My Country and My People

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Subjects: China -- Culture; History; Travel Guides

First published in 1935

This edition published by Reading Essentials

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most important movements in China to-day is the discovery of their own country by young Chinese intellectuals. A generation ago the most progressive of their fathers were beginning to feel a stirring discontent with their own country. They were conscious, indeed the consciousness was forced upon them, that China as she had been in the past was not able to meet the dangerous and aggressive modernity of the West. I do not mean the political modernity so much as the march of economic, educational and military events. These Chinese fathers, fathers of the present generation in China, were the real revolutionists. They forced out of existence the old dynastic rule, they changed with incredible speed the system of education, with indefatigable zeal they planned and set up a scheme of modern government. No ancient government under an emperor ever accomplished with more imperial speed such tremendous changes in so great a country.

In this atmosphere of change, the present intellectual youth of China has grown up. Where the fathers imbibed the doctrine of Confucius and learned the classics and revolted against them, these young people have been battered by many forces of the new times. They have been taught something of science, something of Christianity, something of atheism, something of free love, something of communism, something of Western philosophy, something of modern militarism, something, in fact, of everything. In the midst of the sturdy medievalism of the masses of their countrymen the young intellectuals have been taught the most extreme of every culture. Intellectually they have been forced to the same great omissions that China has made physically. They have skipped, figuratively speaking, from the period of the

unimproved country road to the aeroplane era. The omission was too great. The mind could not compensate for it. The spirit was lost in the conflict.

The first result, therefore, of the hiatus was undoubtedly to produce a class of young Chinese, both men and women, but chiefly men, who frankly did not know how to live in their own country or in the age in which their country still was. They were for the most part educated abroad, where they forgot the realities of their own race. It was easy enough for various revolutionary leaders to persuade these alienated minds that China's so-called backwardness was due primarily to political and material interference by foreign powers. The world was made the scapegoat for China's medievalism. Instead of realizing that China was in her own way making her own steps, slowly, it is true, and somewhat ponderously, toward modernity, it was easy hue and cry to say that if it had not been for foreigners she would have been already on an equality, in material terms, with other nations.

The result of this was a fresh revolution of a sort. China practically rid herself of

her two great grievances outside of Japan, extraterritoriality and the tariff. No great visible change appeared as a consequence. It became apparent that what had been weaknesses were still weaknesses, and that these were inherent in the ideology of the people. It was found, for instance, that when a revolutionary leader became secure and entrenched he became conservative and as corrupt, too often, as an old style official. The same has been true in other histories. There were too many honest and intelligent young minds in China not to observe and accept the truth, that the outside world had very little to do with China's

condition, and what she had to do with it could have been prevented if China had been earlier less sluggish and her leaders less blind and selfish.

Then followed a period of despair and frenzy and increased idealistic worship of the West. The evident prosperity of foreign countries was felt to be a direct fruit of Western scientific development. It was a time when the inferiority complex was rampant in China, and the young patriots were divided between mortification at what their country was and desire to conceal it from foreigners. There was no truth to be found in them, so far as their own country was concerned. They at once hated and admired the foreigners.

What would have happened if the West had continued prosperous and at peace cannot be said. It is enough that the West did not so continue. The Chinese have viewed with interest and sometimes with satisfaction the world war, the depression, the breakdown of prosperity, and the failure of scientific men to prevent these disasters. They have begun to say to themselves that after all China is not so bad. Evidently there is hunger everywhere, there are bandits everywhere, and one people is not better than another, and if this is so, then perhaps China was right in olden times, and perhaps it is just as well to go back and see what the old Chinese philosophy was. At least it taught people to live with contentment and with enjoyment of small things if they had not the great ones, and it regulated life and provided a certain amount of security and safety. The recent interest in China on the part of the West, the wistfulness of certain Western persons who envy the simplicity and security of China's pattern of life and admire her arts and philosophy have also helped to inspire the young Chinese with confidence in themselves.

The result to-day is simply a reiteration of the old Biblical adage that the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. Young China, being wearied of the revolutionary ardours of its father's, is going back to old China, It is almost amusing to see the often self-conscious determination to be really Chinese, to eat Chinese food, to live ir Chinese ways, to dress in Chinese clothes. It is as much of a fad and a pose to be entirely Chinese these days among certain young westernized Chinese as it was for their fathers to wear foreign clothes and eat with knives and forks and want to go to Harvard, These present young people have worn foreign clothes all their lives and eaten foreign food and they did go to Harvard, and they know English literature infinitely better than their own, and now they are sick of it all and want to go back to their grandfathers.

The trend is apparent everywhere, and not only in the externals of dress and customs. Far more importantly is it to be seen in art and literature. The subject of modern Chinese novels of a few years ago, for instance, dealt chiefly with modern love situations, with semi-foreign liaisons, with rebellion against home and parents, and the whole tone was somewhat sickly and certainly totally unrooted in the country. There is still more than enough of this in both art and literature, but health is beginning to creep in, the health of life from plain people living plain and sturdy lives upon their earth. The young intellectuals are beginning to discover their own masses. They are beginning to find that life in the countryside, in small towns and villages, is the real and native life of China, fortunately still fairly untouched with the mixed modernism which has made their own lives unhealthy. They are beginning to feel themselves happy that there is this great solid foundation in their nation, and to turn to it

eagerly for fresh inspiration. It is new to them, it is delightful, it is humorous, it is worth having, and above all, it is purely Chinese.

They have been helped to this new viewpoint, too. They would not, I think, have achieved it so well alone, and it is the West which has helped them. We of the West have helped them not only negatively, by exhibiting a certain sort of breakdown in our own civilization, but we have helped them positively, by our own trend toward elemental life. The Western interest in all proletarian movements has set young China to thinking about her own proletariat, and to discovering the extraordinary quality of her country people, maintaining their life pure and incredibly undisturbed by the world's confusion. It is natural that such tranquillity should greatly appeal to intellectuals in their own confusion and sense of being lost in the twisted times.

Communism, too, has helped them. Communism has brought about class consciousness, it has made the common man articulate and demanding, and since modern education in China has been available to the children of common people, they have already been given a sort of voice, at least, wherewith to speak for themselves, however inadequately. In the art and literature of the young Leftists in China there is a rapidly spreading perception of the value of the common man and woman of their country. The expression is still crude and too much influenced by foreign art, but the notion is there. One sometimes sees these days a peasant woman upon a canvas instead of a bird upon a bamboo twig, and the straining figure of a man pushing a wheelbarrow instead of goldfish flashing in a lotus pool.

Yet if we of the West were to wait for the interpretation of

China until these newly released ones could find adequate and articulate voice, it would be to wait longer, perhaps, than our generation. Happily there are a few others, a few spirits large enough not to be lost in the confusion of the times, humorous enough to see life as it is, with the fine old humour of generations of sophistication and learning, keen enough to understand their own civilization as well as others, and wise enough to choose what is native to them and therefore truly their own. For a long time I have hoped that one of these few would write for us all a book about his own China, a real book, permeated with the essential spirit of the people. Time after time I have opened a book, eagerly and with hope, and time after time I have closed it again in disappointment, because it was untrue, because it was bombastic, because it was too fervent in defence of that which was too great to need defence. It was written to impress the foreigner, and therefore it was unworthy of China.

A book about China, worthy to be about China, can be none of these things. It must be frank and unashamed, because the real Chinese have always been a proud people, proud enough to be frank and unashamed of themselves and their ways. It must be wise and penetrative in its understanding, for the Chinese have been above all peoples wise and penetrative in their understanding of the human heart. It must be humorous, because humour is an essential part of Chinese nature, deep, mellow, kindly humour, founded upon the tragic knowledge and acceptance of life. It must be expressed in flowing, exact, beautiful words, because the Chinese have always valued the beauty of the exact and the exquisite. None but a Chinese could write such a book, and I had begun to think that as yet even no Chinese could write it, because it seemed impossible to find a modern English-writing Chinese who was not so detached from

his own people as to be alien to them, and yet detached enough to comprehend their meaning, the meaning of their age and the meaning of their youth.

> But suddenly, as all great books appear, this book appears, fulfilling every demand made upon it. It is truthful and not ashamed of the truth: it is written proudly and humorously and with beauty, seriously and with gaiety, appreciative and understanding of both old and new. It is, I think, the truest, the most profound, the most complete, the most important book yet written about China. And, best of all, it is written by a Chinese, a modern, whose roots are firmly in the past, but whose rich flowering is in the present.
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> PEARL S, BUCK

PREFACE

In this book I have tried only to communicate my opinions, which I have arrived at after some long and painful thought and reading and introspection. I have not tried to enter into arguments or prove my different theses, but I will stand justified or condemned by this book, as Confucius once said of his Spring and Autumn Annals. China is too big a country, and her national life has too many facets, for her not to be open to the most diverse and contradictory interpretations. And I shall always be able to assist with very convenient material anyone who wishes to hold opposite theses. But truth is truth and will overcome

clever human opinions. It is given to man only at rare moments to perceive the truth, and it is these moments of perception that will survive, and not individual opinions. Therefore, the most formidable marshalling of evidence can often lead one to conclusions which are mere learned nonsense. For the presentation of such perceptions, one needs a simpler, which is really a subtler, style. For truth can never be proved; it can only be hinted at.

> It is also inevitable that I should offend many writers about China, especially my own countrymen and great patriots. These great patriots, I have nothing to do with them, for their god is not my god, and their patriotism is not my patriotism. Perhaps I too love my own country, but I take care to conceal it before them, for one may wear the cloak of patriotism to tatters, and in these tatters be paraded through the city streets to death, in China or the rest of the world.

I am able to confess because, unlike these patriots, I am not ashamed of my country. And I can lay bare her troubles because I have not lost hope. China is bigger than her little patriots, and does not require their whitewashing. She will, as she always did, right herself again.

Nor do I write for the patriots of the West. For I fear more their appreciative quotations from me than the misunderstandings of my countrymen. I write only for the men of simple common sense, that simple common sense for which ancient China was so distinguished, but which is so rare today. My book can only be understood from this simple point of view. To these people who have not lost their sense of ultimate human values, to them alone I speak. For they alone will understand me.

My thanks are due to Pearl S. Buck who, from the beginning to the end, gave me kind encouragement and who personally read through the entire manuscript before it was sent to the press and edited It, to Mr. Richard J. Walsh who offered valuable criticism while the book was in progress, and to Miss Lillian Peffer, who styled the manuscript, read the proofs and made the index. Acknowledgements are also due to Mrs. Selskar M. Gunn, Bemardine Szold Fritz and Baroness Ungern Sternberg, who, sometimes singly and sometimes in chorus, nagged me into writing this book. Lastly, I am indebted to my wife who patiently went through with me the less pleasant aspects of authorship, which only an author's wife could appreciate.

The
author
June,
1935
Shanghai

Part
One
Bases
PROLOGUE

I

When one is in China, one is compelled to think about her, with compassion always, with despair sometimes, and with discrimination and understanding very rarely. For one either loves or hates China. Perhaps even when one does not live in China one sometimes thinks of her as an old, great big country which remains aloof from the world and does not quite belong to it. That aloofness has a certain fascination. But if one comes to China, one feels engulfed and soon stops thinking.

One merely feels she is there, a tremendous existence somewhat too big for the human mind to encompass, a seemingly inconsequential chaos obeying its own laws of existence and enacting its own powerful life-drama, at times tragic, at times comical, but always intensely and boisterously real; then after a while, one begins to think again, with wonder and amazement. This time, the reaction will be temperamental; it merely indicates whether one is a romantic cosmopolitan individual or a conceited, self-satisfied prig, one either, likes or dislikes China, and then proceeds to justify one's likes or dislikes. That is just as well, for we must take some sort of attitude toward China to justify ourselves as intelligent beings. We grope for reasons, and begin to tell one another little anecdotes, trifles of everyday life, escaped or casual words of conversation, things of tremendous importance that make us philosophers and enable us to become, with great equanimity, either her implacable critics, allowing nothing good for her, or else her ardent, romantic admirers. Of course, these generalizations are rather silly. But that is how human opinions are formed all over the world, and it is unavoidable. Then we set about arguing with one another. Some always come out from the argument supremely satisfied of their Tightness, self-assured that they have an opinion of China and of the Chinese people. They are the happy people who rule the world and import merchandise from one part of it to another,

and who are always in the right. Others find themselves beset with doubts and perplexities, with a feeling of awe and bewilderment, perhaps of awe and mystification and they end where they began. But all of us feel China is there, a great mystical Dasein .

> For China is the greatest mystifying and stupefying fact in the modern world, and that not only because of her age or her geographical greatness. She is the oldest living nation with a continuous culture; she has the largest population; once she was the greatest empire in the world, and she was a conqueror; she gave the world some of its most important inventions; she has a literature, a philosophy, a wisdom of life entirely her own; and in the realms of art, she soared where others merely made an effort to flap their wings. And yet, to-day she is undoubtedly the most chaotic, the most misruled nation on earth, the most pathetic and most helpless, the most unable to pull herself together and forge ahead. God—if there be a God— intended her to be a first-class nation among the peoples of the earth, and she has chosen to take a back seat with Guatemala at the League of Nations; and the entire League of Nations, with the best will in the world, cannot help her to pull her own house in order, cannot help her to stop her own civil wars, cannot help her to save herself from her own scholars and militarists, her own revolutionists and gentry politicians.
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> Meanwhile this is the most amazing fact, he is the least concerned about her own salvation. Like a good gambler, she took the loss of a slice of territory the size of Germany itself without a wince. And while General Tang Yulin was beating a world record retreat and losing half a million square miles in eight days, two generals, an uncle and a nephew, were

matching their strength in Szechuen. One begins to wonder whether God will win out in the end, whether God Himself can help China to become a first-class nation in spite of herself.

And another doubt arises in one's mind: What is China's destiny? Will she survive as she so successfully did in the past, and in a way that no other old nation was able to do? Did God really intend her to be a first-class nation? Or is she merely "Mother Earth's miscarriage"?

Once she had a destiny. Once she was a conqueror. Now her greatest destiny seems to be merely to exist, to survive, and one cannot but have faith in her ability to do so, when one remembers how she has survived the ages, after the beauty that was Greece and the glory that was Rome are long vanished, remembers how she has ground and modelled foreign truths into her own likeness and absorbed foreign races into her own blood. This fact of her survival, of her great age, is evidently something worth pondering upon. There is something due an old nation, a respect for hoary old age that should be applied to nations as to individuals. Yes, even to mere old age, even to mere survival.

For whatever else is wrong, China has a sound instinct for life, a strange supernatural, extraordinary vitality. She has led a life of the instinct; she has adjusted herself to economic, political and social environments that might have spelled disaster to a less robust racial constitution; she has received her share of nature's bounty, has clung to her flowers and birds and hills and

dales for her inspiration and moral support, which alone have kept her heart whole and pure and prevented the race from civic social degeneration. She has chosen to live much in the open, to bask in the sunlight, to watch the evening glow, to feel the touch of the morning dew and to smell the fragrance of hay and of the moist earth; through her poetry, through the poetry of habits of life as well as through the poetry of words, she has learned to refresh her, alas! too often wounded, soul. In other words, she has managed to reach grand old age in the same way as human individuals do by living much in the open and having a great deal of sunlight and fresh air. But she has also lived through hard times, through recurrent centuries of war and pestilence, and through natural calamities and human misrule. With a grim humour and somewhat coarse nerves, she has weathered them all, and somehow she has always righted herself. Yes, great age, even mere great age, is something to be wondered at.

> Now that she has reached grand old age, she is beyond bodily and spiritual sorrows, and one would have thought, at times, beyond hope and beyond redemption. Is it the strength or the weakness of old age, one wonders? She has defied the world, and has taken a nonchalant attitude toward it, which her old age entitles her to do. Whatever happens, her placid life flows on unperturbed, insensible to pain and to misery, impervious to shame and to ambition—the little human emotions that agitate young breasts—and undaunted even by the threat of immediate ruin and collapse for the last two centuries. Success and failure have ceased to touch her; calamities and, death have lost their sting; and the overshadowing of her national life for a period of a few centuries has ceased to have any meaning. Like the sea in the Nietzschean analogy, she is greater than all the fish and shell-fish and jelly-fish in her, greater than the mud and refuse thrown into her. She is

greater than the lame propaganda and petulance of all her returned students, greater than the hypocrisy, shame and greed of all her petty officials and turncoat generals and fence-riding revolutionists, greater than her wars and pestilence, greater than her dirt and poverty and famines. For she has survived them all. Amidst wars and pestilence, surrounded by her poor children and grandchildren, Merry Old China quietly sips her tea and smiles on, and in her smile I see her real strength. She quietly sips her tea and smiles on, and in her smile I detect at times a mere laziness to change and at others a conservatism that savours of haughtiness. Laziness or haughtiness, which? I do not know. But somewhere in her soul lurks the cunning of an old dog, and it is a cunning that is strangely impressive. What a strange old soul! What a great old soul!

II

But what price greatness? Carlyle has said somewhere that the first impression of a really great work of art is always unnerving to the point of painfulness. It is the lot of the great to be misunderstood, and so it is China's lot. China has been greatly, magnificently misunderstood. Greatness is often the term we confer on what we do not understand and wish to have done with. Between being well understood, however, and being called great, China would have preferred the former, and it would have been better for everybody all round. But how is China to be understood? Who will be her interpreters? There is that long history of hers, covering a multitude of kings and

emperors and sages and poets and scholars and brave mothers and talented women. There are her arts and philosophies, her paintings and her theatres, which provide the common people with all the moral notions of good and evil, and that tremendous mass of folk literature and folklore. The language alone constitutes an almost hopeless barrier. Can China be understood merely through pidgin English? Is the Old China Hand to pick up an understanding of the soul of China from his cook and amah? Or shall it be from his Number One Boy? Or shall it be from his compradore and shroff, or by reading the correspondence of the North China Daily News ? The proposition is manifestly unfair.

> Indeed, the business of trying to understand a foreign nation with a foreign culture, especially one so different from one's own as China's, is usually not for the mortal man. For this work there is need for broad, brotherly feeling, for the feeling of the common bond of humanity and the cheer of good fellowship. One must feel with the pulse of the heart as well as see with the eyes of the mind. There must be, too, a certain detachment, not from the country under examination, for that is always so, but from oneself and one's subconscious notions, and from the deeply imbedded notions of one's childhood and the equally tyrannous ideas of one's adult days, from those big words with capital letters like Democracy, Prosperity, Capital, and Success and Religion and Dividends. One needs a little detachment, and a little simplicity of mind, too, that simplicity of mind so well typified by Robert Burns, one of the most
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> Scottish and yet most universal of all poets, who strips our souls bare and reveals our common humanity and the loves and sorrows that common humanity is heir to. Only with that detachment and that simplicity of mind can one understand a

foreign nation. Who will, then, be her interpreters? The problem is an almost insoluble one.

Certainly not the sinologues and librarians abroad who see China only through the reflection of the Confucian classics. The true Europeans in China do not speak Chinese, and the true Chinese do not speak English. The Europeans who speak Chinese too well develop certain mental habits akin to the Chinese and are regarded by their compatriots as "queer." The Chinese who speak English too well and develop Western mental habits are "denationalized" or they may not even speak Chinese, or speak it with an English accent. So by a process of elimination, it would seem that we have to put up with the Old China Hand, and that we have largely to depend upon his understanding of pidgin. The Old China Hand, or O.C.H.—let us stop to picture him, for he is important as your only authority on China. He has been well described by Mr. Arthur Ransome.(The Chinese Puzzle, especially the chapter on "The Shanghai Mind') But to my mind, he is a vivid personality, and one can now easily picture him in the imagination. Let us make no mistake about him. He may be the son of a missionary, or a captain or a pilot, or a secretary in the consular service, or he may be a merchant to whom China is just a market for selling sardines and "sunkist" oranges. He is not always uneducated; in fact, he may be a brilliant journalist, with one eye to a political advisorship and the other to a loan commission. He may even be very well informed within his limits, the limits of a man who cannot talk three syllables of Chinese and depends on his English-speaking Chinese friends for his supplies of information. But he keeps on with his adventure and he plays golf and his golf helps to keep him fit. He drinks Lipton's tea and reads the North China Daily News, and his spirit revolts against the morning reports of banditry and kidnapping and recurrent civil wars, which spoil his breakfast for him. He is

well shaved and dresses more neatly than his Chinese associates, and his boots are better shined than they would be in England, although this is no credit to him, for the Chinese boys are such good bootblacks. He rides a distance of three or four miles from his home to his office every morning, and believes himself desired at Miss Smith's tea. He may have no aristocratic blood in his veins nor ancestral oil portraits in his halls, but he can always circumvent that by going further back in history and discovering that his forefathers in the primeval forests had the right blood in them, and that sets his mind at peace and relieves him of all anxiety to study things Chinese, But he is also uncomfortable every time his business takes him through Chinese streets where the heathen eyes all stare at him. He takes his handkerchief and vociferously blows his nose with it and bravely endures it, all the while in a blue funk. He broadly surveys the wave of blue-dressed humanity. It seems to him their eyes are not quite so slant as the shilling-shocker covers represent them to be. Can these people stab one in the back? It seems unbelievable in the beautiful sunlight, but one never knows, and the courage and sportsmanship which he learned at the cricket field all leave him. Why, he would rather be knocked in the head by a cricket bat than go through those crooked streets again! Yes, it was fear, primeval fear of the Unknown.

But to him, it is not just that. It is his humanity that cannot stand the sight of human misery and poverty, as understood in his own terms. He simply cannot stand being pulled by a human beast of burden in a rickshaw—he has to have a car. His car is not just a car, it is a moving covered corridor that; leads from his home to his office and protects him from Chinese humanity. He will not leave his car and his civilization. He tells Miss Smith so at tea, saying that a car in China is not a luxury but a necessity. That three-mile ride of an enclosed mind in an enclosed glass

case from the home to the office he takes every day of his twenty-five years in China, although he does not mention this fact when he goes home to England and signs himself "An Old Resident Twenty-Five Years in China" in correspondence to the London Times. It reads very impressively. Of course, he should know what he is talking about.

> Meanwhile, that three-mile radius has seldom been exceeded, except when he goes on cross-country paper hunts over Chinese farm fields, but then he is out in the open and knows how to defend himself. But in this he is mistaken, for he never has to, and this he knows himself, for he merely says so, when he is out for sport. He has never been invited to Chinese homes, has sedulously avoided Chinese restaurants, and has never read a single line of Chinese newspapers. He goes to the longest bar in the world of an evening, sips his cocktail and picks up and imbibes and exchanges bits of sailors' tales on the China coast handed down from the Portuguese sailors, and is sorry to find that Shanghai is not Sussex, and generally behaves as he would in England.(A writer signing himself "J.D." says in an article on "Englishmen in China" published in The New Statesman, London: "His life is spent between his office and the club. In the former, he is surrounded by foreigners as equals or superiors and by Chinese as inferiors' clerks and so forth. In the latter except for the servants, he sees nothing but foreigners, from whom every night he hears complaints about Chinese dishonesty and stupidity, interspersed by stories of the day's work, and by discussions on sport, which is the one thing that saves the Englishman in China. It is the only alternative to abuse of the Chinese.) He feels happy when he learns that the Chinese are beginning to observe Christmas and make progress, and feels amazed when he is

not understood in English; he walks as if the whole lot of them did not exist for him, and does not say “sorry” even in English when he steps on a fellow-passenger's toes; yes, he has not even learned the Chinese equivalents of “danke sehr ” and “bitte schon ” and “verzeihen Sie ” the minimum moral obligations of even a passing tourist, and complains of anti-foreignism and despairs because even the pillaging of the Pekin palaces after the Boxer Uprising has not taught the Chinese a lesson. There is your authority on China. Oh, for a common bond of humanity!

All this one can understand, and it is even quite natural, and should not be mentioned here were it not for the fact that it bears closely on the formation of opinions on China in the West. One needs only to think of the language difficulty, of the almost impossible learning of the Chinese writing, of the actual political, intellectual and artistic chaos in present-day China, and of the vast differences in customs between the Chinese and the Westerners. The plea here is essentially for a better understanding on a higher level of intelligence. Yet it is difficult to deny the Old China Hand the right to write books and articles about China, simply because he cannot read the Chinese newspapers, Nevertheless, such books and articles must necessarily remain on the level of the gossip along the world's longest bar.

There are exceptions, of course—a Sir Robert Hart or a Bertrand Russell, for example—who are able to see the meaning in a type of life so different from one's own, but for one Sir Robert Hart there are ten thousand Rodney Gilberts, and for one Bertrand Russell there are ten thousand H. G. W. Woodheads. The result is a constant, unintelligent elaboration of the Chinaman as a stage fiction, which is as childish as it is untrue

and with which the West is so familiar, and a continuation of the early Portuguese sailors' tradition minus the sailors' obscenity of language, but with essentially the same sailors' obscenity of mind.

The Chinese sometimes wonder among themselves why China attracts only sailors and adventurers to her coast. To understand that, one would have to read H.B. Morse and trace the continuity of that sailor tradition to the present day, and observe the similarities between the early Portuguese sailors and the modern O.C.H.s in their general outlook, their interests and the natural process of selection and force of circumstances which have washed them ashore on this corner of the earth, and the motives which drove, and are still driving, them to this heathen country—gold and adventure. Gold and adventure which in the first instance drove Columbus, the greatest sailor-adventurer of them all, to seek a route to China.

Then one begins to understand that continuity, begins to understand how that Columbus-sailor tradition has been so solidly and equitably carried on, and one feels a sort of pity for China; a pity that it is not our humanity but our gold and our capacities as buying animals which have attracted the Westerners to this Far Eastern shore. It is gold and success, Henry James's "bitch-goddess," which have bound the Westerners and the Chinese together, and thrown them into this whirlpool of obscenity, with not a single human, spiritual tie among them. They do not admit this to themselves, the Chinese and the English; so the Chinese asks the Englishman why he does not leave the country if he hates it so, and the Englishman asks in retort why the Chinese does not leave the foreign settlements,

and both of them do not know how to reply. As it is, the Englishman does not bother to make himself understood to the Chinese, and the true Chinese bothers even less to make himself understood to the Englishman.

III

But do the Chinese understand themselves? Will they be China's best interpreters? Self-knowledge is proverbially difficult, much more so in a circumstance where a great deal of wholesome, sane-minded criticism is required. Assuredly no language difficulty exists for the educated Chinese,.but that long history of China is difficult for him also to master; her arts, philosophies, poetry, literature and the theatre are difficult for him to penetrate and illuminate with a clear and beautiful understanding; and his own fellow-men, the fellow-passenger in a street car or a former fellow-student now pretending to rule the destiny of a whole province, are for him, too difficult to forgive.

For the mass of foreground details, which swamps the foreign observer, swamps the modern Chinese as well. Perhaps he has even less the cool detachment of the foreign observer. In his breast is concealed a formidable struggle, or several struggles. There is the conflict between his ideal and his real China, and a more formidable conflict between his primeval clan-pride and his moments of admiration for the stranger. His soul is torn by a conflict of loyalties belonging to opposite poles, a loyalty to old China, half romantic and half selfish, and a loyalty to open-eyed wisdom which craves for change and a ruthless clean-sweeping of all that is stale and putrid and dried

up and mouldy. Sometimes it is a more elementary conflict between shame and pride, between sheer family loyalty and a critical ashamedness for the present state of things, instincts wholesome in themselves. But sometimes his clan- pride gets the better of him, and between proper pride and mere reactionism there is only a thin margin, and sometimes his instinct of shame gets the better of him, and between a sincere desire for reform and a mere shallow modernity and worship of the modern bitch-goddess, there is also only a very thin margin. To escape that is indeed a delicate task.

> Where is that unity of understanding to be found? To combine real appreciation with critical appraisal, to see with the mind and feel with the heart, to make the mind and the heart at one, is no easy state of grace to attain to. For it involves no less than the salvaging of an old culture, like the sorting of family treasures, and even the connoisseur's eyes are sometimes deceived and his fingers sometimes falter. It requires courage and that rare thing, honesty, and that still rarer thing, a constant questioning activity of the mind.

But he has a distinct advantage over the foreign observer. For he is a Chinese, and as a Chinese, he not only sees with his mind but he also feels with his heart, and he knows that the blood, surging in his veins in tides of pride and shame is Chinese blood, a mystery of mysteries which carries with its biochemical constitution the past and the future of China bearer of all its pride and shame and of all its glories and it iniquities. The analogy of the family treasure is therefore incomplete and inadequate, for that unconscious national heritage is within him and is part of himself. He has perhaps learned to play English football but he does not love football; he has perhaps learned to admire American efficiency, but his soul revolts against

efficiency; he has perhaps learned to use table napkins, but he hates table napkins, and all through Schubert's melodies and Brahms' songs, he hears, as an overtone, the echo of age-old folk songs and pastoral lyrics of the Orient, luring him back. He explores the beauties and glories of the West, but he comes back to the East, his Oriental blood overcoming him when he is approaching forty. He sees the portrait of his father wearing a Chinese silk cap, and he discards his Western dress and slips into Chinese gowns and slippers, oh, so comfortable, so peaceful and comfortable, for in his Chinese gowns and slippers his soul comes to rest. He cannot understand the Western dog-collar any more, and wonders how he ever stood it for so long. He does not play football any more, either, but begins to cultivate Chinese hygiene, and saunters along in the mulberry fields and bamboo groves and willow banks for his exercise, and even this is not a "country walk" as the English understand it, but just an Oriental saunter, good for the body and good for the soul. He hates the word "exercise". Exercise for what? It is a ridiculous Western notion. Why, even the sight of respectable grown-up men dashing about in a field for a ball now seems ridiculous, supremely ridiculous; and more ridiculous still, the wrapping oneself up in hot flannels and woolen sweaters after the game on a hot summer day. Why all the bother? He reflects. He remembers he used to enjoy it himself, but then he was young and immature and he was not himself. It was but a passing fancy, and he has not really the instinct for sport. No, he is born differently; he is born for kowtowing and for quiet and peace, and not for football and the dog-collar and table napkins and efficiency. He sometimes thinks of himself as a pig, and the Westerner as a dog, and the dog worries the pig, but the pig only grunts, and it may even be a grunt of satisfaction. Why, he even wants to be a pig, a real pig, for it is really so very comfortable,

and he does not envy the dog for his collar and his dog-efficiency and his bitch-goddess success. All he wants is that the dog leave him alone.

Chapter One

THE CHINESE PEOPLE

I NORTH AND SOUTH

In the study of any period of literature or of any epoch of history, the final and highest effort is always an attempt to gain a close view of the man in that period or epoch, for behind the creations of literature and the events of history there is always the individual who is after all of prime interest to us. One thinks of a Marcus Aurelius or a Lucian in the times of decadent Rome, or of a Franç ois Villon in the medieval ages, and the times seem at once familiar and understandable to us. Names like "the age of Johnson" are more suggestive to us than a name like "the eighteenth century" for only by recalling how Johnson lived, the inns he frequented, and the friends with whom he held conversations does the period become real to us. Perhaps the life of a lesser literary light or of an ordinary Londoner in Johnson's time would be just as instructive, but an ordinary Londoner could not be very interesting, because ordinary people throughout the ages are all alike. Whether ordinary people drink ale or Lipton's tea is entirely a matter of social accident, and can

make no important difference because they are ordinary men.

> That Johnson smoked and that he frequented eighteenth century inns is, however, of great historical importance. Great souls react in a peculiar way to their social environment and make it of importance to us. They have that quality of genius which affects and is affected by the things they touch; they are influenced by the books they read and by the women with whom they come into contact, which make no impress on other lesser men. In them is lived to its full the life of their age or generation; they absorb all there is to absorb and respond with finest and most powerful sensitiveness.

Yet, in dealing with a country the common man cannot be ignored. Ancient Greece was not entirely peopled by Sophocleses and Elizabethan England was not strewn with Bacons and Shakespeares. To talk of Greece and only think of Sophocles and Pericles and Aspasia is to get a wrong picture of the Athenians. One has to supplement it with an occasional glimpse of the son of Sophocles who sued his father for incompetency in managing his family affairs, and with characters from Aristophanes, who were not all in love with beauty and occupied in the pursuit of truth, but who were often drunk, gluttonous, quarrelsome, venal and fickle, even as were common Athenians. Perhaps the fickle Athenians help us to understand the downfall of the Athenian republic as much as Pericles and Aspasia help us to understand its greatness. Individually they are naught, but taken in the aggregate they influence to a very large measure the course of national events. In the past epoch, it may be difficult to reconstruct them, but in a living country the common man is always with us.

But who is the common man, and what is he? The Chinaman exists only as a general abstraction in our minds. Apart from the cultural unity which binds the Chinese people as a nation, the southern Chinese differ probably as much from the northerners, in temperament, physique and habits, as the Mediterraneans differ from the Nordic peoples in Europe. Happily, within, the orbit of the Chinese culture there has not been a rise of nationalism, but only of provincialism, which after all was what made peace within the empire possible for centuries. The common historical tradition, the written language, which has in a singular way solved the problem of Esperanto in China, and the cultural homogeneity achieved through centuries of slow, peaceful penetration of a civilization over comparatively docile aborigines, have achieved for China the basis of the common brotherhood so much desirable now in Europe. Even the spoken language presents no difficulty nearly so great as confronts Europe to-day. A native of Manchuria can, with some difficulty, make himself understood in south-west Yunnan, a linguistic feat made possible by a slow colonization process and helped greatly by the system of writing, the visible symbol of China's unity,

This cultural homogeneity sometimes makes us forget that racial differences, differences of blood, do exist within the country. At close range the abstract notion of a Chinaman disappears and breaks up into a picture of a variety of races, different in their stature, temperament and mental make-up. It is only when we try to put a southern commander over northern soldiers that we are abruptly reminded of the existing differences. For on the one hand we have the northern Chinese, acclimatized to simple thinking and hard living, tall and stalwart, hale, hearty and humorous, onion-

eating and fun-loving, children of nature, who are in every way more Mongolic and more conservative than the conglomeration of peoples near Shanghai and who suggest nothing of their loss of racial vigour. They are the Honan boxers, the Shantung bandits and the imperial brigands who have furnished China with all the native imperial dynasties, the raw material from which the characters of Chinese novels of wars and adventure are drawn.

Down the south-east coast, south of the Yangtse, one meets a different type, inured to ease and culture and sophistication, mentally developed but physically retrograde, loving their poetry and their comforts, sleek undergrown men and slim neurasthenic women, fed on birds' nest soup and lotus seeds, shrewd in business, gifted in belles-lettres , and cowardly in war, ready to roll on the ground and cry for mamma before the lifted fist descends, offsprings of the cultured Chinese families who crossed the Yangtse with their books and paintings during the end of the Ch'in Dynasty, when China was overrun by barbaric invaders.

South in Kwangtung, one meets again a different people, where racial vigour is again in evidence, where people eat like men and work like men, enterprising, carefree, spendthrift, pugnacious, adventurous, progressive and quick-tempered, where beneath the Chinese culture a snake-eating aborigines tradition persists, revealing a strong admixture of the blood of the ancient Yueh inhabitants of southern China, North and south of Hankow, in the middle of China, the loud-swearing and intrigue-loving Hupeh people exist, who are compared by the people of other provinces to “nine-headed birds in heaven” because they never say die, and who think pepper not hot enough to eat until they have fried it in oil, while the Hunan

people, noted for their soldiery and their dogged persistence, offer a pleasanter variety of these descendants of the ancient Ch'u warriors.

Movements of trade and the imperial rule of sending scholars to official posts outside their native provinces (Often the families of these officials settle down in their new homes.) have brought about some mixture of the peoples and have smoothed out these provincial differences, but as a whole they continue to exist. For the significant fact remains that the northerner is essentially a conqueror and the southerner is essentially a trader, and that of all the imperial brigands who have founded Chinese dynasties, none have come from south of the Yangtse. The tradition developed that no rice-eating southerners could mount the dragon throne, and only noodle-eating northerners could. In fact, with the exception of the founders of the T'ang and Chou Dynasties, who emerged from north-east Kansu and were therefore Turkish-suspect, all the founders of the great dynasties have come from a rather restricted mountainous area, somewhere around the Lunghai Railway, which includes eastern Honan, southern Hopei, western Shantung and northern Anhui. It should not be difficult to determine the mileage of the radius within which imperial babies were born with a point on the Lunghai Railway as the centre of the area. The founder of the Han Dynasty came from Peihsien in modern Hsuchow, that of the Ch'in Dynasty came from Honan, that of the Sung Dynasty came from Chohsien in southern Hopei, and Chu Hungwu of the Ming Dynasty came from Fengyang in Honan.

To this day, with the exception of Chiang Kaishek of Chekiang whose family history has not been made public, the generals for the most part come from Hopei, Shantung, Anhui

and Honan, also with the Lunghai Railway as the central point. Shantung is responsible for Wu P'eifu, Chang Tsungch'ang, Sun Ch'uanfang and Lu Yunghsiang. Hopei gives us Ch'i Hsuehyuan, Li Chinglin, Chang Chihchiang and Lu Chunglin. Honan produced Yuan Shihk'ai and Anhui produced Feng Yuhsiang and Tuan Ch'ijui. Kiangsu has produced no great generals, but has given us some very fine hotel boys. Over half a century ago, Hunan in the middle of China produced Tseng Kuofan, the exception that proves the rule; for although Tseng was a first-class scholar and general, being born south of the Yangtse and consequently a rice-eater instead of a noodle-eater, he was destined to end up by being a high-minded official and not by founding a new dynasty for China. For this latter task, one needed the rawness and ruggedness of the North, a touch of genuine lovable vagabondage, the gift of loving war and turmoil for its own sake and a contempt for fair play, learning and Confucian ethics until one is sitting secure on the dragon throne, when Confucian monarchism can be of extreme usefulness.

> The raw, rugged North and the soft, pliable South—one can see these differences in their language, music and poetry. Observe the contrast between the Shensi songs, on the one hand, sung to the metallic rhythm of hard wooden tablets and keyed to a high pitch like the Swiss mountain songs, suggestive of the howling winds on mountain tops and broad pastures and desert sand-dunes, and on the other, the indolent Soochow crooning, something that is between a sigh and a snore, throaty, nasal, and highly suggestive of a worn-out patient of asthma whose sighs and groans have by force of habit become swaying and rhythmic. In language, one sees the difference between the sonorous, clear-cut rhythm of Pekingese mandarin that pleases by its alternate light and shade, and the soft and sweet babbling of Soochow women,

with round-lip vowels and circumflex tones, where force of emphasis is not expressed by a greater explosion but by long-drawn-out and finely nuanced syllables at the end of sentences.

The story is recounted of a northern colonel who, on reviewing a Soochow company, could not make the soldiers move by his explosive "Forward March!" The captain who had stayed a long time in Soochow and who understood the situation asked permission to give the command in his own way. The permission was granted. Instead of the usual clearcut "K'aipu chou !" he gave a genuine persuasive Soochow "kebu tser nyiaaaaaaaah !" and lo and behold! the Soochow company moved.

In poetry, this difference is strikingly illustrated in the poems of the North and the South during the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, when northern China was for the first time submerged under a Tartar rule, and the cultured Chinese migrated southward. For it was a time when sentimental love lyrics flourished in the southern courts, and the southern rulers were many of them great lyric poets, while a peculiar form of love ditties, the tzuyehko, developed among the people. A contrast between this sentimental poetry and the fresh, naive poetry of the North would be highly instructive. So sang the anonymous poet of the South in the popular ditties: Kill the ever-crowing cock!

Shoot the early announcer
of the dawn! That there
might be an
uninterrupted Rolling
darkness till Next Year's

morn!

Or again:

The roads are muddy
and forsaken, Despite
the cold I came to
thee.

Go and look at the
footprints in snow, If thou
wilt not believe me.

During the Southern Sung Dynasty, we saw a peculiar development of a sentimental lyric in intricate metre, the tz'u, which invariably sang of the sad lady in her boudoir, and her tearful red candles at night and sweet-flavoured rouge and eyebrow pencils, and silk curtains and beaded window screens and painted rails and departed springs and pining lovers and emaciated sweethearts. It was natural that a people given to this kind of sentimental poetry should be conquered by a northern people who had but short, naive lines of poetry, taken, as it were, direct and without embellishment from the dreary northern landscape.

Down by the Chehleh
river, Beneath the Yin
hills,

Like an inverted
cup is the sky That

covers the
wasteland.

Enormous is the
earth, And the
sky is a deep
blue;

The wind blows, the tall
grass bends, And the sheep
and cattle come into view.

It was with this song that a northern general, after suffering a heavy defeat, rallied his soldiers and sent them again to battle. And in contrast to the southern songs of love, we have a general singing about a newly bought broadsword:

I have just bought me a
five-foot knife, I swing it
with a gleaming cadence.

I fondle it three times a clay,

I won't change it for fifteen maidens!

Another song handed down to us reads:

In the distance I descry the
Mengchin river, The willows
and poplars stand in silent
grace. I am a Mongol's son.

And don't know Chinese lays.

A good rider requires a swift horse,

And a swift horse requires a
good rider. When it clatters
off amidst a cloud of dust,

You know then who wins and who's the outsider.

(These songs are quoted by Dr. Hu Shih in support of the same thesis.)

Lines like these open up a vista of speculation as to the differences of northern and southern blood that went into the make-up of the Chinese race, and seem to make it possible to understand how a nation subjected to two thousand years of kowtowing and indoor living and a civilization without popular sports could avoid the fate of civic racial degeneration that overtook Egypt, Greece and Rome and the other ancient civilizations. How has China done it?

1. DEGENERATION

Degeneration is a highly misleading term, for it can only be relative in meaning. Since the invention of the flush toilet and the vacuum carpet cleaner, the modern man seems to judge a man's moral standards by his cleanliness, and thinks a dog the more highly civilized for having a weekly bath and a winter wrapper round his belly. I have heard sympathetic foreigners talking of Chinese farmers "living like beasts," whose first step of salvation would seem to lie in a generous disinfection of their huts and belongings.

Yet it is not dirt but the fear of dirt which is the sign of man's degeneration, and it is dangerous to judge a man's physical and moral sanity by outside standards. Actually, the European man living in overheated apartments and luxurious cars is less fitted to survive than the Chinese farmer living in his lowly and undisinfected hut. Nor is cruelty, natural in all children and savages, a sign of degeneration; rather the fear of pain and suffering is a sign of it. The dog which remembers only to bark and not to bite, and is led through the streets as a lady's pet, is only a degenerate wolf. Even physical prowess of the type of Jack Dempsey's can lay no claim to human glory outside the ring, but rather only the power to work and to live a happy life. Not even a more highly developed animal whose body is a more sensitized and complicated organism, with greater specialized powers and more refined desires, is necessarily a more robust or healthy animal, when life and survival and happiness come into the question. The real question of physical and moral health in man as well as in animals is how well he is able to do his work and enjoy his life, and how fit he is yet to survive.

> If one takes merely the physical evidences, one can see clear traces of the effects of thousands of years of civilized life, Man in China has adapted himself to a social and cultural environment that demands stamina, resistance power and negative strength, and he has lost a great part of mental and physical powers of conquest and adventure which characterized his forebears in the primeval forests. The humour of the Chinese people in inventing gunpowder and finding its best use in making firecrackers for their grandfathers' birthdays is merely symbolical of their inventiveness along merely pacific lines. The preference for daintiness over power in art has a physical basis in man's lessened vitality and mellowed instincts, and the preference

for reasonableness over aggressiveness in philosophy may be actually traceable to the rounded chin and the amorphous face.

So also have the contempt for physical prowess and sports and the general dislike of the strenuous life intimately to do with man's decreased bodily energy, especially in the city-living bourgeois class. This is easily observable in a street car crowd or a faculty meeting, where Europeans and Chinese are placed in a row side by side. Unhygienic forms of living and the general overeating on the part of the bourgeois Chinese account, in many cases, for the drooping-shoulders and the listless eye. The constitutional differences between European and Chinese children at school age are unmistakable. On the athletic field, it is invariably found that boys who have a European father or mother distinguish themselves by their greater swiftness, agility and general exuberance of energy, while they seldom excel in tests of endurance and never in scholastic attainments. The much vaunted bossing of the Hankow Nationalist Government in 1927 by a man called Borodin is due to the simple fact that the energetic Russian, who is taking merely a second-rate place at home, did three times the work of a Chinese official, and could talk the Chinese leaders to sleep until the latter had to give in in order to be let alone.

Many Europeans in Shanghai wonder why they are dropped by their Chinese friends without realizing the simple reason that the latter are not able to stand the strain of a long and exciting conversation, especially when it is in a foreign language. Many a Sino-European partnership, matrimonial or commercial, has been wrecked on the European's impatience with Chinese stodgy smugness and the Chinaman's impatience with the European's inability to keep still. The

way in which American jazz-band conductors shake their knees and European passengers pace a steamship deck is, to the Chinese highly ridiculous. With the exception of Chiang Kaishek and

T. V. Soong, the Chinese leaders do not "work like a horse"; they simply work like civilized human beings, where life is regarded as not worth the bother of too much human effort, and eventually if Chiang Kaishek and T. V. Soong come out on top, it will be just on account of their greater stamina and capacity for drudgery. It was T. V. Soong who, using a Chinese idiom, announced that he was "as strong as an ox" when he resigned, and failed to give diabetes or hardened liver or tired nerves for his political resignation, which all the rest of the Chinese officials unashamedly do. A list of the physical and mental ailments, from wrecked stomachs and overworked kidneys to shattered nerves and muddled heads, publicly announced by the officials during their political sicknesses, most of which are genuine, would cover all the departments and wards of a modern hospital.

With the exception of the late Sun Yatsen, the Chinese leaders, first-rate scholars all, do not keep up their reading and do not write. A work like Trotzky's autobiography by a Chinese leader is simply unimaginable, and even a manifestly lucrative first-class biography of Sun Yatsen has not yet been written by a Chinese, almost a decade after the great leader's death, nor are there adequate biographies of Tseng Kuofan or Li Hungchang or Yuan Shihkai.

It seems the sipping of tea in the yamen and the interminable talking and eating of melon seeds at home have consumed all our scholars' time. Facts like these explain why gem-like

verses, dainty essays, short prefaces to friends' works, funeral sketches of friends' lives and brief descriptions of travels comprise the works of ninety-five per cent of the famous Chinese authors. When one cannot be powerful, one must choose to be dainty, and when one cannot be aggressive, one has to make a virtue of reasonableness. Only once in a while do we meet a Sima Ch'ien or a Cheng Ch'iao or a Ku Yenwu, whose prodigious labours suggest to us the indefatigable bodily energy of a Balzac or a Victor Hugo. That is what two thousand years of kowtowing could do to a nation.

A study of the hair and skin of the people also seems to indicate what must be considered results of millenniums of civilized indoor living. The general lack or extreme paucity of beard on man's face is one instance of such effect, a fact which makes it possible for most Chinese men not to know the use of a personal razor. Hair on men's chests is unknown, and a moustache on a woman's face, not so rare in Europe, is out of the question in China. On good authority from medical doctors, and from references in writing, one knows that a perfectly bare mons veneris is not uncommon in Chinese women. The pores of the skin are finer than those of the Europeans, with the result that Chinese ladies, on the whole, have more delicate complexions than have European ladies, and their muscles are considerably more flabby, an ideal consciously cultivated through the institution of footbinding, which has other sex appeals. The Chinese are evidently aware of this effect, for in Hsinfeng, Kwangtung, keepers of poultry yards keep their chickens shut up for life in a dark coop, without room for movement, giving us the Hsinfeng chicken, noted for its extreme tenderness. Glandular secretions from the skin must have correspondingly decreased, for the Chinese explain the

foreigners' habit of taking their (imagined) daily baths by their comparatively stronger bodily odour. Perhaps the most marked difference is in the loss of the full, rich resonant quality in the Chinese voice, compared with that of the Europeans.

> While facts regarding the senses are not to my knowledge available, there is no reason to suppose a deterioration in the fine use of the ears and the eyes. The refined olfactory sense is reflected in the Chinese cuisine and in the fact that, in Peking, one speaks of kissing a baby as "smelling" a baby, which is what is done actually. The Chinese literary language has also many equivalents of the French odeur de femme , like "flesh odour" and "fragrance from marble (a woman's body)." On the other hand, sensitiveness to cold and heat and pain and general noise seems to be much more blunt in the Chinese than in the white man. One is well trained for such hardness in the Chinese family communal living. Perhaps the one thing that compels admiration from Westerners is our nerves. While sensitiveness is often very refined along specialized lines—the obvious proof of this is the great beauty of Chinese handicraft products in general—there seems to be a corresponding coarseness as regards response to pain and general suffering.(Arthur Smith's renowned Chinese Characteristics has a chapter on "The Absence of Comfort and Convenience" recounting his experience and observations of Chinese dress, houses, pillows and beds, which all European readers find amusing. I wager it is ten times more amusing to Chinese readers to learn of Arthur Smith's account of his sufferings and discomforts. The white man's nerves are undoubtedly degenerate.) The Chinese capacity for endurance in suffering is enormous.

1. INFUSION OF NEW BLOOD

But the Chinese people, as a race, did not survive merely on the strength of coarse nerves or of capacity for suffering. Actually, they survived on the sinolization (The word 'sinolization' here used for the first time, is preferable to the atrocious Sinification.") of Mongolian peoples. A kind of phylogenetic monkey-gland grafting took place, for one observes a new bloom of culture after each introduction of new blood. The brief sketch of the general constitution and physical condition of the Chinese people shows, not that they have entirely escaped the effects of long civilized living, but that they have developed traits which render them helpless at the hands of a fresher and more warlike race. Life with the Chinese seems to move on a slower, quieter level, the level of sedate living, not the level of action and adventure, with corresponding mental and moral habits of a peaceful and negative character. This makes it easily understandable why periodic conquests from the North were inevitable. Politically, the nation has perished several times at the hands of these conquerors. The problem is then how, in the midst of this political subjugation, the nation remained as a nation; not how the nation warded off these military disasters, as Christendom stopped the advance of the Moslems at the battle of Tours, but how it survived these disasters and, in fact, profited from them by the infusion of new blood, without losing its racial individuality or cultural continuity. The national life, it seems, was organised on such a pattern that the loss of the pristine vigour did not mean the loss of racial stamina and power for resistance. The key to this racial stamina and power for resistance is the key to China's survival.

The infusion of new blood must explain to a large extent the racial vigour that the Chinese people possess to-day.

> Historically, this occurs with such striking regularity, at the interval of every eight hundred years, as to lead one to suppose that actually a periodic regeneration of the race was necessary, and that it was the internal degeneration of the moral fibre of the people that brought about these periodic upheavals, rather than vice versa. Dr. J. S. Lee, in a striking paper on "The Periodic Recurrence of Internecine Wars in China,"(The China Journal of Science and Arts , March and April, 1931) has made a statistical study of these occurrences, which reveal an exact parallelism in these cycles of peace and disorder which "far exceeds the limit of probability" and is "perhaps too exact to be expected from the proceedings of human affairs."

For the striking fact is that Chinese history can be conveniently divided into cycles of eight hundred years. Each cycle begins with a short-lived and militarily strong dynasty, which unified China after centuries of internal strife. Then follow four or five hundred years of peace, with one change of dynasty, succeeded by successive waves of wars, resulting soon in the removal of the capital from the North to the South. Then came secession and rivalry between North and South with increasing intensity, followed by subjugation under a foreign rule, which ended the cycle. History then repeats itself and with the unification of China again under Chinese rule there is a new bloom of culture.

The parallelism of events within each cycle unfolded itself with an unreasonable mechanical exactness as to time and sequence. Dr. Lee mentions, for instance, the undertaking of a great engineering feat which was repeated with fatal regularity and at the exact stage in each cycle, namely, immediately at the beginning of a new bloom of culture: for the first cycle, the

building of the Great Wall under the Ch'in Dynasty and the colossal palaces, the Ofangkung, which were soon subjected to a conflagration lasting three months; for the second cycle, the building of the Grand Canal under the Sui Emperor, who had also magnificent palaces, noted for their grandeur and luxury; and for the third cycle, the rebuilding of the Great Wall, in which form it has survived to the present day, the opening up of several new canals and dams, and the building of the city of Peking under the Emperor Yunglo of the Ming Dynasty, who was also famous for his great Yunglo Library.

These cycles comprise: (i) from the Ch'in Dynasty to the end of the Six

Dynasties and the Tartar invasion (221 B.C.—A.D. 588) covering about 830 years;

(2) from the Sui Dynasty to the Mongol invasion (589-1367), covering about 780 years; and (3) the modern cycle from the Ming Dynasty to the present time, a cycle which is yet uncompleted, but which has so far unfolded itself in the last six hundred years with amazing fidelity to the previous pattern. The peace of five hundred years which was granted us under the Ming and Manchu Dynasties seems to have run its due course, and with the Taiping Rebellion in the 1850's, which marked the first big wave of internecine wars, we are on the crescendo of disorder and of internecine strife, which so far has lived up to its tradition in the removal of the capital from Peking to Nanking in 1927.

It is almost prophetic to note that a division between North and South and the subjugation of Northern China by a foreign race for the outstanding two hundred years have not yet come.

(A mixture of Chinese and Japanese blood, though very rare, has already produced two rather noteworthy Chinese, Koxinga , a good general, carrying on a losing campaign against the Manchus, and Su Manshu, a delicate poet in the beginning of the present century.)

The following diagrams are reproduced here partly for their intrinsic interest, and partly because they are the best short summary of China's political history of over two thousand years within the scope of a printed page. The curves represent the frequency of wars in China proper.

Dr. Lee also mentions the fact that the same parallelism may be observed in the Chou Period preceding the first cycle in the diagram. The Chou Dynasty, which represented the first bloom of Chinese culture, lasted officially 900 years, beginning in the year 1122 B.C. After the first four hundred and fifty years of comparative peace and expansion inside China, the capital was moved east owing to pressure from the north-west in 770 B.C., from which date on we see increasing wars and strifes among the kingdoms, with the central government steadily losing its control over the feudal lords, giving us the Chunchiu Period of Confucius' Annals (722- 481 B.C.) and the later Chankuo Period or the Period of the “Warring Kingdoms” (402-221 B.C.) with Ch'u constantly extending its territory to virtually the whole southern part of the then civilized China. The cycle was then closed with the conquest and reunification of the whole of China by a tribe with a strong mixture of barbarian blood and foreign customs, led by the great Ch'in Emperor.

Facts like these call for an explanation, ethnological, economic or climatic. Over-population, which in its nature can be regularly reached in four or five hundred years of peace, seems to be an important factor. Peace and culture in any country in the world for over five hundred years are unknown to history, and there is no reason why China should be an exception. Yet the review of China's literary history seems to offer another obvious explanation. There was a decadence of moral fibre reflected in poetry and literature during these periods of northern and southern secession and rivalry, as already seen in the poems quoted above in this chapter. The period of northern invasion in the first cycle, the so-called Six Dynasties, from Eastern Chin to the unification of China under Sui, during which North China was overrun with barbaric conquerors, and the period of northern invasion in the second cycle, from the Southern Sung Dynasty to the Mongol Dynasty inclusive, seem to have corresponded with periods of effeminacy of living and decadence of literary style, the first period noted for its artificial and flowery ssuliu euphuistic prose, and the second for its effeminate sentimental poetry. One observes, in fact, not a paucity but an over- abundance of words, played out to their finest nuances, with no more the smell of the soil, but the decadent, cultivated, super-refined flavour of court perfume. The Chinese showed a certain fin-de-sticle delight in the sounds of words, and an extreme refinement in literary and artistic criticism, and in aristocratic habits of living.

For it was in these periods that painting and calligraphy flourished, and aristocratic families rose and established themselves to carry on the artistic tradition. Chinese literary criticism first became conscious of itself in the Six Dynasties,

and Wang Hsichih, the first and greatest calligraphist, who was born of a great aristocratic family, lived in this period. Political weakness and disgrace somehow coincided with artistic refinement, and southern China was ruled in these periods by kings who could not keep their thrones secure but could write exquisite verse. Such ruler-poets were Liang Wuti, Nant'ang Houchu, and Ch'en Houchu, all of them kings of extremely short-lived dynasties and writers of tender love lyrics. The Emperor Huichung of the Southern Sung Dynasty was also a noted painter.

Yet it was in these periods that the germ for the racial revival was laid. For the northern conquerors remained conquerors only in official power, the substrata remaining Chinese. The great Northern Wei Dynasty, whose rulers were of the Sienpei race, not only adopted Chinese culture but also freely intermarried with the

Chinese. So were the so-called Kin (Manchu) kingdoms in the Sung Dynasty largely Chinese. A fermenting process was at work. Even culturally, these periods were periods of penetration of foreign influence, notably that of Buddhism and Indian sculpture in the end of the first cycle, and of Mongol drama and music in that of the second cycle. The clearest effect of this ethnological mixture is perhaps to be found in the linguistic and physical traits of the modern northern Chinese, with altered tones and hardened consonants in the language, and a taller stature and a gay rustic humour in the people. It was this amalgamation of foreign blood that accounted for, to a large extent, the race's long survival.

1. CULTURAL STABILITY

Yet this does not explain all. The question remains how it was possible for the nation to survive these periodic political disasters and not be submerged by them, as old Rome was submerged under the Lombards. Wherein does that racial stamina and capacity for absorbing foreign blood consist? Only by going deeper into these problems can one gain a real understanding of the situation as it stands to-day.

The so-called racial stamina and racial vitality, which in spite of the retrograde character of the Chinese bourgeois class enabled the Chinese people to survive political disasters and regenerate itself through foreign blood, is partly constitutional and partly cultural. Among the cultural forces making for racial stability must be counted first of all the Chinese family system, which was so well-defined and organized as to make it impossible for a man to forget where his lineage belonged. This form of social immortality, which the Chinese prize above all earthly possessions, has something of the character of a religion, which is enhanced by the ritual of ancestor worship, and the consciousness of it has penetrated deep into the Chinese soul.

Such a well-organized and religiously conceived family system was of tremendous force when the Chinese race was thrown into contact with a foreign people with a less well-defined family consciousness. Barbaric tribes or children of mixed parentage were all too anxious to join the family and claim part of the family immortality, indulging in the luxurious feeling that when one dies, one does not die, but one's self lives on in the great stream of the family life. The family system also acted as a direct incentive to quantitative reproduction, for in order that the Lin branch should survive, it is necessary that

many Lin babies should come into this world.

Perhaps it was due entirely to the family system that the Chinese were able to absorb the Jews of Honan, who to-day are so thoroughly sinolized that their Jewish tradition of not eating pork has become a mere memory. The race consciousness of the Jews can be shamed into oblivion only by the greater race consciousness of the family-minded Chinese, and it was no mean accomplishment in the ethnological field. With a less race-conscious and race-proud people than the Jews, like the northern Tartars, for instance, it is easy to see that the Chinese native inhabitants were placed in a great advantage over their foreign invaders. It is in this sense that

Manchuria will remain Chinese in spite of all Japanese machinations; the political order may be changed, and rulers may come and rulers may go, but the Chinese families will remain Chinese families.

Another cultural force making for social stability was the complete absence of established classes in China, and the opportunity open for all to rise in the social scale through the imperial examination system. While the family system accounted for their survival through fecundity, the imperial examination system effected a qualitative selection, and enabled talent to reproduce and propagate itself. This system, which was started in the T'ang Dynasty and based on the ultimate Chinese belief that no man is born noble,(The Chinese for this is, “There is no blood in premiers and generals.”) had its rudiments in the system of civil service and official recommendations in the Han Dynasty. After the Wei and Ch'in Dynasties (third and fourth centuries A.D.) a change in the control of selection for office brought about a system favouring influential families, so much

so that it was stated that “there were no poor scholars in the higher classes and no sons of official families in the lower classes.”(These refer to the “nine classes” of scholars in the Ch'in Dynasty.) This favoured the growth of aristocratic families in the Ch'in Dynasty.

> With the imperial examination system in the T'ang Dynasty (seventh to ninth centuries inclusive) a system was put into effect which, however it was modified in the following dynasties, maintained down to 1905 an open door for all to rise from poverty to power and fame. While the tests were necessarily somewhat mechanical in nature, and were not devised to attract real genius, they were suitable for selecting talent, and might be regarded as intelligence tests. Such a system made possible a constant infiltration of talent from the country to the cities, thereby making up for the loss of racial vigour in the upper classes and maintaining a cycle of internal regeneration so much needed for social health. Viewed across the centuries, it must have had a selective effect on the quality of the ruling class that made for social stability.

What seems still more important is the fact that the ruling class not only came from the country but also returned to the country, as the rural mode of life was always regarded as the ideal. This rural ideal in art, philosophy and life, so deeply imbedded in the Chinese general consciousness, must account in a large measure for the racial health to-day. Did the creators of the Chinese pattern of life do more wisely than they knew in maintaining a level between civilization and the primitive habits of living? Was it their sound instinct which guided them to choose the agricultural civilization, to hate mechanical ingenuity and love the simple ways of life, to invent the

comforts of life without being enslaved by them, and to preach from generation to generation in their poetry, painting and literature the "return to the farm"?

For to be close to nature is to have physical and moral health. Man in the country does not degenerate; only man in the cities does. To scholars and well-to-do families in the cities, persistently the call of the good earth comes. The family letters and instructions of well-known scholars abound in such counsel, and reveal an important aspect of the Chinese civilization, an aspect which subtly but profoundly accounts for its long survival. I select at random from the extremely precious family letters of Cheng Panch'iao to his younger brother, letters that should be counted among the greatest in the world:

The house you bought is well-enclosed and indeed suitable for residence, only I feel the courtyard is too small, and when you look at the sky, it is not big enough. With my unfettered nature, I do not like it. Only a hundred steps north from this house, there is the Parrot Bridge, and another thirty steps from the Bridge is the Plum Tower, with vacant spaces all around. When I was drinking in this Tower in my young days, I used to look out and see the willow banks and the little wooden bridge with decrepit huts and wild flowers against a background of old city walls, and was quite fascinated by it. If you could get fifty thousand cash, you could buy a big lot for me to build my cottage there for my latter days. My intention is to build an earthen wall around it, and plant lots of bamboos and flowers and trees. I am going to have a garden path of paved pebbles leading from the gate to the house door. There will be two rooms, one for the parlour, one for the study, where I can keep books, paintings, brushes, ink-slabs, wine-kettle and tea service, and where I can discuss poetry and literature with some good

friends and the younger generation. Behind this will be the family living-rooms, with three main rooms, two kitchens and one servants' room. Altogether there will be eight rooms, all covered with grass-sheds, and I shall be quite content. Early in the morning before sunrise, I could look east and see the red glow of the morning clouds, and at sunset, the sun will shine from behind the trees. When one stands upon a high place in the courtyard, one can already see the bridge and the clouds and waters in the distance, and when giving a party at night, one can see the lights of the neighbours outside the wall. This will be only thirty steps to your house on the south, and will be separated from the little garden on the east by a small creek. So it is quite ideal. Some may say, "This is indeed very comfortable, only there may be burglars." They do not know that burglars are also but poor people. I would open the door and invite them to come in, and discuss with them what they may share. Whatever there is, they can take away, and if nothing will really suit them, they may even take away the great Wang Hsienchih's old capret to pawn it for a hundred cash. Please, my younger brother, bear this in mind, for this is your stupid brother's provision for spending a happy old age. I wonder whether I may have what I so desire.

> This is typical of the sentiment in Chinese literature. This rural ideal of

Cheng Panch'iao's is as much based on his poetic feeling of common brotherhood with the poor peasant, which comes natural to a Taoistic soul, as the rural ideal of Tseng Kuofan's is based on the desire for the preservation for the family, and closely connected with the Confucian family system. For the rural ideal of life is part of the social system which makes the family the unit and part of the politico-cultural system which

makes lie village the unit. It may be amusing to learn that Tseng Kuofan, the great general and first minister of his times, in his family letters to his children and nephews continually warned them against extravagant habits and advised them to plant vegetables, rear pigs and manure their own farms, yet such advice on frugality and industry was expressly given with the aim that the family prosperity might be prolonged. If simplicity can keep a family integrity long, it should do the same for the national integrity. For to Tseng Kuofan, it was plain that "the official families whose children learn expensive habits of living, prosper only for a generation or two: the merchant families who are industrious and frugal may prosper for three or four generations, the families who till the ground and study books and have simple and careful habits prosper for five or six generations, while the families who have the virtues of filial piety and friendliness prosper for eight or ten generations."

It is therefore entirely easy to understand why Tseng regards "the keeping of fish, the keeping of pigs, the planting of bamboos and the planting of vegetables" as "the four things which should not be neglected. On the one hand, we may thus keep up the tradition of our forefathers, and, on the other hand, one will feel a sense of life and growth when looking in over our walls, and a sense of prosperity when entering our court. Even if you should have to spend a little more money and hire a few more helpers, the money spent on these four things will be well spent From these four things, you can see whether a family is prospering or is going down."

And somehow from the family instructions of Yen Chiht'ui (531-591), Fan Chungyen (989-1052), Chu Hsi (1130-1300), down to those of Ch'en Hungmu (1696-1771) and Tseng Kuofan (1811-1872), this family ideal of industry and frugality and living the

simple life persisted and was recognized as the soundest moral heritage of the nation. The family system somehow wove itself into the rural pattern of life and could not be separated from it. Simplicity was a great word among the Greeks, and simplicity, shunp'o , was a great word among the Chinese. It was as if man knew the benefits of civilization and knew also the dangers of it. Man knew the happiness of the joys of life, but also was aware of its ephemeral nature, fearful of the jealousy of the gods, and was willing to take the joys that were simpler but would last longer. For to enjoy too many good things of life was, according to the Chinese, to chehfo , or decrease one's lot of happiness in this life. Therefore "one should be just as careful in choosing one's pleasures as in avoiding calamities." "Choose the lighter happiness," said a scholar at the end of the Ming Dynasties, and somehow there was an echo of consent in the Chinese breasts. For human happiness is so precarious that the retreat to nature and simplicity is the best safeguard for it. It must be so, and the Chinese knew it by instinct. They wanted survival for their families,, and they achieved it for their nation.

V RACIAL YOUTH

It would seem, therefore, that the Chinese, as a people, avoided the dangers of civic deterioration by a natural distrust of civilization and by keeping close to primitive habits of life. This might suggest that the so-called Chinese civilization must be understood in a greatly modified sense, that it was a civilizaion in love with primitivism itself and was not quite

ready to say good-bye to it. Certainly it was not a civilization that had guaranteed the people peace without intermittent periods of bloodshed and disorder, or that had made wars and famines and floods impossible.

That a country after two thousand years of comparatively civilized living could furnish living material for such a story as All Men Are Brothers , when the eating of human flesh, though rare, was still possible, certainly reveals in a measure the mystery of this enigma of social continuity against the havoc of civilization. Sung Chiang, Li Kuei and the host of robust robbers on the top of Liangshanpo, although coming almost fifteen centuries after Confucius, do not suggest to us representatives of an outworn civilization, but rather happy children of a people in the twilight of a dawning culture, when security of life was yet unknown. It seems as if the race, instead of reaching full maturity with Confucius, was really enjoying a prolonged childhood.

This brings us to the extremely interesting question of the racial constitution of the Chinese race: whether, as an ethnological entity, it reveals not so much the characteristics of an old people as those of a people in many respects still in its racial youth and far from reaching racial maturity. A distinction may be made by saying that the Chinese are culturally old but racially young, a theory which has found support among some of the modern anthropologists. Griffith Taylor (Environment and Race , Oxford University Press, 1927) thus classifies the Chinese among the youngest strata in the evolution of the human race, according to his migration-zone scheme. Havelock Ellis also characterizes the Asiatics as being racially infantile, in the sense of retaining some of the adaptability, flexibility and pristine all-round shunp'o nature of childhood before reaching specialized

development. Perhaps "a prolonged childhood" is the better term, for infantilism and arrested development or stagnation are misleading terms.

> Cultural stagnation of the Chinese is only a misconception of one looking at

China from the outside, without knowledge of her inner life. One needs only to think of the late development of the Chinese porcelain, which did not come, as many foreigners imagine, from the time of Confucius, but from as late as the tenth century, and was then only slowly developed until it reached its perfection under K'anghsi and Ch'ienlung in the seventeenth century, almost before our eyes. Progress in lacquer, printing, and painting was slow, but each dynasty brought it a step forward. [See the enlightening article by V. K. Ting: "How China Acquired Her Civilization," in A Chinese Symposium (published by the Institute of Pacific Relations)] The renowned Chinese style of painting did not come into being until the last thousand years of the Chinese national life, a late period for an old civilization. And in literature, one needs only to think of the lateness of the prose epic and tale of wonder, for the Shuihu (All Men Are Brothers) and Hsiyuchi must be considered such, and they were certainly perfected after the fourteenth century, almost two thousand years after Confucius and Laotse had lived and died.

> The epic was strangely unknown in ancient China, or it was irretrievably lost

without any existing trace in literature. The narrative poem came only in the Han Dynasty, and there were not many of them. The drama came into popularity only with the Mongol

Dynasty in the eleventh century. Tales of imagination like the Hsiyuchi

came about the same time, when the Chinese imagination was stimulated by Buddhism. The novel as such really had a humble beginning only in the ninth century, had its mature development late in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Ming) and reached its climax in the beginning of the Manchu Dynasty with the Red Chamber Dream , a contemporary and Oriental counterpart of Clarissa Harlowe. Had China's cultural life flowered and then ended a few centuries after Confucius as the Greek genius did, there would have been only some fine moral maxims and folk lyrics, and certainly none of China's great paintings, novels and architecture to offer to the world. This sounds as if we are not watching the arrested development of a nation that reached its full bloom in its young Golden Age like Greece and Rome, but that we are watching the prolonged childhood of a race that took millenniums to reach full development, and then is perhaps still courageous enough for further spiritual adventure.

Chapter Two

THE CHINESE CHARACTER I MELLOWNESS

"Character" is a typically English word. Apart from the English, few nations have laid such stress on character in their ideal of education and manhood as the Chinese. The Chinese seem to be so preoccupied with it that in their whole philosophy they have not been able to think of anything else. Totally devoid of any extra-mundane interests, and without getting involved in any religious claptrap, this ideal of building of character has, through the influence of their literature, the theatre, and proverbs, permeated to the lowliest peasant, and provided him with a philosophy of life. But while the English word "character" suggests strength, courage, "guts," and looking merely glum in moments of anger or disappointment, the Chinese word for "character" brings to us the vision of a mature man of mellow temperament, retaining an equanimity of mind under all circumstances, with a complete understanding not only of himself but of his fellow-men.

> The Sung philosophy has a tremendous confidence in the power and supremacy

of the mind over emotions, and an overweening assurance that the human mind, through its understanding of oneself and of one's fellow-men, is able to adjust itself to the most unfavourable circumstances and triumph over them. The Great Learning , the Confucian primer with which Chinese schoolboys used to begin their first lesson at school,. defines the "great learning" as consisting of the attainment of a "dear character," which is almost an impossible English expression, but by which is meant the illumination of understanding, developed and cultivated through knowledge* A mellow understanding of life and of human nature is, and always has been, the Chinese ideal of character, and from that understanding other qualities are derived, such as pacifism, contentment, calm and strength of

endurance which distinguish the Chinese character. Strength of character is really strength of the mind, according to the Confucianists. When a man has cultivated these virtues through mental discipline, we say he has developed his character.

Very often these virtues are attained also through the help of Confucian fatalism. For contrary to the general belief, fatalism is a great source of peace and contentment. A beautiful and talented girl may rebel against an unsuitable marriage, but if the peculiar circumstances of her meeting with her fiancé can convince her that it is the gods who have decreed the match, she can at once, through an act of understanding, become a happy and contented wife. For the husband has in her eyes become a "predestined enemy," and the Chinese proverb says "predestined enemies will always meet in a narrow alleyway." With that understanding, they can love and fight each other furiously ever after, knowing all the time that the gods are looking on and causing them all this trouble.

If we review the Chinese race and try to picture their national characteristics, we shall probably find the following traits of character: (i) sanity, (2) simplicity, (3) love of nature, (4) patience, (5) indifference, (6) old roguery, (7) fecundity, (8) industry, (9) frugality, (10) love of family life, (u) pacifism, (12) contentment, (13) humour, (14) conservatism, and (15) sensuality. They are, on the whole, simple great qualities that would adorn any nation. (I have not put down honesty, because all over the world farming people are honest, and the reputation of the Chinese merchant for honesty is only a concomitant of his provincial method of doing business, and a mere result of the predominance of the rural pattern and ideal of life. When Chinese are put in a seaport, they lose to a marked extent that pristine honesty and can be as dishonest as any Wall Street

stock-jobber.) Some of these characteristics are vices rather than virtues, and others are neutral qualities; they are the weakness as well as the strength of the Chinese nation. Too much mental sanity often clips imagination of its wings and deprives the race of its moments of blissful madness; pacifism can become a vice of cowardice; patience, again, may bring about a morbid tolerance of evil; conservatism may at times be a mere synonym for sloth and laziness, and fecundity may be a racial virtue but an individual vice.

> But all these qualities may be summed up in the word mellowness. They are passive qualities, suggestive of calm and passive strength rather than as youthful vigour and romance. They suggest the qualities of a civilization built for strength and endurance rather than for progress and conquest. For it is a civilization which enables man to find peace under any circumstance, and when a man is at peace with himself, he cannot understand the youthful enthusiasm for progress and reform. It is the old culture of an old people who know life for what it is worth and do not strive for the unattainable. The supremacy of the Chinese mind flays its own hopes and desires, and by making the supreme realization that happiness is an unattainable bluebird and giving up the quest for it — "taking a step backwards," as the Chinese expression goes, it finds happiness nestling in its own hand, almost strangled to death during the hot pursuit of an imagined shadow. As a Ming scholar puts it, "by losing that pawn, one wins the whole game." This so-called mellowness is the result of a certain type of environment. In fact, all national qualities have an organic unity, which finds its explanation in the kind of social and political soil that nourishes them. For mellowness somehow grows naturally out of the Chinese environment as a peculiar variety of pear

grows out of its natural soil. There are American-born Chinese, brought up in a different environment, who are totally devoid of the characteristics of the common Chinese, and who can break up a faculty meeting by the sheer force of their uncouth nasal twang and their direct forceful speech, a speech which knows no fine modulations. They lack that supreme, unique mellowness peculiar to the sons of Cathay. On the other hand, Chinese college youths are considerably more mature than American students of the same age, for even young Chinese freshmen in American universities cannot get interested in football and motor-cars. They have already other and more mature interests. (It is extremely dangerous, therefore, to send fresh American college graduates out to China as missionaries and put them over Chinese teachers or preachers twice as mature as themselves. Many of them have not even tasted the agony of first love.) Most probably they are already married. They have wives and families to think about, their parents to remember, and perhaps some cousins to help through school. Responsibility makes men sober, and a national cultural tradition helps them to think sanely about life at a period earlier than they could arrive at individually. But their mellowness does not come from books; it comes from a society which is apt to laugh young enthusiasm out of court. The Chinese have a certain contempt for young enthusiasm and for new brooms that will sweep this universe clean. By laughing at that enthusiasm and at the belief that everything is possible in the world, Chinese society early teaches the young to hold their tongues while their elders are speaking. Very soon the Chinese youth learns this, and instead of being foolish enough to support any proposed scheme or socialistic venture, he learns to comment unfavourably upon it,

pointing out all the possible difficulties, and in that way gets his pass into mature society. Then, after coming back from Europe or America, he begins to manufacture tooth-paste and calls it "saving the country by industrialization" or he translates some American free verse and calls it "introduction of the Western culture." And since he has usually a big family to support and some cousins for whom to secure positions, he cannot remain a school teacher if he is in the teaching profession, but must think of ways and means to rise higher, perhaps become a dean, and in that way become a good member of his family. That process of trying to rise higher teaches him some memorable lessons of life and human nature, and if he escapes all that experience and remains a round-eyed, innocent hot- headed young man at thirty, still enthusiastic for progress and reform, he is either an inspired idiot or a confounded genius.

1. PATIENCE

Let us take the three worst and most striking characteristics, patience, indifference and old roguery, and see how they arose. I believe that these are effects of culture and environment and hence are not necessarily a part of the Chinese mental make-up. They are here to-day because for thousands of years we have been living under certain cultural and social influences. The natural inference is that when these influences are removed, the qualities will also correspondingly diminish or disappear. The quality of patience is the result of racial adjustment to a condition

where over-population and economic pressure leave very little elbow-room for people to move about, and is, in particular, a result of the family system, which is a miniature of Chinese society. Indifference is largely due to the lack of legal protection and constitutional guarantee for personal liberty. Old roguery is due, for lack of a better word, to the Taoistic view of life. Of course, all these qualities are products of the same environment, and it is only for the sake of clearness that one assigns any single cause for any resulting quality.

That patience is a noble virtue of the Chinese people no one who knows them will gainsay. There is so much of this virtue that it has almost become a vice with them. The Chinese people have put up with more tyranny, anarchy and misrule than any Western people will ever put up with, and seem to have regarded them as part of the laws of nature. In certain parts of Szechuen, the people have been taxed thirty years in advance without showing more energetic protest than a half-audible curse in the privacy of the household. Christian patience would seem like petulance compared with Chinese patience, which is as unique as Chinese blue porcelain is unique. The world tourists would do well to bring home with them some of this Chinese patience along with Chinese blue porcelain, for true individuality cannot be copied. We submit to tyranny and extortion as small fish swim into the mouth of a big fish. Perhaps had our capacity for sufferance been smaller, our sufferings would also be less. As it is, this capacity for putting up with insults has been ennobled by the name of patience, and deliberately inculcated as a cardinal virtue by Confucian ethics. I am not saying that this patience is not a great quality of the Chinese people. Jesus said, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth“ and I

am not sure but that Chinese patience has enabled us to inherit half a continent and keep it. The Chinese also inculcate it consciously as a high moral virtue. As our saying goes, "A man who cannot tolerate small ills can never accomplish great things"

The training school for developing this virtue is, however, the big family, where a large number of daughters-in-law, brothers-in-law, fathers and sons daily learn this virtue by trying to endure one another. In the big family, where a closed door is an offence, and where there is very little elbow-room for the individuals, one learns by necessity and by parental instruction from early childhood the need for mutual toleration and adjustments in human relationships. The deep, slow, everyday wearing effect on character can scarcely be overestimated.

There was once a prime minister, Chang Kungni, who was much envied for his earthly blessedness of having nine generations living together under the same roof. Once the emperor, T'ang Kaochung, asked him the secret of his success, and the minister asked for a brush and paper, on which he wrote a hundred times the character "patience" or "endurance." Instead of taking that as a sad commentary on the family system, the Chinese people have ever after envied his example, and the phrase "hundred patience" (po-jen) has passed into current moral proverbs which are written on red paper and pasted on all house-doors on New Year's Day: "peaceableness brings good luck"; "patience is the best family heritage," etc. But so long as the family system exists and so long as society is built on the principle that a man is not an individual but attains his full being only in living in harmonious social relationships, it is easy to see how patience must be regarded as a supreme virtue

and must grow naturally out of the social system. For in such a society, patience has a reason for existence.

1. INDIFFERENCE

But if the Chinese people are unique in their patience, they are still more justly famous for their indifference. This, again, I believe, is a product of social environment. There is no more significant contrast than that between the parting instruction of Tom Brown's mother in the English classic Tom Brown's School Days to "hold his head high and answer straight" and the traditional parting instruction of the Chinese mother that her son should "not meddle with public affairs." This is so because, in a society where legal protection is not given to personal rights, indifference is always safe and has an attractive side to it difficult for Westerners to appreciate.

I think this indifference is not a natural characteristic of the people, but is a conscious product of our culture, deliberately inculcated by our old-world wisdom under the special circumstances. Taine once said that vice and virtue are products like sugar and vitriol. Without taking such an absolute view, one can nevertheless subscribe to the general statement that any virtue will be more generally encouraged in a society where that virtue is easily seen to be "good," and is more likely to be generally accepted as part of life.

The Chinese people take to indifference as Englishmen take to umbrellas, because the political weather always looks a little ominous for the individual who ventures a little too far out

alone. In other words, indifference has a distinct "survival value" in China. Chinese youths are as public-spirited as foreign youths, and Chinese hot-heads show as much desire to "meddle with public affairs" as those in any other country. But somewhere between their twenty-fifth and their thirtieth years, they all become wise ("hsuek huai liao " as we say), and acquire this indifference which contributes a lot to their mellowness and culture. Some learn it by native intelligence, and others by getting their fingers burned once or twice. All old people play safely because all old rogues have learned the benefits of indifference in a society where personal rights are not guaranteed and where getting one's fingers burned once is bad enough.

> The "survival-value" of indifference consists, therefore, in the fact that in the absence of protection of personal rights, it is highly unsafe for a man to take too much interest in public affairs, or "idle affairs," as we call them. When Shao P'iaop'ing and Lin Poshui, two of our most daring journalists, got shot by a Manchurian war-lord in Peiping in 1926 without even a trial, the other journalists naturally learned the virtue of this indifference in no time, and "became wise." The most successful journalists in China are those who have no opinion of their own. Like all Chinese gentlemen, and like the Western diplomats, they are proud of committing themselves to no opinion on life in general, and on the crying question of the hour in particular.(The oldest and biggest daily paper in China, Shun Poo , formerly enjoyed the reputation of editorially handling (1) foreign and not domestic questions; (2) distant and not immediate topics, and (3) general and not specific subjects, like "The Importance of Diligence," "The Value of Truth" etc.) What else can they do? One can be public-spirited when there is a guarantee for personal rights,

to be politically the lowest period of the Chinese race since the Chou and Han times, representing the end of a progressive degeneration of the race until, for the first time in its history, China was submerged under barbarian rule. Was this cult of indifference natural, and if not, how was it brought about? History reveals this to us in no uncertain terms.

Toward the end of the Han Dynasty, the Chinese scholars were not indifferent.

In fact, political criticism was at its height during this period. Leading scholars and "university" students, numbering over thirty thousand, were often embroiled over questions of current politics, and dared the wrath of the eunuchs and the Emperor in their intrepid attacks on government policies or the conduct of members of the imperial household. Yet, because of the absence of constitutional protection, this movement ended in complete suppression at the hands of the eunuchs. Two or three hundred scholars and sometimes their whole families were sentenced to death, exile or imprisonment. This occurred in the years A.D. 166-169, and was known as the tangku , or "party cases." This was carried out in such a thorough fashion and on such a grand scale that the whole movement was cut short, and its remaining effects were felt for over a century afterward. Then came the reaction and the cult of indifference and the developing crazes for wine, women, poetry and Taoistic occultism. Some of the scholars went into the mountains and built themselves mud-houses without a door, receiving their food through a window till their death. Others disguised themselves as woodcutters and begged their relatives to save them from recognition by refraining from making calls.

Immediately after that came the seven poets, or the "Pléiade of the Bamboo Grove." Liu Ling, a great poet, could go on a drunken fit for months. He used to travel on a cart with a jug of wine, a shovel and a grave-digger, giving the latter the order as they started: "Bury me when I am dead! anywhere, any time" People admired him and called him "clever." All scholars affected either extreme rusticity or extreme sensuality and extreme superficiality. Another great poet, Yuan Hsien, had illicit relations with his maid. When he learned at a public feast that his wife had sent the maid away, he immediately borrowed a horse from a friend and galloped off after the maid until he overtook her and carried her back on horseback in the presence of all the guests. These were the people who became admired for their cleverness. People admired them as a small tortoise admires the thick shell of a big tortoise.

Here we seem to have laid our finger on the fatal disease of the body politic, and to see the origin of that indifference which explains the proverbial inability of the Chinese people to organize themselves. It would seem that the curing of the disease is simple, by having constitutional protection for the people's civil rights. Yet no one has seen the far-reaching consequences of this. No one desires it. No one sincerely wants it.

1. OLD ROGUERY

Perhaps the most striking quality of the Chinese people is what, for want of a better term, must be termed its "old roguery." It is the most difficult characteristic to explain to a