wang An-shih's political enemy was the conservative party of the landed aristocracy, which was the social base of the Neo-Confucianism of the Northern Sung dynasty, hostile to reform. The leader of the conservative party was Ssuma Kuang* (1019-1086). In direct opposition to Wang An-shih's new ideas, he put forward

a reactionary philosophy which centred around the theory of the "mandate of heaven." Adherents of the conservative party included Chou Tun-yi* (1017-1073), and Shao Yung* (1011-1077), who drew heavily upon the idealist theories of the Taoists and the divinations and distorted commentaries to establish the School of Emblems and Numbers* which was actually a conglomeration of superstitions and idealism, including such theories as those of astrology, the oracles, theories of the positive and negative forces and of the five elements. Meanwhile the Cheng brothers, Cheng Hao* (1032-1085) and Cheng Yi* (1033-1107), famous members of the conservative party, formed a school of idealist philosophy known as the Loyang School of Philosophy,* the Cheng brothers being residents of that city. They stated that heaven is really "reason" or "principle"* governing the relationships between ruler and subjects and father and son in feudal ethics. As "reason" is inherent in the human mind, the human mind is, therefore, identical with heaven. Cheng Yi, whose philosophy was essentially the same as that of Cheng Hao, identified human nature with "reason." He considered heaven, human nature and mind different manifestations of the same thing. The philosophy of the Cheng brothers contained many ideas similar to those of the Dhyana and Avatamsaka Sects of Buddhism.

In the district of Kuanchung in Shensi there appeared a school of thought known by its location as the Kuan School.* This school stressed the study of practical subjects and natural science. It was represented by Chang Tsai* (1020-1077), a natural scientist. Politically, although he was not satisfied with Wang An-shih's reform, he did not actively oppose it. Like Liu Tsung-yuan

he accepted matter as the primary substance of the universe. He considered birth and death as a process of condensation and dispersion of matter. He emphatically pointed out that development and changes in the universe are a result of contradiction within matter itself, the result of the "interaction" between the "two extremes" of positive and negative forces, and not of any external cause. Chang Tsai was, however, deeply influenced by Buddhism and the philosophy of the Cheng brothers. He considered the innate character of a man to have an independent existence. Thus he thought that the universe had a dual origin in matter and innate character. For this reason, followers of the Loyang School called the philosophy of Chang Tsai "dualism," which was its fatal mistake.

During the Southern Sung dynasty (1127-1279) Chu Hsi* (1130-1200) developed the philosophy of the Cheng brothers and originated a system of objective idealism. In his world outlook he affirmed that "reason" in its absolute and spiritual sense is the origin of the material world. In its primeval and tranquil state it was called the "supreme absolute"* and it was from this that matter was derived. Man's conscious mind, according to Chu Hsi, manifests itself in two ways, as innate character* and as emotion.* This innate character of man is the "reason" in human form and is therefore perfectly good. However, since the emotions are fettered by the physical body of man, they may be either good or bad. Therefore badness or evil is a product of matter.

Men differed in rank in feudal society because they were differently endowed, so Chu Hsi thought, and the differences in endowment are a result of divine will, or the mandate of heaven. Standing above all other ranks

of men is the sage who is perfectly endowed with "reason." The difference between a sage and a common man is in reality a difference between reason and matter. As reason rules matter so a sage should rule men. In the preface of his book *The Commentary on the Great Learning*,* Chu Hsi made it clear that what he called sage was nothing but the emperor of the feudal state.

In his theory of knowledge he stressed investigation as the method to be used to ascertain the laws of the universe. But he also said that these laws are really inherent in our mind and investigation is only necessary to make them explicit. As to the mysterious substance "reason" it is an outward manifestation of the functioning of the mind itself.

Chu Hsi's contemporary Lu Chiu-yuan* (1139-1192) founded a rival school of Neo-Confucianism by adopting the subjective idealism of the southern Dhyana Sect of Buddhism. In his debates with Chu Hsi, he alleged, "The universe is my mind," and "All things are complete within me." The controversy between Lu Chiu-yuan and Chu Hsi was a family squabble for both were Neo-Confucian idealists and they both believed in the scholastic philosophical doctrines of the feudal age.

In Yeh Shih* (1150-1223) and Chen Liang* (1143-1194), each leading a school of thought, we again find materialist philosophers. Together they waged a theoretical struggle against the Neo-Confucianism of Chu Hsi and Lu Chiu-yuan. Chen Liang pointed out that both Chu Hsi and Lu Chiu-yuan were scholastic philosophers. Their philosophy could only lead men to build castles in the air, indulge in empty talk and pedantry. It could never be of any real use in coping with the critical situation facing the Southern Sung dynasty which was threatened

by invasions from the north. Chen Liang called his own practical philosophy the "philosophy of action." He said, "Act according to the principles of both righteousness and profit, benevolence and power; listen to the dictates of both reason and expediency," and "A man must serve his country and fellow countrymen with deeds and not words." He showed the absurdity of the Neo-Confucian theory which was that "the Heavenly principles ruled conduct in the Three Dynasties (i.e. Hsia, Shang and Chou) but that afterwards human desires began to rule," a theory which lauded the past at the expense of the present. Yeh Shih and his followers, inheriting the tradition of the advocates of practical application and verification by experience, criticized the theoretical foundation of Neo-Confucianism. Yeh Shih was against the Neo-Confucians in their attempt to elevate "reason" above the world of reality. He said, "To understand the general laws of the universe we must study and examine carefully the things of the objective world." From the historical and evolutionary approach Yeh Shih thoroughly refuted the theory of the line of succession invented by the Neo-Confucians. He boldly criticized the idols of the Confucian School like Tseng Tzu,* Tzu Ssu* and Mencius.

The materialist thought of the two schools as represented by Yeh Shih and Chen Liang was largely derived from their profound knowledge of history, science and technology, which enriched their philosophy and provided them with strong weapons in their fight against Neo-Confucianism. The progressive members of the two schools were persecuted by the landed aristocracy. Chen Liang, for instance, once petitioned the court to avenge national humiliation and revive national strength. He

was considered a lunatic and several times sentenced to imprisonment. He died in poverty and distress. During the reign of Emperor Ning Tsung, Yeh Shih once commanded troops against an army of the Chin Kingdom in the Huai River valley and scored a big victory. He was not rewarded for his meritorious service but actually condemned!

Teng Mu* (1247-1306) was considered a "heretical" thinker in the period between the Sung and Yuan (1279-1368) dynasties. After the downfall of the Sung dynasty, with sorrow in his heart, he travelled widely visiting many places of interest. He wrote a book entitled *The Lute of Po Ya** in which he criticized the politics of his time. A spirit of realistic humanitarianism runs through the whole work. Using the form of the short essay he criticized, satirized and accused the rulers of the Yuan dynasty, boldly exposing the tyrants' and ruthless officials' exploitation and oppression of the people. He also mapped out a plan for a Utopian society in which there would be neither oppression nor enslavement and none could eat from the labour of others. Unable to find a way to realize his imaginary plan he succumbed to the illusions and escapism.

The tradition of the subjective idealism of Lu Chiu-yuan was carried on in the Ming dynasty by Wang Shou- jen also known as Wang Yang-ming* (1472-1528) who declared that the universe and the things in it and their laws were all the products of mind. He said that without mind there could be nothing and that it was the basis of the universe. The human mind is "reason" itself because in man's mind there is innate "intuitive knowledge."* This "intuitive knowledge" was really expressed in the moral law of feudalism. In other words, he

considered the feudal moral law innate and, therefore, inviolable. He taught that to gain true knowledge, the mind must be cleaned and renewed to restore its original "intuitive knowledge." This he likened to a bright mirror with its original lustre, free from dust. When you have physical desires your "intuitive knowledge" is clouded but as soon as you overcome your desires you will regain your former clear intuition and you will become a sage. Here Wang Shou-jen is really preaching a kind of monasticism and urging the people to abandon their struggle for the right of existence.

During the Ming dynasty the orthodox successors of Wang Shou-jen included Tsou Shou-yi* and Wang Chi* (1498-1583), each being the leader of a school of thought. They further reduced philosophy to a religion and openly espoused the doctrines of the Dhyana Sect of Buddhism.

3. Philosophy in the Transitional Period Between the Ming and Ching Dynasties: the Beginnings of Enlightenment and Development of Materialism

During the reigns of Chia Ching (1522-1566) and Wan Li (1573-1620) of the Ming dynasty, agriculture, handicrafts and domestic trade, especially in the region around the Yangtse delta, enjoyed great progress and paved the way for a future capitalist society, the beginning of which was already evident. A series of struggles against the feudal order were first waged by the city people culminating in a big peasant uprising which eventually caused the overthrow of the Ming dynasty. During the transitional period of the 16th and 17th centuries, Western sciences — astronomy, geography, mathematics and technology — were introduced into China by the missionaries. Books on philosophy and logic were also translated and they probably exercised some influence over the philosophers of the time. Nevertheless, the Western sciences and philosophy introduced into China at this time were largely those of the Middle Ages; they did not include the progressive thought of the West. In China the progressive scholars paid great attention to the Western sciences, but their opinions differed regarding Western philosophy and they debated its usefulness.

In 1644 the Manchus established their rule in China and carried out an extremely reactionary policy of na-

tional oppression. The conflict between nationalities overshadowed that of classes.

Wang Ken* (1483-1540), the founder of the Taichow School,* advocated the pseudo-philosophy of Wang Shou-jen. For generations his family had been salt-makers. At twenty-nine this young worker wrote the story of a dream to express his ambition. He said he dreamed that heaven was collapsing and the people were greatly frightened. He propped up heaven with one arm; then he put it together with the earth, sun, moon, stars and other heavenly bodies into their proper places so that a new universe was made. Through his tale he indicated that feudal society was disintegrating and a new world was emerging. He travelled in many places, giving lectures. Gradually he rallied round him a number of people — mostly those living in the salt-making areas.

In his philosophy Wang Ken considered that "the universe and all things are one entity," people and all things are of the same substance. This theory adopted the expression of the Neo-Confucians of the Sung and Ming dynasties but in content it reaffirmed that all things have one origin — the universe, all things including man are part of nature. Wang Ken called nature "heaven." The substance of heaven and man was, according to his theory, material and not spiritual. This, however, directly contradicted Wang Shou-jen's world outlook of subjective idealism. Wang Ken also said that eating, drinking and sexual satisfaction were man's natural rights of which he should not be deprived by the ruling class. He encouraged the people to strive for the satisfaction of these natural desires. He implied that the people should "turn the world upside down" to throw the feudal rulers off their thrones.

Expanding his theory of the "substance of inherent nature," Wang Ken discussed "the daily use of the people." By this he meant the daily needs of the working people such as eating, clothing and so on. He insisted that education and knowledge should be found in the "daily use of the people," thus reaffirming that the truth is learned through practice in the daily life of the working people.

According to his world outlook of "all things are one entity," Wang Ken called for the appearance of a new world. The politics of making all things one entity which he warmly anticipated was, according to his plan, a state in which the ruler was as wise and good as Emperors Yao and Shun and the subjects like the subjects of these emperors; everything was fully utilized; everybody became a gentleman; and every home was happy and prosperous.

Another leader of the Taichow School was Ho Hsin-yin* (1517-1579). In his youth he devoted his time to travelling and lecturing instead of obtaining an official position through the imperial examination. His philosophy was coloured by mysticism. He said that man is "the mind of the universe," "love" or "benevolence" is "man's mind," that "mind" is "the supreme absolute," and "the supreme absolute" is the origin of all things. But he also said, "When the universe was, then man was also." In other words, the universe was the origin of man. Such dualism is produced by the union of the Taoist innate mysticism with simple materialism. It is closely related to and combined with the peasants' religion as well as with their anti-feudal struggle.

If we disregard certain of the mystical and dualist views of Ho Hsin-yin, we can see that his philosophy has rational materialist aspects. On the question of the rela-

tion between objects and "reason," he believed that "reason" existed in concrete things, and that it manifested itself through definite forms and shapes, such as weights and measures.

Ho Hsin-yin said that daily conduct and expression of views are the source of learning. Conduct means taking some action through which man learns. When there is action, something is done and something is learned. Speech is action and it causes discussion. When there is speech, there is action, and a discussion follows. He, therefore, boldly proposed freedom of academic discussion. He also completely united thinking with conduct, speech, seeing and hearing, and said that thinking cannot be separated from these. Daily conduct promotes thinking and so does speech, seeing or hearing. Under the historical conditions of the sixteenth century, this was a brilliant exposition of the theory of knowledge and psychology. Recognition should be given to his scholarly achievement.

Furthermore, Ho Hsin-yin declared that man's material desires are inherent, since desire itself is inherent. He expanded his point by saying that the highest desire is to share that of the people. This is to say that he wanted all men to obtain the satisfaction of their human desires. It was a reflection of the will of the working people to defend their right to existence and their right to strive for equality.

How could all men satisfy their human desires? Ho Hsin-yin imagined that a clan could form a community in which the children and the young people could be collectively taught. They would assemble, live and eat together in the ancestral hall. When they grew up, their schooling, marriage, clothing and food would be sub-

sided by the whole community. Those over seventy could retire and be supported. The different families in the clan should help and be friendly to one another. This was, of course, a Utopia.

Another outstanding leader of the Taichow School was Li Chih* (1527-1602). His progressive thinking was obvious in his works on social questions but not his seemingly metaphysical writings in which he discussed Buddhism. His writings on social questions embodied materialism together with his humanitarianism.

On questions of morality, Li Chih showed a spirit of equality, freedom, and respect for individuality. He said that everyone is born with knowledge in which respect all men are same. The term "born with knowledge" can be traced to *The Doctrine of the Mean*, one of the *Four Books* of the Confucian School. It says:

Some are born with knowledge; some know it by study; and some acquire knowledge after a painful feeling of their ignorance. But when once knowledge is possessed, it is the same thing. Some practise it with a natural ease; some because of a desire for self-advantages; and some by strenuous effort. But the achievement being made, it comes to the same thing.

The Neo-Confucians had taken advantage of this argument in *The Doctrine of the Mean* to become apologists for the feudal system of ranks and grades. But Li Chih declared that every man has inborn knowledge, every man could be Buddha — man is Buddha, Buddha is man. He meant that from a moral viewpoint all men are equal.

In Li Chih's philosophy there is another important theme that "truth" is embodied in men without exception. This implies first that "truth" does not detach itself from man,

nor man from itself; the two are inseparable and, secondly, man is "truth" and "truth" is man; there is no "truth" without man, no man without "truth." This argument brings "truth" back from heaven to earth and "truth" is no longer a mysterious thing to be monopolized by the Neo-Confucians.

But what is this "truth" that Li Chih has in mind? To him "truth" begins from man's natural, minimum desire for food and clothes. Then he expands his view to say "man must have his personal desire" and "personal desire is in man's mind." Obviously, such a view stands opposed to the feudal moral concept. The Neo-Confucians had hypocritically propagated the doctrine of suppressing desire. Chu Hsi, for example, advised "earnestness" while Wang Shou-jen advised "investigation of things" — both intended to foil human desire. In contrast, Li Chih believed that even the sages have "a desire for power" since "man must have personal desire"; "truth" can be obtained not by suppressing desire but by satisfying man's wants and giving him happiness in material benefits. This is equivalent to saying that all good conduct is motivated by material interests. It can be seen that Li Chih considered material well-being as the aim of moral practice. As such it is a materialist view of morality in his time.

Li Chih wrote profusely attacking the special privileges of the Confucians and Neo-Confucians and the sanctity of feudal society. His criticism of the Six Classics (*The Book of Poems*, *The Book of History*, *The Book of Rites*, *The Book of Music*, *The Book of Changes* and *The Spring and Autumn Annals*) as well as *The Analects of Confucius** and *Mencius** was that they were merely the records and notes freely written by the disciples and that

they were incomplete and inconsistent. He insisted that they were not all the true messages of the sages, nor "authoritative teachings of permanent value." He continued to say with boldness that truth changes and developments and Confucius' standard of right and wrong should not always be taken as *the* standard.

Li Chih exposed the hypocrisy, shamelessness and other such contemptible conduct of the Neo-Confucians. He said that they claimed to be pure and lofty but the fact was that they worked for high positions and large remuneration. He also exposed the fact that some of them who could write only a few lines of poetry but they called themselves hermits while others who could not write poems discussed "intuitive knowledge" and called themselves sages. Actually, Li Chih concluded, they were as base and impure in thought as the money-mad merchants and timid thieves.

While declaring war on the mundane world, fighting the theology of the feudal ruling class with his materialist views and humanitarianism, Li Chih was never able to completely escape the influence of dominant contemporary thought. In his solitude he dreamed of the mysterious Buddhist "other world" or *Nirvana*, in order to find relief and freedom of mind. And so he sank into mysticism.

The philosophers of the Taichow School earned the hatred of the ruling class which persecuted them cruelly. Among them Ho Hsin-yin met death in prison and Li Chih was compelled to commit suicide after his arrest.

In the Ming dynasty, the one who first challenged the idealist theories of Chu Hsi and Wang Shou-jen was Wang Ting-hsiang* (1471-1544), an outstanding materialist thinker of the time. In two of his well-known works;

*Careful Speech** and *Elegant Narrative*,* he declared that original matter which was the basis of the universe manifested the laws of the objective world in the course of its movement and development. He said it was necessary to go through practical experience in order to know the natural laws. Subjective knowledge, a product of imagination when a man isolates himself and retires to his private study, is false knowledge. There has never been such a thing as innate "intuitive knowledge." For example, he said if an infant were put in a chamber, separated from the outside world and taught nothing, when he grew up he would surely be an idiot. Such, in brief, was Wang Ting-hsiang's theory. He was a forerunner of the anti-Neo-Confucian enlightened thinkers in the period between the Ming and Ching dynasties.

Huang Wan* (1477-1551), a friend of Wang Ting-hsiang, was at first a believer of Wang Shou-jen's theory. In the later years of his life he criticized Wang Shou-jen for having derived inspiration from the Dhyana Sect of Buddhism, saying that his theory, therefore, had nothing to do with the practical needs of the people. In his theory of knowledge Huang Wan based his thinking on materialism in explaining the importance of practice and he advocated the functions of knowledge of the external things. In his world outlook, however, he could not sever himself from Wang Shou-jen's influence. He finally retreated to idealism saying that the gods and spirits ruled the universe.

During the transitional period between the Ming and Ching dynasties there appeared a number of enlightened thinkers and patriots, namely, Fang Yi-chih,* Wang Fu-chih,* Ku Yen-wu,* Huang Tsung-hsi,* and Yen Yuan.* They dreamed of a new world and comforted themselves

with hope during this time of national subjugation. In philosophy their views were largely materialist. They were all against the idealists who did nothing but indulge in empty talks and they struggled against the so-called orthodox school of Neo-Confucianism.

The outstanding scientists of the early period of enlightenment were Hsu Kuang-chi* (1562-1633), Fang Yi-chih (1611-1671) and the latter's two sons, Fang Chung-tung* and Fang Chung-li.* Hsu Kuang-chi was learned in almost every one of the sciences of his time — astronomy, calendar-making, mechanics, arms manufacture, irrigation, water conservancy and other sciences. It was he who first translated Euclid's geometry into Chinese. Fang Yi-chih and his two sons were versed in astronomy, calendar-making, mathematics, physics and music. These scientists not only conducted practical experiments but were able to crystallize their scientific knowledge into philosophical theories. Hsu Kuang-chi maintained the view that science requires the careful examination of a large number of phenomena and possession of a considerable amount of data. Only then could a search for the quantitative relation between the different phenomena and their causes be made. The aim of science, according to him, was to sum up the laws of the natural world. Fang Yi-chih believed that science must have a very fine numerical basis and also principles to summarize and explain this basis. His son, Fang Chung-li, went further in pointing out the dialectical relations between the specific and the abstract in science. He said that scientific laws already summarized should be constantly examined and corrected through observation of the natural phenomena.

Fang Yi-chih has never been mentioned by bourgeois historians of philosophy. It is strange that the name of such a great thinker, natural scientist and anti-Manchu patriot of whom we could be proud should have been allowed to lie in oblivion for three hundred years. He was an adversary of the idealists. His courage in opposing feudal tyranny is particularly noteworthy.

A brilliant scholar, Fang Yi-chih was well read in literature, history, geography and natural sciences and was also an artist. Though living in a time when science was still in its infancy, he already knew that the earth was a moving and not a stationary body and that it was spherical in shape. He had an elementary knowledge of the solar system, optics and physiology. With his knowledge of the natural sciences as a basis, he founded a system of materialist philosophy. The universe, according to him, was not created by a god or spirit, nor was it made of mind or "reason," but of fire. As fire contains the elements of conflict, conflict is the cause of motion. Considered as a single entity, the universe consists of one element, fire, yet this one element only exists as the result of two conflicting forces within it, of which one is substance and the other non-substance, one being original and the other derivative. The "one" exists in the "two" and the "two" are united in the "one." The union of the two conflicting forces in fire is the cause of all changes in the material world. That motion is caused by the union of opposites — this is the most notable philosophical principle first made explicit by Fang Yi-chih.

Unlike the idealists Fang Yi-chih believed that laws are inherent in motion in the material world. There is no such thing as an unknowable "god" or "Way" in-

dependent of the material world. Man is a product of nature. The physical structure of his body produces intellect and intellect is capable of learning the laws of nature. Man's intellectual power increases with his knowledge of the laws of the objective world, as the implements of the peasants and workers improve with use. Just as the peasants and workers change the world with their labour and tools, so the scholar changes the world with his knowledge, and knowledge can only be acquired and improved through labour. Fang Yi-chih was the first Chinese philosopher to put forward this theory.

Fang Yi-chih's monistic materialism is not unlike Descartes' philosophy with regard to the material universe for he thought that the universe was in perpetual same motion. Fang Yi-chih also had a vague idea of the law of the conservation of energy. He believed that both nature and society were constantly moving and changing and that human knowledge was a continuous and developing process. History meant progress. Men of a later age were always wiser than those of previous ones. With great courage he criticized the Confucians for their conservatism and blind credulity. He considered himself the wise man of his time and was proud of his broad scientific knowledge.

Fang Yi-chih's philosophy has its shortcomings; it is marred by mechanism or determinism.

Fang Yi-chih expressed his indignation over social injustice and the evils of society in poetic form. He put forward the bold prophecy that the "old world" would collapse. He was confident of the advent of a new world and showed great enthusiasm for it. He resolutely refused to take part in the official examinations which made the writing of the stereotyped essay the sole road

to official advancement. He was content to be a private citizen all his life. He was one of the leaders of the Restoration Society,* a progressive organization established in 1629, having chapters in many provinces, and wielding great influence in the struggle against the feudal ruling class. By rallying all the progressive forces in the country he hoped to make changes of great historic importance, but he never succeeded. The only way he could fight against the "old world" was with his pen.

Wang Fu-chih (1619-1692) was another great materialist thinker and a patriot. In 1648 he led an uprising in Hengshan, Hunan Province, to resist the Manchu army. Having failed in this attempt he retired to the Shihchuan Mountains in Hengshan and devoted his life to writing. In philosophy he was deeply influenced by Wang Chung and Chang Tsai.

Wang Fu-chih made a profound study of traditional Chinese philosophy. He also studied and criticized the idealist philosophy of the Buddhists. The existence of material things, he believed, did not depend upon our mind and will. He pointed out that there were things which men already knew and there were things which men did not yet know then, but none of these things depended on man for their existence. That some things were unknown did not mean that they would remain unknown for ever. Man would learn more and more until he reached nearer and nearer to the absolute truth. He called this the learning of the sages and its counterpart heresy. He was using a traditional term to develop his own materialism.

Wang Fu-chih was skilful in giving old terms a new meaning. Thus, he used the term "generative forces"* in *The Book of Changes* to describe matter, the original

substance of the universe, giving the term a new meaning and bringing it closer to the word "matter" as used in philosophy. Matter, according to him, was the fundamental substance of the universe. From the motion of matter — its condensation and dispersion — all the laws of the universe are derived. Wang Fu-chih not only stressed motion but also considered it to be the cause of universal development, saying that it was due to motion that things in the universe become more and more varied and developed in new ways every day. He criticized and revised Chang Tsai's views that "the form of the sun and moon never changes." By form, he said, we mean the external appearance of a thing. That the external form of a thing does not change does not mean that the thing undergoes no internal changes. The water of the river today, for instance, may appear to be the same as it presumably was in ancient times. But is the water really the same water? No, the water of today is not that of ancient times and it is the same with physiological changes. Our body is constantly undergoing changes and old tissues are continuously being replaced by new ones though we cannot see them. Wang Fu-chih laid special stress on the process of "continuous changes" by which he meant evolution and progress.

Wang Fu-chih considered social life to be an evolutionary process. The social institutions of ancient times were different from those of his day. Moreover, the former were savage while the latter were civilized. The more modern the times, the more civilized the man. He was against the tendency of making the past more important than the present and said that people who did this were one-sided in their views; they saw what was good in the old but they did not see what was good in

the new. It was Wang Fu-chih's opinion that new things do not come out of nothing; they are derived from old things; they inherit some rational elements from the old and are developed from them.

Wang Fu-chih explained the cause of motion as the interaction between the positive and negative forces. Interaction, he believed, resulted in various phenomena such as inhalation and exhalation, expansion and contraction, rising and falling, union and separation, etc. Everything in the world contained conflicting forces such as strength and weakness, heat and cold, growth and decay, etc., which are antagonistic to each other. In Wang Fu-chih's own words, "they are opposed and hostile to each other." But the result of the struggle between these opposite and antagonistic forces was always reconciliation and peace or union of the opposites. What he failed to see was that the struggle between opposites is continuous while the union of opposites is only a temporary phenomenon. He only felt that "opposition and hostility" is bad and "reconciliation and peace" is good. Hampered by this mistaken view he arrived at some incorrect conclusions on the course of history. It is true that he stood for the theory of social evolution. But when he tackled concrete historical problems he was always influenced by the idea of balance. He thought that history was a continuous process of disturbance and restoration of balance. Wang Fu-chih's view can be easily understood if we take into account the stage of intellectual development prevailing in 17th century China. The enlightened thinkers of that time could see that there was a big change coming but they could not see what kind of change it would be. They saw very clearly that the old social system was tottering,

but they did not know how nor with what it would be changed.

Wang Fu-chih also expounded a theory that "truth" is embodied in "instrument,"* and may be learned through it. By this name of "instrument" he meant concrete things such as social institutions, politics, law, etc. He declared that since there were different kinds of institutions at different times "truth" must be different also. There was no abstract truth applicable at all times. To find "truth" it was necessary, therefore, to go to the "instrument," and not, as the Neo-Confucians were prone to do, to try and discover an abstract eternal truth first which would only be another name for "god."

Wang Fu-chih proceeded from these theories of his which we have just described to show that "mind must conform to reason." By "mind," he meant the process of learning, and he believed that true knowledge must include an understanding of the laws which govern things as they are. To understand these laws was to know the truth. The proper method of acquiring knowledge was to study nature and the laws of motion. This was different from the method used by the subjective idealists, which was to acquire knowledge independently of objective reality. In other words, the method of the realists was to make the mind conform to reason while that of the idealists was to make the mind create reason. They were the two opposing schools of thought. Using the former method the mind sees things as they are; using the latter method the mind sees things as it thinks they should be. Herein lies the difference between the methods of the materialists and idealists in their search for knowledge and truth.

Wang Fu-chih considered man's knowledge to be an accumulation of his past experiences and believed that as man's knowledge increases his nature is enriched. The "perfection" of human nature through "practical knowledge" is one of Wang Fu-chih's most important doctrines. By "practical knowledge" he meant knowledge of the order among things in the objective world. By "perfection" he meant continuous intellectual progress through practice. Man, he said, does not possess a ready-made and perfect character at birth. Man's character is perfected through practice in the course of his historical development. So is the life of man. This theory of Wang Fu-chih is just the opposite of that of the Neo-Confucians of the Sung and Ming dynasties who taught that human nature is "rational" and never changes.

From the essential uniformity of human nature Wang Fu-chih derived the notion of a society in which freedom and equality would prevail. This aspiration of his reflected that of the city people for equality in human and economic rights.

Huang Tsung-hsi (1610-1695) was one of the outstanding democratic political thinkers and historians in Chinese history. In his youth he took part in the Tung Lin Party's¹ fight against feudal authority. Later in his life he took part in the people's struggle against the Manchus. After the struggle had ended in failure he abandoned political activities and devoted the rest of his life to study.

In his writings he listed many vices of the kings and rulers. The king took the property of the whole nation

¹ A group of intellectuals who, during the Ming dynasty, criticized the government's policy through their discussions and writings.

for his own; he mercilessly exploited the people and broke up their families. From this, Huang Tsung-hsi drew the bold conclusion that the king was the cause of great calamities. He developed the idea that if the king were not virtuous, he should only be allowed to remain as a figurehead and the prime minister should be given the task of government administration. He also had a conception of modern representative government and advocated that the traditional educational system should be reorganized according to a new principle, making the schools centres of public opinion capable of influencing public affairs. He denounced the legal system of the feudal rulers; calling it the "law of one family," and thought that it should be replaced by a "law of the nation," under which all men, the ruler and the ruled, would be equal. He dreamed of a society where there was no ruler, where every man lived by himself and for himself. But it should be pointed out that the equality Huang Tsung-hsi spoke about was merely the equality demanded by the urban population. As Engels said when speaking about the French thinkers of the 18th century, "... that equality reduced itself to bourgeois equality before the law; that bourgeois property was proclaimed as one of the most essential rights of man."¹

Huang Tsung-hsi had enough knowledge of the natural sciences to appreciate Fan Chen's atheism. He was also well read in history and philosophy. He wrote two histories of philosophy: *Philosophical Theories of the Sung and Yuan Dynasties** and *Philosophical Theories of the Ming Dynasty*.* Although wavering between idealism

¹F. Engels, *Anti-Duhring*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1947, p. 31.

and materialism he nevertheless found it difficult to accept the idealist theory of existence without conceptual knowledge.

Tang Chen* (1630-1704) agreed with Huang Tsung-hsi in many of his political views. In his book *Thoughts in Retirement*,* remarkable for its creative thinking, he attacked the feudal system with great vehemence, calling all kings of the past two thousand years bandits and thieves. The style of his writing was different from that of other contemporary philosophers who usually wrote in the form of commentaries to the classics. His series of essays was an exposition of his own philosophy and political thought.

Chen Chueh,* a schoolmate of Huang Tsung-hsi, opposed the theory of the Sung and Ming Neo-Confucians who advocated "rational human nature" as against human desire. He construed human nature in terms of actual life. It was practice, he thought, that determined the good or bad in human nature, and he believed human nature should undergo privations and hardships just as plants have to live in all kinds of weather. In writing the *Mortuary Book** he showed his materialist ideas in attacking the superstitious belief in the spirits giving blessings. In another book *An Analysis of the Great Learning** he strongly criticized the philosophy of the Neo-Confucians. He said that he had tried to correct the Cheng brothers and Chu Hsi in order to prevent students of philosophy from being hoodwinked and also to emancipate his own conscience from bondage.

Ku Yen-wu (1613-1682) was a member of the Restoration Society¹ in his youth. • In 1644 he took part in the

¹See p. 63.

struggle waged by the people of the region against the Manchus, which extended from Soochow to Chiahing. After the failure of the struggle he went to the north to look for a new base from which to carry on the struggle anew. He criticized the Neo-Confucian theory of the line of succession from the historical, evolutionary point of view. He pointed out that the rationalism of the Neo-Confucians was different from that of the ancient or original Confucianism. Instead of studying history, documents, culture, institutions and living realities, the Neo-Confucians engaged only in empty talks on abstract principles, being Buddhist rather than Confucian in their thinking. The ancient Confucian scholars were engaged in the study of classics, Ku Yen-wu said; they studied practical problems of life. The ancient world was, therefore, Ku's model. He considered that the ancient scholars acquired knowledge through practice and actual experience in human affairs. The knowledge they spoke of was the practical knowledge of how to improve themselves and others and was not abstract theories of human nature and reason. In Ku Yen-wu's opinion, no spiritual being existed beyond man's actual experience. No spiritual world existed beyond the world of human activities. He rejected the theory of the Neo-Confucians about the "mind-to-mind" transmission of true knowledge through the Three Sages,¹ saying that the mind was merely a fine type of matter capable of thinking. It was only through experience that man can learn the laws of na-

¹The Three Sages were given in three versions by ancient Chinese scholars: (1) Fu Hsi, King Wen, and Confucius; (2) Emperor Yu, Duke Chou, and Confucius; and (3) Emperors Yao, Shun and Yu.

ture and distinguish truth from error. Since everybody was capable of acquiring knowledge through experience, there was no such thing as "mind-to-mind" transmission.

"A man must be well read in literature and be of high principle" was the ancient adage Ku Yen-wu used to guide his conduct. There were, so he thought, two sides to being a man of high principle, negative and positive. On the negative side a man of high principle should not do irrational things such as to write stereotyped essays or engage in empty talks about the mysterious doctrine of the way of heaven and original human nature. On the positive side he should consider government and the interests of the whole nation as his responsibility. In other words, every man should consider himself responsible for the fate of the whole nation. By literature Ku Yen-wu did not mean the ordinary kind of literary writings; he meant practical knowledge of historical changes and political, social and economic problems. He considered knowledge to be a reflection of objective reality and that its correctness should be tested by experience. He used the method of inductive logic to refute the dogmatic method of the Neo-Confucians. His inductive method is characterized by emphasis on investigation, reliance on first-hand materials, exhaustive research, use of the historical method, critical analysis, creative thinking, modesty and an open mind.

One of the most notable features of Ku Yen-wu's method of study was to combine the study of the Six Classics with that of current affairs. He thought the study of the past should enlighten the study of, and be of practical use to, the present. Study of the past for its own sake

without reference to the present leads to erroneous views and bigotry.

Among the philosophers of the period of enlightenment Yen Yuan (1635-1704) was the most radical. His criticism of Neo-Confucianism was even more disparaging than that of the other philosophers, Wang Fu-chih, Huang Tsung-hsi and Ku Yen-wu. He denounced blind faith and superstition, extolled reason and decried the prevailing Neo-Confucianism since the Sung and Ming dynasties. He said that whether a doctrine was right or wrong depended on whether it conformed to truth or not, but did not depend on the number of its supporters. If a doctrine was true, it would still be true even if it were supported by only one or two persons. If a doctrine were false it would still be false even if it were believed by millions of people. A doctrine should not be accepted just because many others accept it. Yen Yuan was aware that his radical views might land him in trouble. But he persisted in his own belief to oppose the Neo-Confucians — the Cheng brothers, Chu Hsi, Lu Chiu-yuan, and Wang Shou-jen.

Basing his judgement on the facts of history, Yen Yuan criticized the main trend of thought since the Sung and Ming dynasties. He made a distinction between two worlds: the "world of words" and the "world of action." The "world of words" was a world of superstitious belief, Buddhist meditation, literary verbosity and empty talk. It was full of conventions and restrictions which stifled creative genius. It was a world of gloom and darkness, and the breeding ground of subjective Neo-Confucian philosophies. In contrast with this, was the "world of reality" or "world of action." In this practical world both hand and brain are used. Here doctors give

treatment to patients, soldiers fight on the battlefield, road-builders build roads, sailors steer their boats, peasants work in the fields, tailors make clothes, composers write music, legislators enact laws, and so on. These people may be doing things of a widely different nature, since there is a division of labour, but they are nevertheless all working people. They are full of spirit and energy and each one has something to give to this manifold world of ours. The "world of words," according to Yen Yuan, was declining while the "world of action" was rising. It is significant that Yen Yuan's philosophy, his division of society into two worlds, was a reflection of the class struggle. In his time the struggle between the progressive and conservative forces was also reflected in the realm of thought, as was the implacable opposition of the town and city dwellers to decaying feudalism.

Yen Yuan held that matter was the original substance or cause of all things, while "reason" or "principle" was the law inherent in the things themselves. Without material things there could be no "reason." In his theory of knowledge, Yen Yuan stressed the importance of perception and practice in the process of knowing. There was a passage in the *Great Learning*,* one of the *Four Books*, about "the investigation of things and extension of knowledge." Yen Yuan interpreted "to investigate" as "to struggle." Thus the process of learning was, according to him, a process of struggle to possess knowledge. He said that to know the rites a person must perform them and to know music they must actually sing and dance. In other words, a man must do a thing before he can understand it. The method of contemplation and meditation of the Neo-Confucians, he pointed out, can only make an effeminate scholar out of a man with book

knowledge and no practical experience. He, therefore, called on the men of letters of his time to free themselves from the bondage of the stereotyped writing and to study science and technology.

Li Kung,* one of Yen Yuan's disciples, carried on and developed this philosophy. But in his theory of knowledge he gave a wrong interpretation to the significance of practice.

Having established their rule in China, the Manchus increased their national oppression. Many innocent scholars were persecuted on account of their writings opposing the interests of the ruling class. The Manchus promoted textual research and the philosophy of Neo-Confucianism so as to facilitate and strengthen their control over the people's thinking. The famous 18th century philosopher Tai Chen* (1723-1777) voiced a strong protest against this policy of thought control. He hinted that "reason" or "principle" has a class character. The ruling class had its own "reason" or "principle" which it uses as an instrument to enslave the people. The people also had theirs which the ruling class considered to be an instrument of revolt. In world outlook Tai Chen believed that the objective world consisted of matter in motion. *The Book of Changes* speaks about what is without shape, meaning the metaphysical and what has shape, meaning the physical. Both, according to Tai Chen, are substance and phenomena in movement. The former is the internal aspect of matter while the latter is the external shape of it as it appears to be. There is, therefore, no such thing as abstract "reason" or "principle" having no connection with matter and objective reality. Tai Chen particularly stressed the value of knowledge derived from the analysis and generalization

of actual things and events in the objective world. One shortcoming in his theory of knowledge was that he did not pay enough attention to practice and so his theory of knowledge cannot be compared favourably with that of Yen Yuan. However, he strongly opposed the teachings of the Sung Neo-Confucians that men should forsake their desires and restore their innate reason. He believed that desire was also innate in man and taught that if a man's desire was satisfied he would not harm himself nor would he interfere with others in satisfying their desire; and this conforms to reason. It was really an indirect refutation of the philosophy of the ruling class because, as he said, they often "killed people in the name of reason."

During the eighteenth century academic pursuits were under strict control and as a consequence learning in the style of the Han dynasty scholars* was promoted. This type of learning did not deal with the philosophical aspect of Confucianism, but was only devoted to laborious research into historical material divorced from politics, which the Manchu ruling class saw as a useful instrument for keeping the thought of the scholars ineffective and impractical. But the progressive scholars of the time, such as Wang Chung* (1744-1794),¹ Chang Hsueh-cheng* (1738-1801) and Chiao Hsun* (1763-1820) were aware of this underlying motive and raised their criticisms.

Wang Chung was a rebel against feudal society. Critical and sceptical in spirit, he frowned on the conventional studies of his time and castigated the contemporary scholars. He carried on the tradition of the enlightened

¹Different from Wang Chung (27-107) discussed in Chapter 2.

scholars of the early Ching dynasty. His aim was to revive the philosophy of the thinkers of the Warring States Period, especially the theory of universal love expounded by Mo Ti and the materialist theory of Hsun Ching. Although Wang Chung did some work in textual research, it was, as he said himself, different from that done by the other scholars because his aim was to bring out the real meaning of the Six Classics and make them serve the needs of his time.

Chang Hsueh-cheng was relentless in his criticism of the Han style learning. According to him the writings of these scholars were not original but merely selections copied from other works. They were the results of painstaking labour, to be sure, but they had no originality and could not be called schools or systems of thought. Containing vast quantities of information they were at best reference material for the use of students, and like a carriage or a boat used by a traveller, which should be discarded when the traveller arrived at his destination. But the ordinary scholar of this type, Chang Hsueh-cheng thought, was like a traveller who rides a carriage or a boat perpetually and never knows where to go.

The most brilliant part of Chang Hsueh-cheng's philosophy is, however, his materialism. He drew heavily on Mo Ti, Lao Tzu, Hsun Ching, and Han Fei, each one of whom, he said, had mastered one aspect of the great "truth" or "Way." He said "truth" resides in "instrument." He made certain revisions of Lao Tzu's philosophy, omitting the point that "truth" is unknowable but reaffirming the natural law that "truth" has substance. He criticized the Neo-Confucians of the Sung and Ming dynasties and in contrast declared that

"heaven is manifested in man and reason exists in matter." In his theory of knowledge he believed that subjective knowledge is a reflection of objective reality. He also pointed out that without practical experience knowledge would be merely an empty thing, lacking validity. The study of books alone makes men narrow-minded pedants.

One of Chang Hsueh-cheng's most important achievements was his theory with regard to the Classics. He discussed the question "the Six Classics are all history!" With great boldness he pointed out that the Six Classics¹ which were accepted by people of feudal society as sacred are but the records of laws and institutions of ancient times, ancient treatises on politics and records of ancient social life; they were, therefore, "instruments." There was nothing sacred or permanent about them. This view of his was considered by the ruling class as blasphemy, and that of a rebel. He was, therefore, branded a heretic.

Chiao Hsun was a great mathematician. He followed the lead given by Tai Chen and carried on further research but in a critical spirit. From his knowledge of mathematics he advanced the philosophical theory of formalistic equilibrium. He thought that all changes are those of quantity and that things do not differ from one another in their essential quality or inner composition. He described numbers as an absolute form, having an independent existence apart from the material world. His world outlook was, therefore, a form of idealism, in which quantitative relations became the cause of the universe. Chiao Hsun's theory of equilibrium may be said to reflect the rise of new ideas from the intellectual

¹ See p. 57.

contact between the East and West following the development of commerce and communication. He was also the precursor of Tan Ssu-tung,* an advocate of the "science of benevolence" which savoured of bourgeois "free trade."

Having made quantitative relations the initial cause of the universe, Chiao Hsun proceeded to show the many shortcomings of the textual research of the Han style learning. He thought that this hampered creative thinking. He, therefore, proposed that a scholar should broaden the scope of his study by having the Six Classics as his guide and also studying the works of the various schools of philosophy extensively to gain a comprehensive understanding of linguistic problems and the power of reasoning. He should not only test the truth of his knowledge by practice but also see that it conformed to philosophical principles. He criticized the usual methods of study in his time, believing that a scholar should be versed in literature, textual criticism and philosophy, the last being the most important. He was one of the earliest Ching scholars to revive the doctrines of the Modern Text School of the Han dynasty. From the sayings he quoted from the Kungyang School,*¹ it would appear that he believed also in certain reforms.

By the end of the eighteenth century the disintegration of feudal society was obvious. Peasant uprisings continued without cessation. Meanwhile, the colonial policy of the Western imperialists was intensified. Social conflicts of the time were reflected in the views of Kung Tzu-chen* (1792-1841) and Wei Yuan* (1794-1856).

Kung Tzu-chen criticized the corrupt practices of the

¹ See footnote on p. 86.

Ching court and predicted that all time-worn ideas and systems would be destroyed by the peasants in their uprisings. He saw through the colonial schemes of the British and prophesied that a new historical epoch would dawn. He paid great attention to the question of land-ownership. He said that in the ancient patriarchal clan communes equitable instead of unfair distribution prevailed. He, therefore, looked upon the ancient patriarchal society as his ideal.

Wei Yuan believed that the world was constantly changing. The more old ideas and practices were discarded, the better it would be for the people. In his discussions on political questions he criticized the Ching government for its corruption and proposed plans for making China a strong and wealthy country. He advised the use of tactics in dealing with foreign countries saying: "Take advantage of the hostility between foreign countries to make them fight each other; learn their strong points so as to pay them in their own coin." What he meant by "strong points" were warships, fire-arms and the methods of building up and training an army. "If we want to know the real conditions of foreign countries," said he, "we must begin with establishing an institute to translate foreign books into Chinese." His book *Illustrated Records of Oceanic Countries** contained information on world geography. He paid much attention to the appearance of merchant capital at that time.

Kung Tzu-chen and Wei Yuan were forerunners of the modern liberal-bourgeois reformists.

4. Modern Philosophy: the New and Old Learning and Bourgeois Philosophy

After the Opium War (1840-1842) Chinese society gradually became semi-feudal and semi-colonial. The Western imperialists dumped their cheap manufactured goods into the Chinese market and, as Marx had pointed out, destroyed China's natural economy which was based on a combination of individual farming and home handicrafts. The feudal, patriarchal society of China, which had previously closed its doors to foreigners, quickly underwent a complete change. The inroads of capitalism and the collapse of the feudal order soon awoke the progressive intellectuals from their slumber and made them realize the necessity of studying Western culture in order to save their country from doom. But among the more enlightened feudal scholars only a feeble attempt was made at social reform. The real heralds of a new era who rose in revolutionary struggle were the masses, the millions of oppressed and despised peasants.

Modern revolutions in China have been characterized by their mass character, usually involving millions of people. They arose like waves one after the other and living epics of glory and heroism were written by them. The Taiping Revolution, which began in 1850, was the curtain-raiser of modern democratic revolution in China. As soon as the Chinese peasants stepped onto the stage of modern history, they at once took up of their own

free will the task of struggling against both feudal oppression and foreign aggression. The land system and political platform of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (1851-1864) represented Utopian ideals and the struggle of the broad masses of Chinese peasants against feudal oppression.

Adopting a theological form of the Reformation, the Taipings borrowed the concept of a rebel "God" from the West and founded a religion which they believed to be reformed Christianity. Their sharp contrasting of God and the Devil represented the irreconcilable ideological conflict between the broad masses of revolutionary peasants and the traditional feudal forces. Their aim was to destroy the hell on earth created by the feudal landlords. Borrowing from the doctrines of primitive Christianity they dreamed of a paradise on earth where liberty, equality and fraternity would prevail. In the modern history of China it was precisely the despised peasants who first dared to stand up and fight against the feudal moral code and superstitions, who dared to overthrow the idol of Confucius, who dared to declare war against all feudal tradition and conventions. The Taiping movement shook the patriarchal system and the ideology of feudal society to its roots. The feudal moralists called it "the greatest moral degradation of all times." It was in reality a great political, cultural and ideological revolution. The revolutionary thought of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was a prelude to the modern enlightenment movement in China.

One of the characteristics of the modern enlightenment movement was that, neither its leaders nor its followers were able to entirely free themselves from scholastic tradition. They expressed their views in the

language of the Classics and the works of the ancient philosophers. In other words, modern thought was clothed in the language of the Sages. In this respect not even the revolutionaries of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, who attempted linguistic reform were different, for their programme for a cultural revolution, which opposed Confucianism or traditional moral institutions, was still expressed within the context of the classical learning. When speaking of equality Hung Hsiuchuan,* the leader of the Taiping Revolution, explained it by quoting the passage dealing with "cosmopolitanism" from the ancient treatise "Evolutions of Rites." When speaking of the capitalist system Hung Jen-kan,* another Taiping leader, cloaked it with the enlightened despotism of the Duke of Chou.¹

Another characteristic of thinkers connected with the modern enlightenment movement in China was that their outlook was no longer limited within the bounds of feudal national culture isolated from the outside world. They had an elementary knowledge of the current world situation and the culture of the capitalist countries. As China gradually lost her former position of being a great nation and sank to the humiliating position of being a dumping ground for European capitalists they realized that it was necessary to reform the old feudal culture by studying the Western way of life and learning "new theories" and "new principles" from the West. The term "Western Learning" became the main subject of dispute between intellectuals of the new and old schools of thought.

¹ See p. 3.

The struggle in the realm of thought and culture in modern China was a struggle waged by progressives of recent origin against conservatives of long standing. It was a conflict between the young immature culture of the rising bourgeoisie and the old deep-rooted culture of feudal China. It was a conflict between Western or New Learning and Chinese or Old Learning. The former consisted of natural and social sciences serving the cause of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, while the latter consisted of traditional doctrines serving the interests of the feudal ruling class. Owing to the weakness of the bourgeoisie and the advent of the imperialist era in the world, works of intellectuals advocating Western or New Learning, whether their terminology was borrowed from the West or from the ancients, could not but contain many backward and feudal ideas. They were like a child just learning to imitate the grown-ups.

In the thirty years following the defeat of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom the men in power were representatives of the landlords and bureaucrats whose rise to power was due to their ability to suppress the peasant revolutions. With the support of Western capital they launched the "Westernization" Movement* which aimed mainly at establishing an armament industry. The "Westernization" Movement was in reality one of feudal bureaucrats who later became compradors. They were the precursors of the bureaucrat-comprador bourgeoisie. "Chinese Learning is the substance and Western Learning is the functioning"—this was the slogan of the "Westernizing" group. They wanted to breathe life into the corpse of feudalism and to decorate it with modern culture and science. They wanted to curry favour with the Western capitalists and thus maintain their own posi-

tion and interests. The movement must not, therefore, be looked upon as a real measure whereby they hoped to learn the truth from the West.

Meanwhile, the first reformists of modern China appeared among the scholar-officials of feudal society. They included such men as Ma Chien-chung* (1845-1900), Chen Chih,* Hsueh Fu-cheng* (1838-?), and Cheng Kuan-ying* (1841-?). They were the opponents of the "Westernizing" group. They criticized the latter with varying degrees of severity and vaguely expressed their desire to develop private industrial enterprises and see the realization of constitutional monarchy. These scholar-officials had been influenced by Western capitalist thought and they became, consciously or unconsciously, the spokesmen of the rising class of industrialists and business men of the 1860s.

The defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 proved that the "Westernizing" group was utterly incapable of finding a remedy for China's ills. At this time the Western capitalist powers were entering the new era of imperialism and beginning to seek capital investment in China. Taking advantage of cheap labour they used their capital to build factories in China and made the Chinese economy entirely dependent upon them. A wave of anti-imperialist feeling was rising through the Chinese masses and the seeds of a democratic revolution were sown. In the middle and upper sections of the ruling class there was also an increasing desire for reform. As a result a new movement was launched by a group of liberal-bourgeois reformists headed by Kang Yu-wei.*

Kang Yu-wei (1858-1927) raised his voice at this time of national crisis to call for political reform.* His re-

formist ideas did have an influence on the progressive trend of his time and were in the interest of the nation. But he emphasized that change was the way of heaven. His idea was that change was not to be gained through observing the laws of development and change in the conflict between the old and new but rather it was based on wishful thinking. He wanted to change some external features of the old regime and adapt them to the new situation to perpetuate their existence. This was a distortion of the evolutionary theory and was based on imagination and not on fact. "Heaven is everlasting because it can adapt to change and so is earth," he said. In other words, he was using the idea of gradual change as a means of preventing change. His logic was exactly the timid logic of the reformists, and when applied to politics it became the idea that if a ruling house followed the way of heaven and made changes in due time, it would last for ever. By political reform, he meant that the emperor should make certain voluntary changes and minor concessions on the question of constitutional monarchy. Kang Yu-wei also talked about modernization.* But what he hoped for was merely that the feudal government would use its power to carry out a policy of mercantilism, develop capitalism to a limited extent and keep the feudal system fundamentally intact.

Kang Yu-wei had a smattering of Western knowledge, of the natural sciences, history, geography, etc. He was greatly influenced and impressed by the Reformation in Europe and attempted to carry out reforms in China on a similar pattern. He put forward a new theory concerning the original ideas of Confucius as a reformer in order to give authenticity to, and provide himself with a propaganda weapon for, his programme of reform. In

his book *The Study of Classics Forged During the Hsin Period** he stated that the Classics of the Modern Text School of the Western Han dynasty were the original Classics handed down by Confucius while the "Classics" of the Ancient Text School of the Eastern Han dynasty were forged by Liu Hsin.* Just as the Protestant thinkers of the Reformation period distorted scholastic philosophy to prove that the God worshipped in the Middle Ages was not the true God. Kang Yu-wei's theory dealt a severe blow to the traditional Classics which had been believed to be authentic and had been studied by scholars for two thousand years. He tried to prove that the Confucius worshipped by the Confucians for so many centuries was a false idol. In his book *An Inquiry into Confucius' Reform in the Name of the Ancients** he adopted the method of the Kungyang School¹ and claimed to give a true picture of Confucius. He said that the Six Classics were all works of Confucius in an attempt to bring order out of chaos at his time by using the names of Emperors Yao, Shun, etc. who were merely his ideal and therefore imaginary sages. Thus, Kang Yu-wei made Confucius a pioneer reformer, who claimed authority of the ancients as a basis for his plan of reform. It is obvious that such historical views were absurd. But what Kang Yu-wei did was not without progressive significance. He aroused people's critical spirit and made them re-examine and reappraise history.

According to Kang Yu-wei, the real teaching of Confucius is embodied in *The Spring and Autumn Annals* and

¹Members of this school were followers of Kungyang Kao (late Warring States Period) in the interpretation of Confucius' work, *The Spring and Autumn Annals*.

its real meaning is to be found in the tradition of the Kungyang School and in the book *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals** written by Tung Chungshu. Adopting the methods and principles of the Kungyang School Kang Yu-wei expounded his philosophy that "love" or "benevolence" is the essence of the *Annals*. He explained "love" by such terms as "inability to endure seeing the sufferings of others," "soul," "spirit," etc. "Love" which originates in heaven is equivalent to Master, the idea of God common to many religions of the world. He was against the atheistic views of Darwin and others but failed to give any convincing proof of his arguments. The only argument he could offer was: "The world is so big and man so small that he will never be able to know everything." The scientists' denial of the existence of God he thought very presumptuous. His conclusion was, therefore, that the existence of God was certain. But Kang Yu-wei also accepted the scientific view of the natural scientists and believed that "Heaven" is a boundless celestial sphere with infinite numbers of stars and constellations. He was awed by the infinite extent of the universe and deplored the limitations of human knowledge.

Occasionally Kang Yu-wei wandered away from the realm of philosophy and entered that of the natural sciences, making certain correct statements about the structure of the universe. In his book *Discourses on the Heavens*,* for instance, he followed the nebular theory of Kant and explained the sun as having originated from tiny substances — "a big mass of gaseous substance," to use his own words. But he could not understand or explain natural sciences in terms of materialist philosophy. Whenever a fundamental problem of philosophy arose

he at once invoked his spiritualist world outlook, giving a twisted meaning. For instance, he explained "electricity" as "benevolence" tinging it with a mysterious element.¹

As the liberal reformists, of whom Kang Yu-wei was a leader, stood aloof from the masses, they could receive no material support from them. They had to seek help from the spiritual realm with its principle of "love" or "benevolence" for the "salvation of the world." "Love" became, for them, a mysterious, eternal and omnipotent power. Kang Yu-wei connected the idea of "love" with that of trade which he thought was the result of a relationship between self and other men. This shows that the philosophical principle of the reformists, i.e. "love," was closely connected with their politico-economical doctrine. This was mercantilism and the former was a reflection of the latter in the realm of abstract thought. He further believed that there were three stages of "love" with ever increasing scope. The first stage was filial piety, as taught by the Confucians together with the love for other people, varying according to the degree of intimacy. The principle of filial piety demanded that the distinctions of high and low, noble and base, old and young, internal and external, far and near, etc. in social relations should never be altered. The second stage of "love," which had special reference to the conduct of the rulers, was to love the people (i.e. to serve the cause of

¹In his book *Commentaries on Mencius** Kang Yu-wei said, "The feeling of inability to endure seeing the sufferings of others is benevolence, electricity or Ether, which everybody has. All benevolent policies originate from this feeling; it is the sea of all changes, the roots, the source. . . ."

the bourgeoisie). The third or final stage was an extension of the idea to the world of nature—the world of rivers, mountains, plants, insects, etc. The work of “love” in this stage included the promotion of industry and transformation of nature. Kang Yu-wei’s philosophy of “love” is, therefore, a philosophy of compromise. By calling its primary requisite filial piety, he meant to compromise with feudalism and through this compromise he wished to realize reform in the style of capitalism, i.e. through the second and third stages of “love.” It clearly reflects his compromising attitude and reformist views on constitutional monarchy.

In his book *On Cosmopolitanism** he gave a detailed account of the sufferings mankind had undergone since the earliest times and a description of the prosperity and happiness in the new “cosmopolitan world” of his imagination. He derived his idea of this world from European theories of Utopian socialism and the Western bourgeois idea of democracy. It was meant to be a development of, as well as an improvement on, the traditional political thought of the Confucians. The parts of his book which attacked private ownership of property and expressed hope for a happy future were progressive in nature. But when he described his plan of how to attain the “cosmopolitan world” his liberal-bourgeois characteristics were revealed. He made equality between man and woman a key question towards the realization of this “cosmopolitan world.” He never referred to the problem of land which was the central problem of the democratic revolution in modern China. Finally, he pictured his “cosmopolitan world” as nothing more than the democratic system of the U.S.A. and Switzerland. He thought that China could only advance towards a “peaceful era”

or a society of constitutional reform but could not hope for a democratic revolution. As such, Kang Yu-wei's Utopia is not even comparable with the peasants' Utopian socialism of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom nor with Sun Yat-sen's subjective socialism characteristic of the thought of the petty bourgeoisie. In his book *On Cosmopolitanism* Kang Yu-wei distorted the meaning of the democratic revolution. His "cosmopolitan world" is, therefore, not to be looked upon as one of Lenin's "good Utopias."

In the reformist group, the most radical thinker was Tan Ssu-tung* (1865-1898) who, however, remained a reformist in political practice. He borrowed the concept of Ether from the natural sciences and made it his imaginary new authority as a weapon to fight against feudal ethics. In his parlance Ether had the same meaning as benevolence or universal love, compassion, mercy and the power of attraction. He even connected the sacredness of "free trade" with the authority of Ether, considering the former as being derived from the nature of the latter. A closed-door policy in commerce would, according to his theory, be a violation of the principle of Ether or universal love. Equality was also an attribute of Ether. Progress and change were determined by Ether. According to him, Ether, largely a mysterious primary force, was not a spiritual phenomenon separated from the world of reality. It existed in the things of this world. Tan Ssu-tung, therefore, carried on the idealist tradition of Kang Yu-wei's theory of "love." However, while he stressed the importance of natural sciences, his contribution is at its best a kind of disguised materialism under the name of pantheism.

Tan Ssu-tung talked a great deal about the importance of the natural sciences. Although his aim was to use

them to connect with the Confucian, Mohist, Buddhist, and Christian systems of thought, what he wanted was to make natural sciences an instrument for practical use. When he spoke about the natural sciences in relation to his views on political and economic questions including the establishment of schools and buying machines, he praised the natural sciences, extolled their power, and made a good exposition of them. But when he came to a fundamental philosophical problem, he at once halted, turned away from science and resorted to the mysterious principle of "love." "Love," he said, "is the source of all things. The world exists in the mind only; it is pure consciousness." He became, in short, a true idealist. But Tan Ssu-tung considered that the self-sufficient economy of the feudal society was built on the principle of immovability and thrift and strongly attacked it. He regarded the traditional morals and institutions as an instrument of the ruling class for oppressing the people and consolidating their own position. Of the Five Bonds of Relationships¹ he stressed the relationship between friends, considering it to be an expression of the principle of equality. This reflected his idea of bourgeois democracy based on commodity exchange.

Among the liberal reformists Yen Fu* (1853-1921) was the most learned in the natural sciences and in the political and economic theories of the Western bourgeoisie. He lavished praises on the characteristic features of capitalist society, saying, "In the sphere of learning, let truth prevail over falsehood; in the legal and political spheres subject private interests to those of the public." By the

¹ Between ruler and subjects, father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger and between friends.

first statement he meant the study of the sciences of physics, mathematics, biology, logic, geology, etc.; by the second he was referring to the economic theory of Adam Smith and the political philosophy of Montesquieu. Yen Fu was deeply influenced in his thinking by Spencer. He explained social phenomena by the law of evolution, saying that society is governed by the law of "struggle for existence and natural selection." The strong and intelligent survive while the weak and stupid are eliminated. If China went along the path of capitalism and strove to become a nation of wealth and power, she would, he thought, win in the struggle with nature.

Yen Fu not only paid attention to the practical significance of the natural sciences but also to the importance of their method of study. The method of studying the natural sciences, according to him, was to base theories on facts and to use facts to prove theories. The method used by the schools of Lu Chiu-yuan and Wang Shou-jen, he stated, was just the opposite. Their theories were not based on facts and they did not use facts to prove their theories. They thought that the laws of nature should obey their will and they spun theories out of their own minds. Yen Fu, therefore, exhorted people to reject the subjective method of these idealists and go to the natural sciences and logic for real knowledge. He considered, however, the methods used in science to be nothing but a matter of logic: deduction and induction. To promote the study of logic, he translated John Stuart Mill's *Logic* (translation unfinished) and William Stanley Jevons' *Elementary Lessons in Logic* into Chinese. Beginning in 1900 he taught logic in Shanghai. His influence was widely felt among the intellectuals of his time.

Yen Fu voiced strong opposition to absolute monarchy. He did not, however, stand for the immediate abolition of monarchy in China. On the contrary, he supported the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. In the later years of his life he, like Kang Yu-wei, renounced the doctrine of reform and became a supporter of the conservative ideas.

During the period between the Yi Ho Tuan Movement¹ in 1900 and the Revolution of 1911, conditions in China may be described as follows: First, national and social crises which were interwoven were serious and the contradiction between the Chinese people and alliance of the imperialist and feudal forces was becoming increasingly strong. A dark shadow fell over the whole land and the people lived and suffered in a stifling atmosphere of oppression. Secondly, forces were gathering for a great upheaval. The people's revolution, accelerated by the national and social crises, rolled on like a wave, revealing a great historic panorama of popular struggle as it steadily developed. Ever since the time of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (1851-1864), revolution in modern China has shown a markedly mass character. It was not the feeble moaning of a few reformists but an uprising of millions upon millions of people. "Millions upon millions of people, oppressed and slumbering in medieval stagnancy, have awakened, demand a new life, and struggle for the elementary rights of man, for democracy." (V. I. Lenin, *The Awakening of Asia*) This was precisely the era of "the awakening of Asia."

¹Originally known as Yi Ho Chuan (Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists) and known in the West as the "Boxers."

After the suppression of the Yi Ho Tuan Movement by joint imperialist and feudal forces, the national crisis in China deepened. Acting in accordance with the Western bourgeois theory of the equality of rights of man, progressive intellectuals such as Tsou Jung,* Chen Tien-hua,* and Wu Yueh* challenged the feudal despotic system. Tsou Jung in his *Revolutionary Army* (published in 1903) and Chen Tien-hua in his *Wake Up and Warning Bell* (published in 1903-04) revealed the miserable life of the people under the oppression of the Ching dynasty and the foreign powers. With great eloquence they aroused in the mind of the people desire for freedom and democracy and encouraged their will to struggle. They showed a frantic enthusiasm which is characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie. In an article reviewing the *Revolutionary Army*, the *Kiangsu Journal** said:

The aim of the book is to drive away the Manchus and restore China to the Chinese. Its style is clear and precise. Its tone is profoundly pathetic. Anyone, who has the slightest feeling of nationalism, cannot help, after reading it, to jump up on his feet, swing his sword, and feel his blood boil with indignation. If this book can be popularized and its ideas implanted in the mind of 400 million people, China will doubtlessly rise and become strong. Thus, our hope lies in the readers of the *Revolutionary Army*.

In 1905, uniting the Society for the Revival of China,* the Restoration League* and China Revival League,* a group of bourgeois revolutionary democrats founded the China Revolutionary League* in Tokyo, Japan. Their political programme of bourgeois revolution was: "Drive away the Manchus, restore China to the Chinese, estab-

lish a republic, and equalize landownership." The *People's Herald*,* organ of the Revolutionary League, carried many articles and pictures about the Russian Revolution of 1905. This shows that China's pioneer revolutionaries had a profound admiration for the Russian revolution. The Russian revolution proved, the *People's Herald* pointed out, that the path of constitutional monarchy is a blind alley and that revolution is the only effective means of realizing democratic government. The confidence of the bourgeois revolutionary democrats in the success of the Chinese revolution and determination to carry it out was greatly strengthened by the example of Russia's revolution. But they were entirely unable to see the special characteristics of what happened in Russia in 1905 which made it different from previous bourgeois revolutions. The 1905 Revolution testified that only the working class could assume leadership of a thoroughgoing bourgeois-democratic revolution, and that only the working class could lead and unite the broad masses of peasants, overthrow feudal rule, and clear the way for socialism.

Writing in the *New People's Magazine*,* Kang Yu-wei and Liang Chi-chao,* leaders of the Constitutionalists, strongly advocated the reformist method and opposed the transformation of China by revolution. They advocated the preservation of the monarchical form of government and feudal landownership by all possible means. They also disseminated theories such as "revolution will invite the partition of China," "revolution will breed civil war," etc., which were intended to discredit democratic revolution. Liang Chi-chao (1873-1929), editor of the magazine, was the chief spokesman for the Constitutional Monarchists. During the period 1895-98 he collaborated with

Kang Yu-wei in propagating their ideas of political reform and introducing the political and scientific thought of the Western bourgeoisie. In those days this did have a progressive significance. In 1902 he published an article in the *New People's Magazine* entitled "On the New People" which exerted a great influence on the public. In this article he called for a "great destruction" in China. The Chinese people, he said, should cultivate the spirit of adventure, consciousness of their own rights, self-respect, ability for self-government and co-operation among themselves. But his conclusion was that the masses were not yet qualified to talk about destruction, and the country could never be saved by the revolution of the "trouble-makers" (i.e. the revolutionaries). From this we can see clearly the difference between the two lines followed by the reformists and the revolutionaries.

To refute the false theories of the Monarchists who advised the "enlightened despots" to consider the establishment of a constitution, the bourgeois revolutionary democrats founded the *People's Herald*, organ of the Revolutionary League. Sun Yat-sen, Chu Chih-hsin,* Chang Tai-yen* and others contributed many articles in which they advocated democratic revolution, preparing the ideological background for the Revolution of 1911.

In criticizing the theory of the Constitutionalists that "revolution will invite the partition of China," the revolutionary democrats pointed out that the foreign powers carried out aggression in China because China was weak and her people poor. If China would only brace up but not becoming belligerent, the big powers would be less covetous of her. The revolutionary democrats, however, had no clear understanding of imperialism. They even declared that after the victory of the revolution the trea-

ties signed by the Manchu government with the foreign powers would be respected.

In refuting the Constitutionalists' theory that "revolution will breed civil war," the revolutionary democrats said that after the victory of the revolution a democratic republic would be established. The function of government would be divided into three parts — judicial, executive, and legislative — and thus the monopoly of power by any single branch could be avoided. The power of the president would not be as great as that of the parliament and members of the parliament would be elected according to electoral law. Therefore, they said, civil war could not occur. The idea of a bourgeois republic put forward by the democrats had a great influence on the intellectual world. It made people realize that under the rule of the Manchus constitutionalism was not the right road towards national salvation.

About the same time, some leaders of the revolutionary democrats saw for themselves that the capitalist countries of Europe and America had not succeeded in leading their people into a land of happiness and that the problem of socialist revolution was already on the agenda of these countries. They, therefore, thought that China might as well put socialism into practice at an early time so as to prevent difficulties from arising in the future. But they spoke of the "equalization of landownership," which was an item in the platform of democratic revolution, as a measure of social revolution. This, however, was a mistake.

The Revolution of 1911, under the leadership of the revolutionary democrats headed by Sun Yat-sen, overthrew the rule of the Manchu dynasty. Although this revolution did not make China a real republic, it did

inspire the people with the spirit of democracy and the idea was deeply impressed on their minds. After the revolution, however, the bourgeois revolutionary democrats were rent by dissension. Some of them withdrew from the revolution and collaborated with Yuan Shih-kai, while others retailed the theories of the declining bourgeoisie of foreign countries and hoped through them to find a way out. As to the democrats headed by Sun Yat-sen, although they were also perplexed and dejected they had a strong will and a revolutionary spirit and therefore they marched forward without stopping.

A section of the intellectuals among the revolutionary democrats turned from optimism to pessimism. This change was reflected most clearly in the philosophical thought of Chang Tai-yen.

Chang Tai-yen was a great scholar and a political activist who took part in the early bourgeois-democratic revolutionary movement. When he participated in the anti-Manchu struggle in the earlier period of his life he denounced the compromising attitude of the Constitutionalists, and advocated democratic revolution. But after the 1911 Revolution he became pessimistic and despondent and lost confidence. So he escaped into the idealist world of Buddhism.

In the earlier period, in his philosophical thought he followed the tradition of Hsun Ching and Han Fei. But during the formation of his philosophical system he soon began to adhere to the idealism of Chuang Tzu and the Buddhists. He combined these two forms of idealism and mixed them with the world of will and idea of Schopenhauer and the agnosticism of Kant. In his world outlook he believed that time had no real existence and was purely a mental conception. He even said that all things in

the universe were immaterial and hence illusory, and stated explicitly that "the universe was non-existent and that its existence had to be established by the mind." Thus, he denied that the objective world has an existence independent of the mind.

What has been said above, however, gives only one aspect of Chang Tai-yen's philosophy. In his earlier works he reveals another. Participation in the anti-feudal political struggle and in the realm of thought together with his realistic spirit of learning helped him to show in his philosophy, especially in his theory of knowledge, certain elements of materialism and atheism. The materialist elements and positive method in Chang Tai-yen's philosophy was closely connected with his sound political views in the earlier period of his life. He was sceptical about the capitalist system of Europe and America. He wanted China to practise the system of "direct participation by the people" as soon as a democratic system was established. He also said that the abolition of land monopoly was the key to the implementation of the democratic system. All these views were progressive.

In studying Chang Tai-yen's philosophy, we must first acquaint ourselves with his logic of linguistics. Speaking of the development of language and thought he stressed that practice through work gave rise to perceptual experience, which is the source of mental activity. He accepted Hsun Ching's theory that "language must first go through the sensory organs" which meant perceptual experience. "During primitive times," Chang Tai-yen said, "language was used to express the concrete things in man's experience; the nature of objects and the relation between them came later." His theory, in brief, was that

a man gets, through perceptual experience, the images of concrete things. After these images have appeared in a man's brain many times and have been analysed and synthesized he begins to know the relation between them and their nature. This theory of treating the process of the formation of language as a natural process should, of course, be considered as materialist.

Speaking of the origin of knowledge Chang Tai-yen said that inference could not be made without perception. By this he meant that perceptual experience is the basis of thought. He also pointed out that if we rely solely on perceptual experience and ignore our reasoning power we may mistake a wrong perception for a right one. We must therefore depend on reasoning for true knowledge.

With regard to the Kungyang School,¹ which was known for its distorted interpretations of the Classics, Chang Tai-yen proposed to use the realistic method as a remedy for its defects. To neglect the realistic method and start with *a priori* ideas in reasoning, he pointed out, will lead one to the absurd ideas of theology. He therefore taught that we should dispense with *a priori* ideas altogether.

Using the positive method in studying Chinese philosophy Chang Tai-yen put forward many original and constructive ideas. He was opposed, for instance, to the Kungyang School's theory of love. He said that this idea which, in Confucius' thought, implied "conscientiousness and altruism" might be interpreted to mean the deductive and inductive methods of logic. He gave the idealist philosophers Tzu Ssu and Mencius no place in

¹ See p. 86.

the history of philosophy. He considered the popularity of the mystical theory of the "five elements" to be the result of Tzu Ssu's patronage. With regard to Chinese philosophy from the Han dynasty onwards he held many views notable for their veracity. He said, for instance, that Wang Chung was the only philosopher worthy of the name in the Han dynasty. He also considered Cheng Yi and Chu Hsi as arch-hypocrites. All these ideas of his reveal his keen insight.

Kang Yu-wei and others of the Modern Text School with a theological point of view wanted to apotheosize Confucius and establish a religion with Confucius as its founder. Chang Tai-yen, however, said that Confucius' thought was not a religious doctrine and that all theological theories were untenable from the standpoint of logic. He considered all theories of the existence of God to be based on an external cause. The propounders of these theories consider that God transcends everything and is the creator of the universe. This is a dogmatic statement which contains within itself irreconcilable contradictions. If the theory of external cause is further pressed God, the supreme ruler of the universe, also needs to have a cause. He will then no longer be the supreme ruler of the universe. Chang Tai-yen therefore said, "For this reason we must say that there is no God."

After the 1911 Revolution Chinese intellectuals who were groping for a solution to their various problems, both social and philosophical, began to look for it in the West. They introduced the various philosophies of the Western bourgeoisie extensively, such as Kant's dualism, Comte's and Spencer's positivism, and Kropotkin's theory of mutual aid. Wang Kuo-wei* (1877-1927) introduced

the philosophies of Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche to the Chinese reading public. He also explained Chinese philosophical categories, such as "human nature" and "reason," by the philosophical concepts of Kant and Schopenhauer. Wang Kuo-wei's own philosophy, stated briefly in his own words, was as follows: "The idealist world outlook is attractive but not credible; the positive method of natural sciences is credible though not attractive."

Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) was one of China's most outstanding patriots and democratic revolutionaries. His thought can be divided into two stages. The first stage began in 1894 when he was first engaged in political activities and ended at the time of the May 4 Movement in 1919. During this period he put forward his idea of a bourgeois republic and fought for its realization, which, however, the concrete historical conditions of modern China did not permit at that time. Sun Yat-sen was most unhappy about it. During the several years which followed the 1911 Revolution he made a theoretical summation of the experiences gained in the revolution and wrote the book *The Doctrine of Sun Yat-sen*.^{*} In this he outlined his own philosophy. The second stage of his thinking began with the May 4 Movement in 1919 and ended with his death in 1925. During this period he gradually abandoned his old platform for a bourgeois republic and accepted that of a people's democratic republic proposed by the Chinese Communist Party. And for the realization of this new aim, he waged a resolute struggle.

Sun Yat-sen did not have a complete system of philosophy. It was rather a conglomeration of various elements including many aspects of idealism. He often

showed a dualistic tendency, wavering between idealism and materialism. A careful analysis of his writings, however, reveals that there was a rational kernel in his philosophy, a simple, spontaneous materialism based on his profound belief in experimental and natural science. In his writings he made many references to great scientists and their theories, such as Darwin, Newton, Laplace, and Pasteur. He believed that the natural sciences correctly explain the inherent laws of the objective world. From the history of the development of the natural sciences he came to two conclusions. First, as a consequence of this development man's knowledge of the objective world increases. Secondly, the world is evolutionary and man's knowledge, which reflects the conditions of the world, is also evolutionary. His philosophy which was deeply influenced by the theory of evolution, was just the opposite of the dogmatic, metaphysical, feudal philosophy, which says, "Heaven does not change nor will the 'Way' or 'truth.'" Unfortunately, once he divorced himself from the realm of reality with its contradictions, and sought elsewhere for the cause of evolution, he unconsciously went the wrong way.

On the fundamental problem of philosophy, i.e. the problem of matter and spirit, Sun Yat-sen affirmed that matter is substance and spirit is the functioning of substance. The internal and external organs of the human body, for instance, are all substance while speech and motion are functions, performed by man's spirit. Matter and spirit, or substance and function, co-ordinate with each other and are inseparable. By using the traditional terminology in Chinese philosophy Sun Yat-sen established the principle for his own simple materialist world outlook.

Sun Yat-sen thought in somewhat the same way as the natural scientists and philosophers of eighteenth century Europe. These men could not see the contrast between the materialist and the idealist theories of knowledge. But because of their belief in natural science they ridiculed idealism, and refused to accept any theory of knowledge but that of the materialists. Their philosophy was decidedly materialist though they were not aware of the fact. It was the same with Sun Yat-sen. He believed that theory follows the observance of fact; fact precedes speech. In other words, there can be no theory before practice. He illustrated his point by the development of architecture and shipbuilding. Man practises the building of houses and ships first then develops a system of knowledge of architecture and shipbuilding. From facts in the development of science he concluded that the world and its laws are knowable. As an illustration he said that from the study of bacteriology we now know that certain diseases are caused by bacteria and from studying the history of commodity exchange we now know the function of money.

It should be pointed out that Sun Yat-sen's great revolutionary optimism, his fearlessness in encountering great obstacles in the tortuous path of revolution and persistent adherence to the principle of democracy were all the direct result of his philosophical outlook based upon reliance on science. He believed that science would make infinite progress possible, that the world and its laws are knowable, and that the world can be changed.

Sun Yat-sen advanced the theory that "to know is difficult and to do is easy." This theory has little significance so far as the theory of knowledge is concerned for the question of being difficult or easy does not arise with

regard to knowing and doing. The question here is rather one concerning the dialectical relation between knowledge and action, knowledge being derived from action. The proposition "to know is difficult and to do is easy" seems to be rather superficial. But historically speaking, it is not without progressive significance. It was meant to combat the old theory "to know is easy but to do is difficult," which the feudal rulers had used for ages as an excuse for their complacency and procrastination. It also served to warn the people against bureaucrats and politicians who hoped to fish in troubled waters in the time of revolution. It should be noted that the "doing" or "acting" Sun Yat-sen talked about did not refer to the practice of changing the existing conditions in the struggle for production and class struggle. What he meant was merely scientific experiment and personal conduct. He was still unable to reveal the concrete, historical unity between knowing (theory) and doing (practice).

One of the characteristics of Sun Yat-sen's philosophy was that he made "fact" a test of truth. Whether he was criticizing others or stating his own opinions he always substantiated his point with facts. But strictly speaking, Sun Yat-sen's use of the term "fact" was rather restricted. The facts he used to illustrate or support his arguments were often partial and superficial and he often arrived at conclusions from them instead of gaining a knowledge of the laws of things. But it should always be remembered that he was interested in new things and had nothing in common with hidebound dogmatists. He sought truth persistently. He was always ready to draw on his past experiences to correct his mistakes. In his later years, under the influence of the Rus-

sian October Revolution and with the help of the Chinese Communist Party, Sun Yat-sen made great progress in his political thinking. Adopting the policy of allying with Soviet Russia, co-operating with the Communist Party, and supporting the workers and peasants' movement in China, he revised his Three Principles of the People.* This was a big step forward in his political outlook.

In short, we may say that Sun Yat-sen's great emphasis on facts was a notable contribution to the materialist theory of knowledge. It was to his great credit that he had the courage, in the name of the President of the Chinese Republic, to state that the October Revolution was the hope of mankind, to recognize the Soviet Government and to announce his desire to learn from this great revolution.

With the victory of the 1911 Revolution China became a republic. In an attempt to restore monarchy with himself as the emperor, Yuan Shih-kai betrayed the interests of the people and yielded to Japanese pressure in agreeing to the notorious Twenty-one Demands. This further aggravated the national crisis. A new path had to be found. It was the opinion of the more radical bourgeois-democratic intellectuals that the 1911 Revolution had only succeeded in nominally overthrowing the Manchu dynasty which, they thought, still existed in spirit if not in fact since the old ways of thinking and doing things still prevailed. It was, therefore, necessary to uproot all old ideas to found not a nominal republic but a real one. Therefore, around the year 1915 they launched a movement for cultural reform. Their aim was to abolish all the old rites, old ethical and moral standards, and superstitious belief in gods and spirits, all of which were

being perpetuated by the landlord class because they served its interests. This cultural movement was really a continuation of the democratic spirit of the 1911 Revolution. The democratic intellectuals connected with the movement had Chen Tu-hsiu* (1880-1942) and Wu Yu* (1871-1949) as their leaders, who used the natural sciences and the bourgeois theory of "equality of rights" as their weapons in their fight against feudalism. They advocated the establishment of a "free and independent national government," i.e. the capitalist political system. As Mao Tse-tung said in his *On New Democracy*: "At that time the ideology of the new learning played the revolutionary role of fighting the Chinese feudal ideology, and was in the service of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of the old period."¹ This kind of ideology, however, did not answer the historical question: "Which road should China take?" And as long as this question remained unanswered, the people felt an increasingly strong desire to find the right solution.

¹*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1954, Vol. III, p. 143.

5. Contemporary Philosophy: the Two Main Trends in Philosophy Since the May 4 Movement; the Development of Marxism in China

PART I

Lenin pointed out in 1913 that the historical mission of Marxism in the world was carried out in three stages, the last one beginning at the time of the 1905 Revolution in Russia. Since then Marxism has demonstrated its truth and triumphed not only in the West but also in the East. It has given additional proof of its truth and gained further victories in the revolutions which sprang up in Asia. In 1917, the first great socialist country in the world was founded. The valuable experience gained by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in its revolutionary struggle has since become a fountain-head of inspiration to Chinese revolutionaries as well as to the working people of the whole world in their fight for emancipation. The militant theories formulated by Marxism-Leninism have been the guiding star for Chinese and all other revolutionaries. The course of the October Revolution reflected the universal law of the development of human society in its present stage. It is precisely for this reason that Mao Tse-tung frequently exhorts us to be humble pupils of the Soviet Union. Modern China was a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country.

The Marxist-Leninist theory of class struggle, proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, are universal truths and are applicable to China. Lenin said:

The Asiatic revolutions have revealed the same spinelessness and baseness of liberalism, the same exceptional importance of the independence of the democratic masses, and the same sharp demarcation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie of all kinds. After the experience both of Europe and Asia, whoever now speaks of non-class politics and of non-class Socialism simply deserves to be put in a cage and exhibited along with the Australian kangaroo.¹

The new-democratic revolution of China was carried out under the influence of the October Socialist Revolution. The May 4 Movement of 1919² marked a turning point in China's struggle against imperialism and feu-

¹"Historical Destiny of the Doctrine of Karl Marx," V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1950, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 85.

²The May 4 Movement began as a demonstration held by the students of Peking on May 4, 1919 to protest against the imperialists' aggressive activities in China, the Paris Peace Conference which was dominated by the imperialists and against the traitorous crimes committed by Chinese warlords. The patriotic movement soon spread to the other parts of the country. Strikes were held by students, workers, and business men and it soon became a nation-wide movement. It gave a great impetus to the cultural revolution. It aimed chiefly at overthrowing the old moral code, replacing it with a new one and also replacing the old literary style of writing. The movement laid the ideological foundation for the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 and preparing and training many revolutionary cadres.

dalism and China's cultural revolution was one of the phases of that movement. It was during the May 4 Movement that the Chinese working class, taking the leading role in China's democratic revolution, first stepped into the political arena. At the same time the progressive intellectuals having been armed with some rudimentary ideas of communism served as a bridge between the Chinese working-class movement and scientific socialism. Not long after the May 4 Movement Mao Tse-tung, Liu Shao-chi and other revolutionaries began extensive educational and organizational work among the masses of workers. Marxism soon became the main trend of thought in China's cultural revolution. Meanwhile the communist thinkers formed a cultural united front with the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intellectuals against imperialism and feudalism. They launched an all-out attack on the old culture which had been the serving maid of the imperialist and feudal forces.

The spread of Marxist thought in China owed much to the efforts of the pioneers of Marxism among Chinese intellectuals. Li Ta-chao* (1888-1927), for instance, expounded the basic theory of historical materialism. He pointed out that Marxism alone exposes the whole truth of social development. In elucidating Marxist historical materialism he laid special emphasis on its theory of class struggle, describing it as a "golden thread" running through all Marxist philosophy. Speaking from the Marxist class viewpoint he praised the October Revolution highly. "The bell of humanitarianism has rung!" he said, "and the light of freedom has dawned." He declared: "The world of the future will be the world of the Red Flag." The slogan calling for the overthrow of world capitalism, which was brought forward during

the October Revolution, was, according to Li Ta-chao, "particularly significant" for the Chinese people long trampled under the iron hoofs of imperialism. This slogan made the Chinese people realize that to gain national independence and emancipation they must carry out revolutionary struggles to overthrow imperialism in China. He believed that the Chinese people and the working people of the whole world, both being oppressed by imperialism, should form a united front against it. Li Ta-chao, therefore, considered the Soviet Union to be the motherland, the pioneer in revolution and the great centre of the world's working people.

In 1919 in the province of Hunan the *Hsiangchiang Review*,* a journal devoted to the propagation of Marxism, was founded by Mao Tse-tung. One of the issues carried an article written by him entitled "The Great Unity of the People." The central thesis of the article later proved to be the prototype of the "united front" theory which has been the people's powerful revolutionary weapon in China. Mao Tse-tung pointed out that the success of every revolutionary movement recorded in history, be it ideological, intellectual, political or social, depended on two things: the degree of solidarity achieved by the unity of the people and the truth and progressiveness of the thought which formed the basis of this unity. For instance, the victory of the October Socialist Revolution was due to the magnificent unity achieved by the masses of Russian workers and peasants and to the indisputably true and invincible doctrine of Marxism. He said that the October Revolution had greatly influenced the people's revolutionary movements in Asia and Europe and accounted for the birth of the May 4 Movement of 1919. He thought that

movement so important that it "animated the whole world and freed it of all evils." He believed that if the force of the united Chinese people was built up and the revolution was guided by the principle of Marxism, "a golden world, a world of radiance and splendour, will be near at hand." In 1920 he came into close touch with Li Ta-chao. By this time he had become a Marxist both in theory and in practice. In the letters he exchanged with Tsai Ho-shen* and in the preparatory documents for the founding of Communist Groups, he advocated the "organization of a communist party modelled on that of the Soviet Russia both in principle and in method" as a guide for the Chinese people in their revolutionary movement.

Mao Tse-tung said in his *On New Democracy*:

The cultural revolution ushered in by the May 4 Movement was a movement for thoroughly opposing feudal culture; since the dawn of Chinese history, there had never been such a great and thoroughgoing cultural revolution.¹

During this period a bitter struggle over which road to take was waged on the cultural front, i.e. between Marxism and the reactionary alliance formed by the two cultures of imperialism and feudalism. The cultural revolution of this time, especially during its earlier period, made an ideological preparation for the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 and trained cadres for its new revolutionary task. From the very beginning members of the reactionary cultural camp who were the bitter enemies of Marxism did everything in

¹*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 146.*

their power to smother it and prevent its development in China.

The struggle in the cultural field between taking one of these two roads was, first of all, a struggle between those who took one of two attitudes towards foreign cultures. Were the revolutionary activities of China to be linked up with the revolutionary culture of socialism or was the feudal culture of China to be linked up with the bourgeois culture of the imperialists?

On June 8, 1919, one month after the May 4 Movement and five days after the June 3 Movement, in which the working class took part, John Dewey, an imperialist who was invited by Hu Shih* to come to China from the United States, made some very injudicious statements. He advocated that the political doctrine of Marxism, which was then gaining wide support in China, was something which could not be copied and he advised the Chinese people not to plagiarize this theory which was foreign to them nor try to apply it to their country where conditions were different. In July of the same year, Hu Shih published a series of essays bearing the general title of "Problems and Isms" in which he echoed Dewey's absurd utterances. In these essays he advised people to "Talk less about isms and study more of problems," in a vain attempt to stem the tide of Marxism. Li Ta-chao, the well-known Marxist, repeatedly refuted Hu Shih's arguments, attacking them and successfully exposing their duplicity. He pointed out that the only way China could carry out reform was to link up the revolutionary practice of China with Marxism and that there was no other way. He said that the popularity and growing influence of Bolshevism represented a great change in world culture. In the autumn of the

same year Dewey published another essay on social and political philosophy of pragmatism, in which he slandered Marxism as a spent force and denounced Marxism-Leninism as an over-radical and infectious doctrine. While he did not like others to talk about "isms" he seemed to have no reluctance in doing so himself, displaying his shop-worn ideas of pragmatic philosophy and sociology. He insisted that the bourgeois doctrine of individualism could be used as an antidote for the theory of class struggle. He shamelessly volunteered to be a go-between in bringing about a "marriage" between the old culture of China, i.e. feudal revivalism, and the "new culture" of American imperialism, i.e. bourgeois individualism. Before a revolution took place in China, he hoped to change the "former emperors' paternalistic policy of protecting the people" into a "democratic policy of protecting the people." In this way he thought it possible to preserve the existing social structure, which was essentially a feudal one, and to import piecemeal certain features of American imperialism, such as "trade" and "spirit," thus achieving "great reform" in the country. Obviously if his plan had been carried out, nothing but the colonization and enslavement of China by American imperialism would have been the result.

During the two years 1919-20 Hu Shih, who actually spoke of himself as a "ready-made go-between," published many reactionary articles on the "mutual adaptability of the new and old cultures." All the arguments in his writings were immediately refuted by the Marxists. In the journal *New Youth*,* for instance, issue No. 4, Vol. 6 carried an article by Hu Shih entitled "Pragmatism." In its next issue appeared an article by Li Ta-chao entitled "Marxism As I See It," in which he

introduced the Marxist theories of class struggle, surplus value, and historical materialism. In issue No. 1, Vol. 7, Hu Shih's article "The Significance of the New Trend of Thought" was published. In No. 2 of the same volume appeared Li Ta-chao's article "Changes in Modern Chinese Thought Explained in Terms of Economics." Li Ta-chao showed, through an analysis of modern Chinese thought, that changes in the economic base of society will lead to changes in the superstructure, such as government, law, family system, etc. Social reform in China should, therefore, be carried out only after first tackling the fundamental problem of changing the economic base. Awed by the growing influence of Marxism, Hu Shih, in alliance with the Right-wing writers, intrigued to gain control of the *New Youth* and make it his own mouth-piece. His plot, however, failed because of opposition by Lu Hsun and others. The journal was saved and its policy remained unchanged. It did not become an instrument of this would-be "go-between" for the realization of his plan to "marry Chinese and American cultures" and "to reconstruct civilization through Sino-American collaboration." Instead, it remained a vehicle for the spread of Marxism. It can be seen that the battle of ideas—the struggle about which road to take or the question of "who will win"—was a bitter one, necessitating a stand being taken either on one side or the other. A neutral or third position simply did not exist. It was precisely at this time that Chen Tu-hsiu, a radical among the bourgeois democrats, showed his vacillation. From Hu Shih's essay "My Thoughts at Forty" and Chen Tu-hsiu's letters to Hu Shih we can see that Chen Tu-hsiu stood for compromise in China's cultural revolution while Hu Shih was a die-

hard in the reactionary camp. Chen Tu-hsiu alleged that since dialectical materialism and pragmatism both emphasized the importance of the present and the future and since they were the two most important philosophical methods of our time, they should be combined to form a united front. Hu Shih, however, said that the two are different, "like man and animals," and pointed out that Chen Tu-hsiu's hope was quite unwarranted.

After Marxism had begun to take root in China, the anti-Marxist activities of the big landlords, the bourgeois Rightists and the imperialists, together with their henchmen, broke up the united front of the "May 4" cultural revolution into factions. In the reactionary cultural camp were various groups representing different reactionary interests, men of all types and shades of opinion appeared, each vaunting his own foresight and sagacity. They debated the question of which kind of foreign culture should be imported into China. As has been said above, Hu Shih, the self-appointed "go-between" and ardent protagonist of Sino-American collaboration, invited John Dewey to lecture in China to sow the seeds of enslavement. This created a new tide of similar activities among other "knights of truth" who championed Sino-British, Sino-German, or Sino-Japanese collaboration. They vied with one another in accepting the decadent theories of the imperialists which they hoped might prove a panacea for China's ills and an effective antidote against Marxism. So, many Western philosophers came to China including Bertrand Russell from Britain and Hans Driesch from Germany. Most Chinese reactionaries hoped and believed that the mere presence of these peddlers of idealism would be sufficient to inoculate the Chinese youth and make them

immune to revolutionary propaganda. About the same time the idealist doctrine of Bergsonism was preached with much fanfare. In their struggle against various reactionary theories the genius of Chinese Marxist philosophers was raised to a much higher level and the Marxist movement gained strength in the first stage of its development in China. This helped to lay a theoretical background and train cadres for the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. In the realm of philosophy and social science, the controversy regarding the introduction of foreign cultures was a struggle about which road to take. It was not only revolution versus reaction, but it also reflected a fight between thoroughgoing new-democratic revolution and all kinds of reformism opposed to it.

In 1920, when Chinese Communist Groups were being organized, and in 1921, when the Chinese Communist Party was founded, the line of demarcation between the two opposing forces — the Marxists and Anti-Marxists — in the realm of culture and thought became more clearly drawn. Following this great controversy regarding the question of introducing foreign cultures into China, another one arose concerning the problem of socialism, which unfolded on an even larger scale.

The Young China Association,* a united cultural front organization formed during the May 4 Movement, was now split into two groups — Right and Left. The bourgeois intellectuals who belonged to the Rightist group insisted that more time should be spent on the academic studies and less on talk about "isms." They considered socialism to be an abstract theory having little or no practical value. They believed that science, philosophy, and sociology should be studied from a purely pedantic

interest detached from politics and reality. They tried to discourage young people from joining in the actual revolutionary struggle. Some of them maintained the idea that imported socialism would not meet the requirements of China and that a Chinese type of "national socialism" might evolve after long study. These Rightists were really reformists in a new disguise and their ideas were in direct opposition to those of the Marxists. Members of the Association who were Marxists immediately denounced this view. Among them Li Ta-chao and Teng Chung-hsia* were exemplary in the firmness of their stand and in the correctness of their views. They stated that Marxism which is scientific socialism is the only guide to thoroughgoing social reconstruction, that the tasks of propagating socialism and organizing a revolution cannot be divorced from each other and that to talk vociferously about socialism without actually promoting revolution is the height of folly. In 1920 a similar controversy arose among the members of the New People's Society* organized by Chinese students studying in France. A few of its members took a moderate reformist attitude while the Marxists, led by Tsai Ho-shen, insisted that China must "take the path of the Russians." In his letters to Mao Tse-tung, Tsai refuted the reformists, who distorted socialism, and showed how absurd Russell was, who was then lecturing in China, in favouring the "study" of communism and opposing a revolution.

In the same year even Chang Tung-sun,* Chang Chun-mai* and Liang Chi-chao, landowning bourgeois politicians, "took up the study" of socialism. But the reason they studied socialism was only because they felt that the northern warlords then in power were not clever enough in their anti-communist methods. They pro-

posed to follow Russell's advice, to find proofs through "study" that "it would be better for socialism to come to China very slowly!" During the years 1920 and 1921 they wrote and published a tremendous amount of reactionary literature. They borrowed from Russell the doctrine of guild socialism, which has long been discredited, they slandered Marxism and the Chinese working-class movement, saying that their combination would lead to a form of "pseudo-socialism of the rabble." They proceeded to spread the reactionary theory of "class harmony." The Marxists resolutely denounced all such false theories. They stressed the fact that capitalism was declining and that China was marching towards a bright future. They pointed to the success of the October Socialist Revolution and the correct path which it showed China; they pointed out that the universal truth of Marxism could be applied to China's class struggle and revolution. The cogency of their arguments gave the lie to the theories of the bourgeois propagandists and warded off their attacks. Naturally, most of the Chinese Marxists of the early period were unable to make a clear distinction between propaganda for Marxism and a political programme. They could not, as Mao Tse-tung said in *On New Democracy*, "distinguish the dissemination of communist ideology and the communist social system from the implementation of the new-democratic programme of action; distinguish the communist theory and methods applied in examining various problems, in pursuing scientific studies, in organizing work and in training cadres, from the new-democratic line provided for the national culture as a whole."¹

¹*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 153.*

Chinese Marxists waged a relentless struggle in support of socialism not only against the Rightist bourgeois scholars but also against certain "Leftists" of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois scholars. These "Leftist" elements were the chief representatives of imported anarchism and nihilism of the Chinese type. Taking advantage of the fanaticism of the petty bourgeoisie and its longing for freedom which was as deep as its hatred for despotism, for a time they slandered Marxism with the frenzy of mad men, vehemently opposing Marxist theories of proletarian revolution and dictatorship. Truly, as Lenin said, "The philosophy of the anarchists is bourgeois philosophy turned inside out. Their individualistic theories and their individualistic ideals are the very antithesis of socialism."¹ Greatly disgusted with the respect for authority customary in the old society they went to the other extreme of demanding "absolute freedom." They even talked wildly about a "cosmic revolution." Some of them insisted that suicide and love-making were the means necessary for the carrying out of the revolution of mankind. All these absurd theories were refuted by the Marxists and shown to be sheer nonsense. In 1921 the *Communist Monthly* carried an article which said that anarchism is a false theory and is incompatible with true socialism. Mao Tse-tung also pointed out that absolute freedom and anarchism may sound good in theory but they are impracticable. These ideas were only a fantasy of the petty bourgeoisie.

It should be noted that a small number of the early Marxists were strongly influenced by the anarchists with

¹ "Socialism and Anarchism," V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1946, Vol. III, p. 344.

regard to both Marxist theory and the problem of trade union organization. It was only after such anarchism was severely criticized and those who had once believed in it were convinced of its deception that they abandoned the bourgeois theories of "absolute freedom" and "democracy in general" and accepted communism. This meant the rallying of the revolutionary intellectuals around the banner of Marxism and also greater unity and clarity of ideas among the members of the Chinese Communist Party which grew stronger and purer in organization. The victory of the Marxists in this struggle meant, therefore, a consolidation of their position and an increase of their power.

Making it clear that the democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism should be led by the proletariat, the Chinese Communist Party formed a united front with the Kuomintang and helped Sun Yat-sen revise his Three Principles of the People. This was an epochal event not only in the sphere of politics but also in the sphere of culture. In accordance with Marxist principles the Chinese Communist Party outlined a programme of cultural revolution which was anti-imperialist and anti-feudal in nature. This soon attracted intellectuals from among the educational and academic circles to its fold. As Marxism gradually won support in the hearts and minds of the masses of the people, the reactionaries, being isolated, had to take extraordinary measures to try and ensure their survival and devise new means and methods of hoodwinking the people.

After a trip to Europe Liang Chi-chao wrote about the "poverty of science" and the impending "revival" of the oriental feudal civilization to explain his new theory of

upholding "national characteristics."¹ Liang Su-ming* also wrote a book on "Oriental Culture" which was full of absurdities. He said that the future of the world would be a transition from the Confucian culture of China to the religious culture of India. His conclusion was, of course, hostility to Marxism. He divided the development of socialism into three periods: 1) the religious socialism of the Saint-Simonists, 2) the scientific socialism of the Marxists, and 3) the philosophical socialism of Russell, Kropotkin, and the guild socialists. After maliciously attacking the Marxist theory of class struggle, he said that during the third period of socialism there would come an "intuitive understanding" of the truth of Confucianism. Meanwhile, Chang Chun-mai advocated the "spiritual civilization" which stressed cultivation of the mind as propounded by the Confucians from Confucius and Mencius down to the Neo-Confucians of the Sung and Ming dynasties as an antidote to "material civilization," which, according to him, made no sharp distinction between right and wrong. He arbitrarily mixed up the individualism of Adam Smith with the socialism of the Marxists and said that neither was "noble or sacred."

Hu Shih and Ting Wen-chiang,* two other reactionary thinkers, promoted what Hu Shih himself called "the systematization of the old learning."* Putting forward the slogan "Save the nation by study," they exhorted the young people to devote themselves to the study of the Chinese classical literature. They loudly announced their doctrine of national nihilism. Hu Shih not only slandered the fine traditions of the revolution-

¹ See footnote in the Foreword.

ary and progressive aspect of Chinese culture but also ingratiated himself with the feudal ruling class by supplying it with "useful lessons" by turning things upside down and collecting reactionary trash. He and his ilk wanted to substitute textual research for the study of history and to replace philosophy by a piecemeal study. Their aim was to show that Chinese culture was inferior to American imperialist culture. Hu Shih claimed to have "discovered" a "truth" in China's cultural legacy, that the characteristics of Chinese culture were "femininity, cosmopolitanism and passivity." This made it easy for Hu Shih to do his work as a "go-between" and unite the Chinese and American cultures, a role which he had long wanted to play. He, therefore, founded the journal *Endeavour*, of which he was the chief editor, and "endeavoured" to work to this end. He admitted that his "systematization of the old learning" was closely connected with his practical political programme, i.e. "to weld the two worlds (the Chinese feudal and American imperialist worlds) together" "so as to gradually link up practice with theory." In short, he stood for "total Westernization" which was the essence of his arguments against the protagonists of the new theory of upholding "national characteristics." This was also a direct attack on the Declaration of the Second National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party.¹

¹The Declaration of the Second National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1922 says: "All things point to the fact that the greatest suffering of the Chinese people (be they bourgeoisie, workers or peasants) is caused by the forces of capitalist imperialism and the feudal forces of the warlords and bureaucrats. The struggle against these forces by the democratic revolutionary movement is, therefore, very signifi-

Hu Shih was against the use of "anti-imperialism" in cultural terminology. He said that "anti-imperialism" meant "communism." From his "textual research" he came to the conclusion that Chinese culture was inferior to other cultures. He said that the way out for China was an honest avowal that the Chinese people "did not even know enough to be ashamed of themselves and had no will to prove their own worth." He hoped that by propagating such theory he could stop the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal Northern Expeditionary War (the war against the northern warlords launched from Kwangtung in 1926 by the first Kuomintang-Communist coalition) and stem the tide of the cultural revolution.

Tai Chi-tao,* a member of the Right-wing of the Kuomintang, was the author of another new theory of upholding "national characteristics."¹ He tried to make Sun Yat-sen one of the Confucian patriarchs. He boldly proclaimed that Sun Yat-sen's philosophy was a continuation of the Confucian tradition being in the line of succession from Emperor Yao through Emperor Shun, King Wen and King Wu, Duke Chou, and Confucius. This was, of course, a most preposterous and reactionary theory. Worst of all, it deprived Sun Yat-sen's revised Three Principles of the People of its most important elements, i.e. anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism.

The above-mentioned reactionary thinkers, though differing widely in their opinions when discussing cultural tradition, paid more attention to the past than to the present or extolled the past at the expense of the

cant as the success of this revolution will give us independence and greater freedom."

¹See footnote in the Foreword.

present. In this way they hoped to show that Marxism did not fit into the Chinese social pattern. In an effort to discredit Marxism they spread the rumour that Marxism meant the end of China's cultural heritage. The progressive thinkers had to show that by inducing people to alienate themselves from reality and politics the bourgeois scholars were leading them astray in their learning. To refute all falsehoods the true defenders of Chinese culture had to make a scientific analysis, applying the principles of historical materialism to Chinese history and quoting from past and contemporary authorities to show that only the Marxists could carry on the real tradition of Chinese culture. In this, Lu Hsun and Chu Chiu-pai* did a considerable amount of useful work. Chu Chiu-pai first pointed out that Tai Chi-tao's real aim in fabricating the Confucian line of succession was to distort Sun Yat-sen's new Three Principles of the People, changing it into "a doctrine of benevolence and mercy," and to make the work of revolution mere philanthropy. Next he showed that Tai Chi-tao wanted the broad masses of workers and peasants to stop their struggle and "look up to the upper classes for their favours and directions." It is easy to see that the Rightists within the Kuomintang began to show their counter-revolutionary tendencies very clearly. In a series of political and literary essays, Lu Hsun made a searching analysis of the situation and dealt a smart blow to the reactionary thinkers of all shades. He said bluntly that the "systematization of the old learning" sponsored by "high-class people," such as Hu Shih, was nothing but a ruse to prevent the intellectuals and students from taking part in real revolutionary struggles.

While disappointed politicians and the old cultured aristocracy were moaning about the wretched fate of the people and suggesting as a remedy the "re-study of the national heritage" or work in textual research as balm for national misfortune, the revolutionary war of the Northern Expedition broke out. This pricked the bubble of the reactionaries' wishful thinking of trying to turn the intellectuals into bookworms. Some of the reactionaries had treated one another as friends while at other times posed as enemies. They were the men who were once in the limelight and had dazzled the people with their debates and quarrels. There was the debate on Oriental and Occidental cultures; there were arguments on the subject of "Science and Philosophy of Life." But whatever role they played they were basically men of the same mind and purpose. They were essentially idealists though some of them were idealists of the old metaphysical schools while others were of the new, "scientific" and more fashionable type. They were "in the same boat" — all enemies of Marxism. Whatever the peculiar brand of their philosophy might be the idealists were all defeated by the Marxists and had to beat a hasty retreat. Their views, different in form but all counter-revolutionary in content, were soon swept away by the revolutionary tide of communism.

In *On New Democracy* Mao Tse-tung said:

But since the May 4 Movement things have gone differently. Since then a brand-new cultural force of fresh strength has appeared in China . . . the new cultural force too, in new uniform and with new weapons, mustering all possible allies and deploying itself in battle array, launches heroic attacks on imperialist

culture and feudal culture. . . . in whatever direction this new cultural force has turned its spearhead, a great revolution has taken place in both thought-content and form (such as the style of written language). Its influence is so great and its power so tremendous that it is practically invincible wherever it goes.¹

Mao Tse-tung's *Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society* and *Report of an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan*, both written during the First Revolutionary War (1924-27), show clearly that he had long applied the theory of dialectical materialism creatively to China's revolution and linked up the actual work of the revolution with the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism. Using the fundamental method of Marxism, i.e. class analysis, he made a scientific analysis of the classes in the Chinese society, thus getting a correct solution to the foremost problem of Chinese revolution, which was: "Who are our enemies and who are our friends?" He stressed the point that the proletariat was the leading force in the revolution and that the peasantry was its most reliable ally. He sang the praises of the peasants' revolutionary movement against the landlords with great confidence; and called on his revolutionary comrades to lead the peasants on their march forward. He considered the alliance of workers and peasants to be the main question in the revolutionary movement and judged whether a man was revolutionary or counter-revolutionary by whether he stood for or against the peasant movement. He also made an analysis of the national bourgeoisie in which he pointed out its

¹*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 143-44.*

dual character, by which he meant that to a certain extent it was both revolutionary and vacillating. "Its right wing," he concluded, "may become our enemy and its left wing may become our friend, but we must be constantly on our guard towards the latter and not allow it to create confusion in our front."¹ The Kuomintang's betrayal of the revolution in 1927 fully proved that Mao Tse-tung was right in his analysis.

PART II

(1)

Civil strife in China between revolution and counter-revolution had two fronts during the ten years from 1927 to 1937. The first consisted of the intensification of the Communist-led peasant revolution and the "encirclement and annihilation campaigns" carried out by the Kuomintang while the second consisted of the intensification of the Communist-led cultural revolution and the Kuomintang's cultural "encirclement and annihilation campaign." Both of these Kuomintang campaigns ended in ignominious defeat.

During this period among the Chinese communist thinkers a group of Left-wing writers was formed, with Lu Hsun as their standard-bearer. They made their influence felt everywhere—in the realms of philosophy and the social sciences, literature and art. They soon won a magnificent victory over the reactionary writers

¹*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 20.*

who were spokesmen for the Kuomintang. Although it had declared Marxism illegal and prohibited its propagation under severe punishment, the Left-wing writers persisted in their propaganda by both legal and illegal methods. Marxist philosophy and social sciences found their way into the Kuomintang-dominated colleges and universities, influencing many young revolutionary intellectuals. The December 9 Movement¹ was an important landmark in this period of China's cultural revolution.

During this period the reactionary cultural camp came to life again and showed great activity.

The counter-revolutionary cultural leaders launched the "New Life Movement" which was largely a mixture of feudal and fascist slogans, such as the feudal formula of "propriety, righteousness, honesty, and sense of shame" and the fascist shibboleth of "simplicity and plainness." The Kuomintang reactionaries gave false interpretations and did everything to distort Sun Yat-sen's philosophy and political theories. They replaced the spirit of optimism in the new Three Principles of the People with their idealist theory of "vitalism" and used a form of culture "peculiarly characteristic of China" to misrepresent Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary culture which stood for fairness and justice.

In 1928 Hu Shih and a number of his followers founded the journal *Crescent*. For the purpose of carrying out political activities, this clique spread its reactionary doc-

¹This refers to the students' patriotic demonstration in Peking on December 9, 1935 under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. The movement called for the cessation of civil war and armed resistance to Japan, and won nation-wide support.

trine of reformism in opposition to Marxism and the Chinese Communist Party. Meanwhile, Liang Su-ming put forward a theory of "rural construction," which was thoroughly anti-Marxist, maliciously calling Bolshevism a "blind alley in politics." Synchronizing his utterances with those of the Kuomintang reactionaries he attacked the Communists verbally with all kinds of lies. He was not only a man of speech but also a man of action. To carry out his plan of "opposing the Communist Party" he devised political, economic, and other kinds of "orders" with which the landlords could arm and protect themselves, their property and their interests.

Hu Shih and Liang Sou-ming said, "We are firemen and not incendiaries, we should collaborate with the government (i.e. the Kuomintang) in maintaining social order and convincing the 'opposition party' (i.e. the Communists)." In Hu Shih's words, "We shall make a thorough study and investigation with the Communists as our object."

But no reactionary systems of thought could stand against the strength of Marxism and the influence of reactionary literature rapidly declined. The situation was well described in a letter written by a certain reactionary, Miss Su, to Hu Shih. This was what she said in part:

The literary circle is now dominated by the Leftists. Books and periodicals propagating communism are welcomed by the young people. Lu Hsun sits on the pinnacle of the literary world, issuing orders and directions. He is a great menace to the party and government (meaning the Kuomintang party and government). If communism continues to exist the Three

Principles of the People will disappear. . . . The world as it is today has become a world of proletarian culture!

During this period another struggle was waged in the field of sociology between the bourgeois scholars who propagated the theories of Comte, Malinowski, etc., and the progressives who accepted Marxist historical materialism as their guide to study.

In the study of history there was the struggle between bourgeois and Marxist historians. Some of the former were pragmatists who held that the study of theories and doctrines should be replaced by a textual research into historical materials while others stood for Oswald Spengler's theory of historical cycles. The Marxists, however, advocated a scientific approach to history.

In economic theories there was a struggle between the Marginal Utility School, theories of Keynes, etc. on the one hand and Marxist political economy on the other.

In philosophic discussion the battle was between the Neo-Kantians, Neo-Hegelians, new realists, and pragmatic idealists on the one hand and the dialectical materialists on the other.

In the arena of political theories the combatants were the fascists, various kinds of reformists, Trotskyites, etc. against all those who advocated the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state.

It is easy to see on how many different fronts the battle was waged. The promoters of these reactionary theories, who were spokesmen for the landlords and bourgeoisie, vied with one another to gain Kuomintang support for their "cultural campaign." But they and their theories had fallen behind the times. They were

completely isolated from the broad masses of people who looked upon them with disgust.

In the struggle between the reactionary thinkers and the Marxists one thing is particularly interesting and worthy of note. The bourgeois scholars were confident that they had something to show in the fields of Chinese history and the history of Chinese philosophy. They thought that here they could hold the Marxists at bay. But to their great chagrin the battle-steeled Marxists were quite competent in these fields and their arguments were invincible. In controversies about the nature of Chinese society, the social history of China, and the history of Chinese thought and culture, the Marxists fought the bourgeois scholars with a tenacity similar to that of Engels in his fight against Duhring. Led by Kuo Mo-jo and basing their arguments upon scientific research and an even larger amount of material than their enemies possessed, they emerged triumphant. They exposed the vacuity of bourgeois scholarship, revealing that its treasures were rubbish, that the bourgeois scholars were living in the past instead of the present and were wasting their time and deceiving the people. Held under the clear searchlight of Marxist criticism, the arguments and theories of all brands of idealism were exposed as false and bourgeois scholarship as useless. In thus debunking bourgeois scholarship and charting a new scientific approach to learning, the Marxists did a great service to China's academic life.

This is what Mao Tse-tung said in his *On New Democracy* about China's cultural revolution in the twenty years after the May 4 Movement:

The progress achieved during the twenty years after the May 4 Movement surpasses not only that of the preceding eighty years but practically that of the previous thousands of years in Chinese history as a whole. Can we not visualize the progress China will make in another twenty years?¹

Mao Tse-tung showed great foresight when he wrote this in 1940. He already foresaw the great progress China is making today.

(2)

In October 1927, Mao Tse-tung led the peasants in successfully staging the autumn-harvest uprising in Hunan. In the same month the first revolutionary base was established in Chingkang Mountain area in the border region between Hunan and Kiangsi Provinces by the workers' and peasants' armed forces. In 1930 it became the Central Soviet Area, the centre of China's revolution.

Mao Tse-tung frequently exhorted members of the Chinese Communist Party to apply the principle of materialism to their work. A materialist approach means having a scientific and objective attitude towards everything. It was absolutely necessary for the Party to formulate its political line and policies strictly in accordance with objective conditions.

After the failure of the First Revolutionary Civil War in 1927 Mao Tse-tung correctly formulated the political line of the Chinese Communist Party in accordance with

¹*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 151.*

the actual conditions existing at that time. Before doing this he first made an analysis of the national situation and the activities of the various classes. In *Why Can China's Red Political Power Exist?* which is part of the resolution drawn up by Mao Tse-tung for the Second Party Conference of the Hunan-Kiangsi Border Area in 1928, he said:

The present regime of the new Kuomintang warlords is still a regime of the comprador class in the cities and the landed gentry in the countryside, a regime which has in foreign affairs capitulated to imperialism and at home replaced old warlords with new ones, and has subjected the working class and peasantry to an economic exploitation and a political oppression more ruthless than before.¹

By this he meant that concrete conditions determined the nature of China's revolution at that time which was still bourgeois-democratic with the proletariat as the leading force.

Feudal relations of production were the basic form of oppressing and exploiting the peasants. The only way to emancipate the peasants was to abolish the feudal system of landownership. Only when the peasants were emancipated could the forces of agricultural production be developed and a big anti-imperialist army built up. It was, therefore, clear that the agrarian question was the focal question in China's bourgeois-democratic revolution and it was most important for the proletariat to lead the peasants in carrying out the agrarian revolution.

¹*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 63.*

Owing to uneven economic development, modern industry in China was limited to certain areas of the country. The imperialists exercised direct economic control over those regions of modern economy but their influence had not then reached the remote places which lacked modern industry. Under such conditions China's revolution, led by the proletariat, had to first win success in the countryside, where enemy influence had not penetrated. Accordingly, the political line Mao Tse-tung formulated for the Party during the period of the Second Revolutionary Civil War (1927-37) contained the following points: to establish and consolidate strong Red political power in the countryside, to carry out a protracted revolutionary struggle there, to surround the cities from the countryside, and finally capture them. China's experience in revolution has proved that this political line was entirely correct. It was correct because it was formulated in accordance with the objective conditions existing in China and was based upon the requirements of the Chinese people. This is one example of the way concrete problems of the revolution were solved by the scientific method of dialectical materialism.

Mao Tse-tung's knowledge and use of the scientific method in formulating the correct political line was in direct contrast with the "Left" opportunists' reliance on their subjective ideas. They thought that China's revolution was gaining steadily in strength, whereas in fact the revolutionary forces were then on the defensive. They underestimated the value of guerrilla warfare waged by the peasants and the importance of the revolutionary bases in the countryside. They clung to the idea that revolutionary uprisings should begin in the big cities and clamoured for the start of armed insurrections in the

major ones. The errors committed by these "Left" opportunists within the Communist Party resulted in a serious setback for the revolution. The trouble with these "Left" opportunists was that they ignored the principles of dialectical materialism, paid no attention to the objective conditions necessary for China's revolution nor to the requirements of the people, and mistook their subjective desires, feelings and empty talks for facts.

Materialism, dialectics and theory of knowledge are united in Marxist philosophy; materialism starting from objective reality and dialectics analysing the movement of opposites come together. Mao Tse-tung's writings show great vitality of revolutionary dialectics. He set great store by Lenin's saying that to make a concrete analysis of concrete conditions is the core of revolutionary dialectics. In *Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War* which he wrote in 1936, he pointed out that Chinese Communists should learn from the experiences in revolutionary war of other countries, especially those of the Soviet Union. But these should not be applied to China mechanically. Above all, Chinese Communists should study the characteristics of China's revolutionary war. They should realize that China is a land of uneven political and economic development, that it is led by the Communist Party, and that it is necessary to carry out agrarian reform. From these special characteristics Mao Tse-tung concluded that the revolutionary war in China was likely to develop and be successful. From the fact that the enemy was strong and the Red Army weak, he concluded that it was impossible for the Red Army to gain a nation-wide victory within a short period of time. These characteristics, said Mao Tse-tung, "determine the guiding line for China's revolutionary war and its stra-

tegic and tactical principles." Speaking specifically he advocated the strategy of a protracted war and quick decision in campaigns, and raised guerrilla warfare to a strategic level in China's revolutionary war. These principles made it possible for the revolutionary people's army to defeat Chiang Kai-shek's four "encirclement campaigns."

The "Left" opportunists, however, did not understand how to use the dialectical principles of Marxism and paid no attention to the special characteristics of China's revolutionary war. They applied the experiences of the other countries mechanically. They adopted the strategy of a war of quick decision and protracted campaigns. Under the circumstances, this was a wrong military principle but the "Left" opportunists thought that its correctness was self-evident. The result was that the Red Army was defeated in the enemy's fifth "encirclement campaign" and its main force had to move to a new area in the north, giving up its former position.

In the "Resolution on Some Questions in the History of Our Party," adopted on April 20, 1945 at the Enlarged Seventh Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, the experiences and lessons gained and learned during the Second Revolutionary Civil War were summed up according to the principles of Marxism. It was stated in the resolution:

When Communists who live and fight in China study dialectical materialism and historical materialism, they should do so for the purpose of applying them, as Comrade Mao does, to investigate and solve the actual problems of the Chinese revolution.¹

¹*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 208.*

Speaking from his experience in revolution, Mao Tse-tung stressed the importance of studying any complicated process in which more than two contradictions exist. He said, "We must do our utmost to discover the principal contradiction."¹ By principal contradiction he meant the principal links in work. The Chinese Communist Party and Mao Tse-tung are past masters in using the method of Marxist dialectics to discover the changes in the principal contradictions at various stages of revolution. In this way they put forward at the appropriate time, correct political slogans encouraging the people to march in the right direction with revolutionary enthusiasm. This is how the Marxist theory of uninterrupted revolution was applied to the actual conditions existing in China. In the essays *On the Tactics of Fighting Japanese Imperialism*, written in 1935, and *The Tasks of the Chinese Communist Party in the Period of Resistance to Japan*, written in 1937, Mao Tse-tung pointed out that owing to Japan's savage invasion of China "the contradiction between China and Japan has become the primary one and China's internal contradiction a secondary and subordinate one."² This made it possible in the fight against Japanese imperialism to create a national united front which included the masses of people, the national bourgeoisie, and certain members of the Kuomintang government who were ready to resist Japanese invasion. Accordingly the Party put forward the principal slogans of "An anti-Japanese national united front" and "A united democratic republic" and also slogans, such as "Make the

¹ Mao Tse-tung, *On Contradiction*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1958, p. 33.

² *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 258.

War of Resistance a Fact!" "Stop civil war!" etc. In this way it mobilized, organized, and led the masses of people to wage the war of national liberation and fight against Japanese imperialism.

In *On the Protracted War* written in 1938 Mao Tse-tung formulated the military strategy for the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression. This treatise is a vivid example of the application of Marxist dialectics in solving the actual problems of China's revolution. It proves beyond doubt the power of the Marxist dialectics. It was so convincing that after a Kuomintang propagandist had read it he could not help exclaiming in fright, "The Kuomintang is finished!" Mao Tse-tung said that in actual work revolutionaries should approach the question as a whole and guard against partiality. The "whole" requires that in studying anything account should be taken of all contradictions together with their different aspects in their various stages of development. He also analysed the strong and weak points of both China and Japan. He stated that Japan was a powerful nation, with a stronger military force—these were its strong points. But it also had weak points which would prove fatal. These were that the war waged by the Japanese imperialists was an unjust war and was not supported by the peace-loving peoples of the world; Japan had an insufficient command of manpower and material resources, etc. China's strong points were that the war of resistance was a just war and was led by the Chinese Communist Party; it had a well-steeled Red Army; and it was likely to receive support from all the peace-loving peoples in the world, etc. But China was a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country and its military force was weak, etc.—these were its weak points. Taking all this into

consideration Mao Tse-tung reached the conclusion that the Anti-Japanese War would be a protracted war, but that the final victory would belong to China. According to him, those who believed that the Chinese nation would be subjugated and those who thought that a quick victory could be obtained were both one-sided in their views and did not grasp the whole situation. An old Chinese adage says, "A leaf held before the eyes blocks out the view of Mount Tai." The defeatists saw only the relative strength of the two countries but they did not see the other points. This was the reason why they held the erroneous view that "resistance spells inevitable defeat." As to those who believed in a quick victory they had simply forgotten the relative strength of the military power of China and Japan while concentrating their attention on other conditions.

Mao Tse-tung always maintains that one of the most effective ways to raise the level of Marxist-Leninist thinking in the Party is to analyse and sum up the history of ideological struggles between opposing schools of thought within the Party. In 1937 he wrote the treatises *On Practice* and *On Contradiction*, in which he spoke about the development of Marxist philosophy in the practical experience of Chinese revolution and forcefully criticized the two subjective tendencies of doctrinairism and empiricism. He attacked the former particularly because it had prevailed and caused serious damage to the Party during the period 1931-34 and held it up to Party members as a typical lesson in erroneous thought.

Mao Tse-tung developed the Marxist theory of knowledge from actual experiences gained during the course of China's revolution. He made a brilliant Marxist-Leninist analysis of the relation between knowing and

doing, which had been a controversial subject in Chinese philosophy from the time of Confucius to that of Sun Yat-sen. Mao Tse-tung's conclusion was that knowledge is derived from practice. By practice he meant man's activities in production, class struggle, scientific and artistic pursuits, etc. He said that there are two kinds of knowledge: that of the natural sciences, i.e. man's knowledge gained in production, and that of the social sciences, i.e. man's knowledge gained in class struggle. Both are derived from practice. There are two closely related stages in the process of knowing: perceptual knowledge and rational knowledge; they are united on the basis of practice. There can be no real knowledge to speak of without revolutionary practice and knowledge based thereupon. If the importance of taking part personally in the practical struggle to change reality is denied, then it is not possible to be a materialist. Mao Tse-tung, therefore, tells us that if we want to do our work well we must join the masses in practical revolutionary struggles and temper ourselves among the masses instead of shutting ourselves in our rooms—that will not settle any question. The trouble with the doctrinaires is that they fail to link up theory with practice. He also tells us that knowledge must not stop at the lower stage of perception. If perceptual knowledge is not developed to the rational stage, it becomes impossible to understand the laws of the objective world but it is quite easy to fall into the error of empiricism in actual work.

In *On Practice* he also says that to discover whether a theory is true or whether a viewpoint is correct, it has to be tested by practice. Before the appearance of Marxist philosophy the question of the criterion of truth had never been satisfactorily solved. It was this philos-

ophy which first made practice the criterion of truth. This theory has since become a powerful weapon of the masses in refuting the erroneous ideas of the idealists and reactionaries. The idealists have always tried to mislead the masses into believing that they are the sole possessors of truth. But what they call truth has invariably turned out to be falsehood when tested by practice. Decades of practice in the communist movement have demonstrated the truth of Marxism-Leninism.

With reference to China's revolutionary experience Mao Tse-tung made a profound analysis of the relationship between knowledge and practice. "Practice, knowledge, more practice, more knowledge," he pointed out in his conclusion, "is a pattern of cyclical repetition to infinity in which with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge reaches a higher level."¹ In accordance with the Marxist theory of knowledge the Chinese Communist Party through its directives and Mao Tse-tung through his writings summed up experiences in leading revolutionary work and laid down certain fundamental principles of correct leadership. To give an example there is the slogan: "From the masses to the masses!" This means that after careful study, the views of the masses are systematized and summed up. They are then taken back to the masses, explained and popularized until the masses embrace the ideas again as their own, stand up for them and translate them into action, to test their correctness. After testing they express their views and opinions again and the cycle is repeated. There is also the method of "linking the general directives with the

¹ Mao Tse-tung, *On Practice*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1958, pp. 21-22.

specific instructions; linking the leadership with the masses." Under the guidance of such principles Party members and the masses are closely united and the Party derives constant fresh strength from the wisdom of the masses and consequently is able to lead the masses to win one victory after another.

In *On Contradiction* Mao Tse-tung paid great attention to the principle enunciated by Lenin but once almost forgotten, i.e. the unity of opposites is the fundamental law of the objective world. He made a profound analysis of this, illustrating it with concrete examples taken from China's revolutionary experiences. He pointed out that the object of studying materialist dialectics is to enable a correct analysis to be made of the movement of opposites of things and to find solutions to them. Contradiction is a universal phenomenon. It exists in a thing from beginning to end in its movement. Everything has its individual and particular kind of contradiction. It is necessary, says Mao Tse-tung, to pay attention to the particularity of each contradiction and resolve different contradictions by different methods. The contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, for instance, is resolved by socialist revolution, that between the broad masses of the people and the feudal system by democratic revolution, and that between colonies and imperialism by national revolutionary war. The doctrinaires make no study of the particularities of contradictions. They apply the same method to all kinds of contradictions. They are unable to solve any problems; they can only make good things bad and bad things worse. Mao Tse-tung also made a detailed study of the problems of the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction and the role of antagonism in contradiction.

When discussing the unity and the struggle of opposites he supported and further developed the theory of Lenin when he said that the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary, and relative while the struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute and that opposites can transform themselves into one another under certain conditions. When a new thing first appears it is comparatively weak in strength and is in danger of being ousted by old things. If the law of the transformation of opposites in a certain situation is understood, conditions can be created to accelerate the growth of new things and to ensure their victory and dominant position over the old.

During 1941-42 Mao Tse-tung wrote *Reform Our Study, Rectify the Party's Style in Work, and Oppose the Party "Eight-legged Essay."* In them he discussed the two basic antagonistic attitudes towards Marxism-Leninism and the revolutionary practice in China. The first attitude was one of militant materialism. It was the scientific attitude of objectivity, of "shooting the arrow at the target," and of "seeking truth from facts." It was an attitude in which theory and practice are linked and is a manifestation of the Party spirit. The second attitude was subjectivism. This was an expression of a subjective wish, "shooting an arrow at random," and is unscientific, theory and practice being divorced from each other. It was a manifestation of the lack of Party spirit or of impure Party spirit. In the course of the Party's rectification campaign carried out in 1942, the first attitude and method of thinking stood the test and triumphed over the second. This created the ideological basis for the Party's leadership in the victory of the revolution and

paved the way for successfully waging the great War of Liberation.

Mao Tse-tung pointed out emphatically that to carry out the principle of militant materialism in revolutionary work it is necessary to study current events, the experiences of international working-class movements and history very carefully. To have "a blurred picture of the present-day China" and "to be completely in the dark about the China of yesterday and the day before yesterday" will surely lead to subjectivism. In *The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War*, Mao Tse-tung stated, "We must make a summing-up from Confucius down to Sun Yat-sen and inherit this precious legacy."¹ But in inheriting this legacy we must distinguish its democratic traditions from its feudal dregs. We should discard the latter and preserve the former. But in preserving the former discretion should be exercised as "we should never absorb anything and everything uncritically."

(3)

Mao Tse-tung's teachings guided the Chinese communist thinkers in their relentless struggle against the Kuomintang's cultural tyranny and its theory of national capitulation and against those who opposed the war of resistance, national unity, and progressive thought.

The advocates of the bourgeois theory of national capitulation were in reality supporters of the Kuomintang's policy of cultural tyranny. Chang Nai-chi,* spokesman

¹*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 260.*

of the bourgeoisie, who supported capitulation, said at the beginning of the war of resistance, "Issue fewer calls and make more proposals!" The Communists saw the danger of this statement and lost no time in refuting it. Mao Tse-tung called on the members of the Party to be vigilant in preventing the idea of national capitulation from infiltrating into the Party.

The Kuomintang reactionaries and the literary writers under their patronage were in a passive position everywhere. Their so-called learned societies and associations as well as their press and publishing houses rapidly lost their influence under the impact of the Left's cultural offensive. The writings of Mao Tse-tung were especially popular. His treatise *On New Democracy* was widely read in the Kuomintang-controlled regions. This enraged the dictator Chiang Kai-shek, and he severely castigated the propaganda personnel of the Kuomintang for their incompetency. He decided to take the matter into his own hands. With the help of hack writers he published a book called *China's Destiny*, notorious for its fascist ideas. As to the "scholars" under Kuomintang patronage, they either revamped the old anti-Soviet, anti-Communist, and anti-Marxist theories which they had put forward during the earlier period of "cultural encirclement and annihilation" campaign or harped on their various old theories of idealism in the field of social sciences. But battered weapons are of little use in warfare and their use brought nothing but ridicule.

In the realm of philosophy a number of backward anti-rationalist and pro-fascist tendencies appeared among certain reactionary thinkers. The school of "New Rationalism" talked about the "most philosophical philosophy," which was only metaphysics handed down from

the long past. In the field of history many "historians" of the new Mirror of History* School¹ appeared. Their main theme was that the Kuomintang was leading China into a new era and that a future of great promise lay before the nation. These philosophers and historians prided themselves as being modern Chu Hsi and Ssuma Kuangs and thought they could combat historical materialism. In the field of sociology there were all kinds of fantastic theories. Some men claimed to belong to a school of "comprehensive cultural knowledge" advocating "humanitarianism." They alleged that belief in philosophical doctrines was the same as belief in religion, their aim being to cast a reflection on Marxism. They said that to reach "the road of freedom," it was necessary to be free from "isms." They compared the government of a state to business management which, they said, should be considered as having fulfilled its duty if it succeeded in procuring profits for shareholders. All these theories were intended to ward off criticisms of the Kuomintang dictatorship raised by the people under the guidance of the Chinese Communist Party.

Towards the end of the Kuomintang regime there appeared a group of "liberal" thinkers known as the "Third Line." Their aim was to rescue the rapidly collapsing Chiang Kai-shek regime from its final downfall. Hu Shih wrote an article entitled "Two Cultures of Two Worlds." He poured blasphemy on socialist culture and

¹*The Mirror of History* was a general history from the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) to the Five Dynasties (907-960) written by Ssuma Kuang (1019-1086), a historian of the Sung dynasty, and other scholars. These new "historians" claimed to be their successors.

called on the Chinese people to follow the "culture which has its centre in America." "China need not be ashamed of having no culture of her own," he said, "if she can assimilate the culture of other peoples." Fearing that the reactionary thinkers might despair of China's future he told them to wait patiently for cultural salvation by America. Liang Su-ming and others, too, came forward with a theory meant to justify Chiang Kai-shek's policy of suppression. He wrote a book entitled *The Meaning of Chinese Culture*. In it he explained a system of "rationalist" philosophy, supposed to be the traditional philosophy of China, denying class struggle. "Both the rulers and the people," he said, "should act as befit their station. They should take the most profitable and safest road . . . and avoid all conflicts. Otherwise . . . the people may rise in revolt and the rulers will be in a position of danger." With such a muddled "rationalist" philosophy he hoped to persuade the people to put down their arms, renounce class struggle, denounce Bolshevism, abandon their attempt at armed revolution, and thus "bring peace to the nation."

All these anti-Communist, anti-Soviet, and anti-Marxist ballyhoos of the various schools of reactionary thought of the bourgeoisie and landlord class answered Lenin's description: "The lap-dog must be strong if at the elephant he barks!"¹ The power of these reactionary thinkers was exceedingly small though they did not seem to realize this. Their fantastic theories, which were com-

¹"What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social Democrats," Lenin, *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1950, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 129.

pletely unfounded and often antiquated, could not stand the impact of any counter-attack. They could not escape the fate of being rejected by the people and facing truth they simply vanished.

During the war of resistance to Japanese aggression the revolutionary force on the cultural front fought in co-ordination with the armed forces on the war front. Its success in achieving unity among its own ranks and defeating the enemy may be described in Mao Tse-tung's words. He said in *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Art and Literature* in May 1942:

Since the May 4 Movement of 1919 this cultural army has taken shape in China and has helped the Chinese revolution in gradually reducing the domain and weakening the influence of China's feudal culture and her comprador culture which is adapted to imperialist aggression. By now the Chinese reactionaries can only propose what they call "quantity versus quality" as a means of opposing the new culture; in other words, the reactionaries who can afford to blow the expense are straining to turn out an immense quantity of stuff, though they are unable to produce anything good.¹

PART III

(1)

"The fundamental question of every revolution is the question of power," said Lenin. In this respect, the found-

¹ *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 63.*

ing of the Chinese People's Republic in 1949 was a victory scored by China's bourgeois-democratic revolution and marked the beginning of its socialist revolution.

In July 1949 Mao Tse-tung wrote a book entitled *On People's Democratic Dictatorship* on the 28th anniversary of the birth of the Chinese Communist Party. He described how, after the Opium War, Chinese progressives went through infinite toil in search of methods of national salvation from the West. In his opinion, "Hung Hsiu-chuan, Kang Yu-wei, Yen Fu and Sun Yat-sen represented the group of men who, before the birth of the Chinese Communist Party, looked to the West for truth."¹ But it was only after the October Revolution, beginning from the May 4 Movement, and due to the introduction of Marxism-Leninism into China and the fact that the Chinese workers appeared on the scene as leaders of the revolution, that the Chinese people, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, were able to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat after a long and difficult struggle. This was, to quote Mao Tse-tung again, a "people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class (through the Communist Party) and based upon the alliance of workers and peasants. This dictatorship must unite with all international revolutionary forces."²

The establishment of the people's democratic dictatorship in China has proved beyond doubt that Marxism-Leninism is a universal truth applicable everywhere in the world. It has also proved that the path of the October Revolution (i.e. the basic experience of the Russian

¹Mao Tse-tung, *On People's Democratic Dictatorship*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1959, p. 3.

²*Ibid.*, p. 18.

revolution) reflected the universal laws at a particular stage in the course of development of human society. Mao Tse-tung vividly drew the conclusion: "Follow the path of the Russians."

As far back as 1920 Lenin had already pointed out that the Russian revolution had "a significance which is not local, not peculiarly national, not Russian only but international."¹ Again he said: "But at the present moment of history the situation is precisely such that the Russian model reveals to *all* countries something, and something very essential, of their near and inevitable future."² In contrast with the modern spineless revisionists the Chinese people have a great desire for truth and believe in what Lenin said. They call their revolution "a continuation of the great October Revolution." A leading article entitled "More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" written by the Editorial Department of the *Renmin Ribao* (*People's Daily*) on the basis of a discussion at an enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party was published in that paper on December 29, 1956. It summarized the main requisites for the success of the October Revolution as being leadership of the Communist Party, alliance of the workers and peasants, proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship, socialist industrialization, agricultural co-operation, cultural revolution, and proletarian internationalism. The article pointed out, "In the present in-

¹ "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder," V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1952, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 341.

² *Ibid.*, p. 342.

ternational situation, it is of particularly great significance to defend this Marxist-Leninist path opened by the October Revolution."¹ The modern revisionists completely ignore the basic experiences gained by the Soviet people during the past forty years since the October Revolution. They have tried to substitute bourgeois nationalism for proletarian internationalism, bourgeois theory of a non-class state for the Marxist theory of state, a subjective theory of a dual policy for the objective laws concerning social development and the decline of imperialism, and sophistry of compromise for materialist dialectics. The contributions of the Chinese Communist Party to Marxism-Leninism have eloquently refuted the modern revisionists' false accusation that Marxism has ceased to develop in the past forty years. Facts have proved that what the modern revisionists thought to be new ideas are really obsolete arguments used by former revisionists such as Bernstein and Kautsky. They all stem from bourgeois ideology and are a serious menace to the international working-class movement.

In leading the people in their revolutionary struggles the Chinese Communist Party has taken into full account the special characteristics of China. It has skilfully applied the basic experience of the October Revolution to Chinese conditions and linked up the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with China's revolutionary practice. Lenin explained this truth as early as in 1920:

As long as national and state differences exist among peoples and countries — and these differences will continue to exist for a very long time even after the dicta-

¹ *More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1957, p. 12.

torship of the proletariat has been established on a world scale — the unity of international tactics of the communist working-class movement of all countries demands, not the elimination of variety, not the abolition of national differences (that is a foolish dream at the present moment), but such an application of the *fundamental* principles of communism (Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat) as will *correctly modify* these principles in certain *particulars*, correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state differences: Investigate, study, seek, divine, grasp that which is peculiarly national, specifically national in the *concrete manner* in which each country approaches the fulfilment of the *single* international task, in which it approaches the victory over opportunism and “Left” doctrinairism within the working-class movement, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, and the establishment of a Soviet republic and a proletarian dictatorship — such is the main task of the historical period through which all the advanced countries (and not only the advanced countries) are now passing.¹

Revisionists and Right opportunists of the present day like to quote this passage to support their own pet theory. But in doing this they frequently tuck away the words “single international task” and propagate “national communism.” As to the doctrinaires, they divorce theory from practice. In their hands theories become a lifeless abstraction. Unable to understand the dialectical rela-

¹“‘Left-Wing’ Communism, an Infantile Disorder,” V. I. Lenin, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

tion between unity and variety, they are of course unable to solve the concrete problems in revolutionary practice.

(2)

After the founding of the Chinese People's Republic the Chinese Communist Party led the people to wage one revolutionary struggle after another. Through the five great political movements¹ and three great "transformations"² the socialist revolution with regard to property ownership was virtually completed.

In accordance with the special conditions of China, Mao Tse-tung creatively developed Marxism-Leninism with regard to many important problems of socialist revolution. He formulated the policy of carrying out a peaceful socialist transformation of capitalist industry and commerce. This policy was formulated on basis of certain objective conditions. First of all, a people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the working class and based on the alliance between the workers and peasants had been set up with the victory of the new-

¹The five great political movements are: the agrarian reform; the campaign to resist American aggression and aid Korea; the suppression of the counter-revolutionaries; the *san fan* movement (against corruption, waste and bureaucracy among government employees), and *wu fan* movement (against capitalists' bribery of government workers, tax evasion, theft of state property, cheating on government contracts, and spying out economic information for private speculation); and ideological remoulding of intellectuals.

²The three socialist transformations are: the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, and capitalist industry and commerce.

democratic revolution. Secondly, a strong socialist state economy had become the leading force in the national economy. Thirdly, the people's democratic united front had been consolidated. Fourthly, the international situation was favourable to China. Finally, the characteristics of the Chinese national bourgeoisie were such as to warrant the formulation of such a policy.

Mao Tse-tung said more than once that the peasant question was the main one both in the period of democratic revolution and the period of socialist revolution. In 1955 he published his booklet *The Question of Agricultural Co-operation*. In it he made a Marxist analysis of class relations in the countryside after the agrarian reform. He gave his timely advice that rapid socialist transformation of the small-peasant economy must be carried out simultaneously with the building of socialist industry. He foresaw a nation-wide upsurge in agricultural co-operation and grasped the significance of its inevitable change from possibility to realization. The firm leadership of the Party and the great eagerness of the peasant masses to go the socialist way were the basic reasons for the inevitable and rapid development of agricultural co-operation. These were the "essence, the crux of the matter."¹ Mao Tse-tung frequently said that new things are always full of vitality; they are the essence of social development, the main trends. To be able to discover the essence, i.e. the new and rising forces, it is necessary to associate closely with the masses, be appreciative of their talents and be ready to benefit from their wisdom. He criticized those who held Right

¹Mao Tse-tung, *The Question of Agricultural Co-operation*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1956, p. 21.

conservative views about the question of agricultural co-operation because they were unable to see the new and rising forces, the rapid expansion of national economy and the enthusiasm of the poor and lower-middle peasants for socialism. In other words, they could not see the "essence, the crux of the matter." They only saw the negative side of things and their senses became dull.

In *The Question of Agricultural Co-operation*, Mao Tse-tung also gave his advice to the Chinese people to give up the outworn idea that agricultural co-operation can only be carried out hand-in-hand with agricultural mechanization. China is still mainly an agricultural country. Although she has made big progress in industry she is still unable to produce enough farm machines for the rapid mechanization of agriculture and agricultural co-operation cannot be put off until the day when sufficient machines are available. He pointed out, therefore, that socialist transformation of agriculture should be carried out in two steps: the first being co-operation and socialist reform and the second, mechanization and technological reform. In accordance with conditions peculiar to China and with the experiences of the Chinese peasants, he laid down a series of transitional measures for the socialist transformation of agriculture, adopting the method of gradual advance. According to these steps the peasants organized themselves on a voluntary basis for mutual benefit. Usually mutual-aid teams are organized first. These teams are gradually changed into agricultural producers' co-operatives of a semi-socialist nature or elementary co-operatives from which co-operatives of an entirely socialist nature or advanced co-operatives are finally formed.

"Theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses," said Marx. *The Question of Agricultural Co-operation* gave great encouragement to the peasants in their enthusiasm for socialism. Thus, in the latter half of 1955, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, an upsurge in the socialist transformation of agriculture took place in the whole country.

It was at this time that Mao Tse-tung pointed out the question confronting the Party and the people. He said:

It affects agricultural production; industrial production (including state, joint state-private and co-operative industries); handicraft production; the scale and speed of capital construction in industry, communications and transportation; the co-ordination of commerce with other branches of the economy; and the co-ordination of the work in science, culture, education, public health, and so on, with our various economic enterprises. In all these fields there is an underestimation of the situation which must be criticized and corrected if the work in them is to keep pace with the development of the situation as a whole. . . . The present problem is that many people consider impossible things which could be done if they exerted themselves. It is entirely necessary, therefore, to keep criticizing these Rightist conservative ideas, which still actually exist.¹

Mao Tse-tung and members of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party reviewed the scale and speed of socialist economic construction, the co-ordination between the various kinds of construction as well

¹*Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1957, pp. 9-10 (Preface).

as the laws governing their progress, and the direction towards which socialism should proceed, arriving at a general principle which is: "to build socialism with greater, faster, better, and more economical results."

To call into play all the active factors necessary for realizing such an aim, Mao Tse-tung made a speech entitled *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People* at the Supreme State Conference held in February 1957. This speech, a brilliant analysis of the contradictions in Chinese society, became a powerful weapon for the people in carrying out the nation-wide rectification campaign and a guide for solving the various problems arising in the course of socialist construction.

Starting from the actual conditions existing in China, Mao Tse-tung said that there are two types of contradictions. One is the contradiction between the masses of people on the one hand and the imperialists, anti-socialist bourgeois Rightists, overthrown landlord and comprador classes and other reactionaries on the other. This is a contradiction between the people and their enemies and is antagonistic in nature. The other is the contradiction among the people themselves. This includes the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie. Mao Tse-tung said:

The contradiction between the exploiter and the exploited, which exists between the national bourgeoisie and the working class, is an antagonistic one. But, in the concrete conditions existing in China, such an antagonistic contradiction, if properly handled, can be transformed into a non-antagonistic one and resolved in a peaceful way.¹

¹Mao Tse-tung, *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1958, p. 10.

For this reason, the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie together with its intellectuals — the latter two having gradually accepted socialist transformation — is a contradiction among the people, being mainly an ideological one concerning two lines of thought. The contradictions among the people also include those within the working class, between the working class and the peasantry, and between the working class and the working people who formerly worked on an individual basis. These contradictions reveal themselves mainly in conflicts between the advanced and the backward; between the progressive and the conservative; between the method of doing things according to the principle of achieving greater, faster, better, and more economical results and that of doing things according to the reverse principle; and between the communist ideology and the ideological remnants of old China, such as bureaucracy, sectarianism, and subjectivism. All these, however, belong to the type of contradictions among the people. At present, owing to the differentiation of classes and to changes in the relative strength of the various classes, a small part of the contradictions in social relations have become contradictions between the people and their enemy while by far the greater part of them are contradictions among the people themselves. To resolve the contradictions among the people themselves it is necessary to use the method of “unity — criticism — unity.” In the course of the nation-wide rectification campaign, a method of allowing people to freely air their views, to freely debate any problem and to post *tatsepao*¹ for resolving contradictions among the

¹ Opinions and criticisms written out in bold Chinese characters on large sheets of paper and posted freely for everybody to see.

people was evolved. These methods, highly democratic in nature, were widely used by the people. As a result, a fresh scene of lively activity appeared in all constructive enterprises throughout the country.

In the same speech Mao Tse-tung analysed the nature of contradiction from the philosophical point of view. He said that everything from its beginning to its end contains contradictions. Social progress is made through the overcoming of contradictions; a new contradiction appears as soon as an old one is resolved. In a socialist society the relations of production suit the development of the productive forces. But still there are contradictions in certain links between them though these contradictions are non-antagonistic and can be resolved promptly through proper handling. So, the progress of socialism is made through constantly overcoming these contradictions. To deny that there are contradictions in a socialist society is incorrect. A true Marxist should not be afraid to face the contradictions in a socialist society. He should analyse them in a scientific manner and try to find ways of resolving them. In his work he should try to create the necessary conditions for the masses to turn their creative genius to full account. As soon as one revolutionary task is completed he should immediately start a new one, with the help of the masses, thus helping the people to go forward constantly in uninterrupted revolution with ever increasing spirit and energy. In this way the constant appearance, growth, and development of new things is ensured.

The conflict between socialism and capitalism is the main contradiction in China during the period of transition. In 1956, after the socialist revolution in the ownership of the means of production had scored a decisive

victory (i.e. private industry and commerce was changed over to joint state-private enterprises *en masse*), this main contradiction showed itself obviously in certain links in the relation between the economic base and the superstructure. Mao Tse-tung made a scientific analysis of this contradiction. He said:

The superstructure — our state institutions of people's democratic dictatorship and its laws, and socialist ideology under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism — has played a positive role in facilitating the victory of socialist transformation and establishment of a socialist organization of labour; it is suited to the socialist economic base, that is, socialist relations of production. But survivals of bourgeois ideology, bureaucratic ways of doing things in our state organs, and flaws in certain links of our state institutions stand in contradiction to the economic base of socialism.¹

He showed that unless a complete victory was won for the socialist revolution in both the political and ideological fronts the question "Who will win?" in the fight between socialism and capitalism would not be finally answered. Mao Tse-tung said in the same speech that the ideological class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie "will still be long and devious and at times may even become very acute." For this reason socialist revolution must continue in the political and ideological spheres. Failure to grasp this or to think that to settle the question of ownership is to settle the question of "Who will win?" in the struggle between so-

¹Mao Tse-tung, *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

cialism and capitalism in our country will lead to serious mistakes.

The question of socialist revolution in the political and ideological spheres is mainly one of how to remould the people's thought and working style and how to improve their work. In May 1957, therefore, the Chinese Communist Party launched a new rectification campaign starting with its own members. From this the work of the Party and government received a new impetus. With the carrying out of the anti-Rightist struggle the rectification campaign soon became a nation-wide movement, which, as subsequent developments proved, was the practical application of the theory of how to correctly handle contradictions among the people.

The campaign was a fight against bureaucracy, sectarianism, and subjectivism through self-education and self-remoulding; it was a socialist revolutionary movement in the political and ideological spheres participated in by the broad masses of people.

In order to help the broad masses take up a position of direct support for the vanguard of the proletariat, Lenin said, "Propaganda and agitation alone are not enough. For this the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions."¹ The Chinese Communist Party followed this advice. It consistently carried out the formula "unity — criticism — unity," and the policy of curing the illness to save the patient and to give the man who has committed a blunder a chance to correct himself. By criticizing themselves first, members of the

¹"'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder," V. I. Lenin, *op. cit.*, p. 421.

Party, as the vanguard of the proletariat, led the broad masses of people to practise criticism and self-criticism. The aim was to achieve ideological remoulding and improve their working methods by way of political education. In other words, it was the aim of the Party to carry out an ideological revolution so that a proletarian ideology would replace that of the bourgeoisie.

Shortly after the Party had launched the rectification campaign, a group of bourgeois Rightists who opposed socialism and the Communist Party and desperately hoped for a revival of capitalism took advantage of the campaign to open an ignominious attack on the Party. Marxism-Leninism was an anathema to them. What they worked for was a return of bourgeois sociology.

But Mao Tse-tung's teachings in his speech *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People* had instilled great fighting strength in the masses. They had learned how to distinguish "poisonous weeds" from "fragrant flowers." Following his advice that, "poisonous weeds should be fought against wherever they crop up," they waged resolute struggles and counter-attacks against the reactionary views of these Rightists, which were the theoretical basis of the bourgeois design for staging a political comeback. In exposing the political schemes of the Rightists the Marxists and the broad masses of people pointed out that in dragging China back onto the path of capitalism the Rightists would really lead China to ruin and national extinction. After a hundred years of revolutionary struggle the Chinese people have fully realized that Marxism-Leninism and socialism is the only hope for China. They know there is no alternative. Through their anti-Rightist struggle,

they became all the more determined in their desire to build socialism and more confident in their future.

The Marxists and the broad masses of people exposed the Rightists' trick in propagating the theory of "social investigation" as proposed by the bourgeois sociologists. They pointed out that in doing this the Rightists were really standing on the side of the comprador and landlord classes; that they were using the subjective method of the idealists, following the reactionary theory of functionalism in playing with figures and giving distorted descriptions of conditions in China, so as to oppose the working class and Marxism.

Marxists and wide sections of the people showed that through the revolutionary activities of the international working-class movements during the last century, Marxism-Leninism had made great progress and would continue to do so in the future. The Rightists said that Marxism was "out of date" and that it was "at a standstill." But none of their fake theories stood the test of truth.

The Marxists and millions of ordinary people pointed out that the basic Marxist method of class analysis is infallible. This method exposes the real class nature of the component parts of the superstructure — its law, morality, political power and so on. The "genuine democracy" and "genuine freedom of speech" advocated by the Rightists are merely hypocritical catchwords used by the bourgeoisie to camouflage the class nature of the bourgeois state.

It was further pointed out that throughout history there was no such thing as "human nature" in the abstract, but that it was an expression of class character. The "human nature" which the Rightists talked about was

nothing but chicanery. The "greater freedom" for which they clamoured was but the freedom of the exploiting class to cheat, oppress, prey upon the people and monopolize the profits, such being the characteristics of the "human nature" of the bourgeoisie.

Relying on Lenin's theory of the two kinds of cultural heritage, the Marxists showed the Rightists' fabrication of a "purely national cultural heritage" and a non-class code of morality. They pointed out why it was that the Rightists opposed making a Marxist analysis of our cultural heritage and opposed making a distinction between the "democratic essence" of our cultural heritage and its "feudal dregs." It became obvious to the people why the Rightists denied the fact of the struggle between materialism and idealism. They were making apologies for reviving their multifarious theories of "national characteristics"¹ and looking for markets to sell their bourgeois idealism.

In short, during the anti-Rightist struggle the people, led by the Party, succeeded in defeating the attack launched by the Rightists, and in doing so enlightened themselves still more. The Marxists were steeled and they expanded their ranks.

After this smashing victory was won over the bourgeois Rightists and a nation-wide rectification campaign carried out, a big leap forward was made on all fronts. A socialist revolution was thoroughly carried out in all cultural and academic circles. Owing to deep-seated bourgeois ideas of philosophy and the social sciences, some intellectuals frequently distorted the laws of historical development and class struggle under the pre-

¹ See footnote in the Foreword.

tence of objectivity which was nothing but bourgeois claptrap. Under the pretext of carrying on our cultural heritage, some disseminated a new type of the revival of "national characteristics" while others held the decadent view of "learning for learning's sake," trying to lead the young people away from politics and from the world of reality. The Chinese Communist Party took the lead in intellectual circles in criticizing the harmful style of extolling the past at the expense of the present and divorcing theory from reality as a result of reactionary bourgeois influences. The struggle between these two ideas is still being waged in the realms of philosophy and social sciences. It is quite certain that in this struggle, Marxism will continue to play a leading role in the social sciences and will show even greater power as a weapon of modern thought. "Marxism," as Mao Tse-tung said, "can only develop through struggle — this is true not only in the past and present, it is necessarily true in the future also."¹ At present, the philosophers and social scientists, as well as the natural scientists, are carrying out an ideological revolution. They are criticizing one another, but in the manner of "a mild breeze and gentle rain," presenting facts, and giving reasons for their arguments. The aim of this revolution is to expose and discredit bourgeois individualism and make it possible for all to advance towards the goal of being "thoroughly Red and profoundly expert." To successfully fulfil this task the Party persuaded and encouraged the intellectuals to leave their private studies, descend from their ivory towers and take part

¹Mao Tse-tung, *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*, op. cit., p. 51.

in the work of production together with the workers and peasants. In this way they might be better able to feel and think as the workers and peasants do and change their whole outlook on life by acquiring a rich store of practical experience. When the minds of the intellectuals are entirely emancipated in this way, so that they begin to think in the communist way, a big leap forward cannot but take place in the fields of philosophy and the social sciences.

Scoring great victories in the rectification campaign and anti-Rightist struggle, the people were further enlightened and willing to accept communist ideology. Under such conditions the Second Session of the Eighth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was convened in May 1958. The session reviewed the people's struggle and the practical experience of the past eight years together with the development of Mao Tse-tung's ideological thinking, and formulated the general line of socialist construction, which is in brief: To go all out, to aim high, and achieve greater, faster, better, and more economical results in building socialism. At the same time they also promulgated the important measures to be taken in implementing the general line. These were: to carry out step by step the technical and cultural revolutions simultaneously with the socialist revolution on the economic, political, and ideological fronts; to develop both industry and agriculture at the same time with the condition that priority be given to the development of heavy industry; and to develop industries under central and local control while similarly developing big, medium, and small industrial enterprises, under the conditions of central leadership, over-all planning, and co-operation in the division of labour. Under the guidance of this

general principle of socialist construction, technical and cultural revolutions are being carried out with great rapidity and thoroughness. The rate of agricultural production is increasing at high speed. Industrial enterprises are now being set up in every township and co-operative. Every township will have a middle school. Technical reform is being carried out throughout the length and breadth of the country with new inventions being reported practically every day. The whole "leap forward" movement is characterized by close co-ordination between industry and agriculture as well as between education and production. In this spirit and under such conditions we can say with confidence that, guided by the wisdom of Mao Tse-tung, we shall not only increase our productive forces in industry and agriculture, improve the material and cultural life of the people, but shall set a quicker pace for our socialist construction.

It is only under a socialist system that full play can be given to man's subjective activity which is built upon the knowledge of the laws of the objective world. The more man understands the objective laws, the better will he be able to develop his creative genius. The practical experience in our socialist construction has fully borne out the validity of this theory.

Life's realities have abundantly confirmed that Mao Tse-tung sets the best example of how to combine Marxism with revolutionary practice in China, and have testified that the philosophy of Marxism is the most powerful weapon in changing the world and that Marx was right when he said, "Theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses" — which has become one of the theories of Marxism-Leninism. At the Second Session of the Eighth Chinese Communist

Party Congress (May 1958), the Party members were encouraged to follow the examples of Mao Tse-tung and other leading comrades long known for their ability to get along well with the masses and especially for the way in which they apply the philosophy of Marxism to actual revolutionary work and the way they combine revolutionary zeal with realistic appraisal. Responding to the call of the Party, China's millions of workers and peasants are rapidly abandoning, indeed, many of them have long since abandoned, the age-old opinion that philosophy is a mysterious and difficult subject to understand and beyond the comprehension of the common people. Now they are diligently and systematically studying Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung's writings. They are making great efforts to draw lessons from practical experience and crystallize them into theories and so turn the correct theories into a material force to make further advances in their practical work. All this shows that we are living in a great era in which we shall see Marxism-Leninism flourishing.

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