

TRADITION AND TRANSITION  
IN CHINESE POLITICS

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Australian Institute of International Affairs  
Sydney - Melbourne - Canberra

1943

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China is the chief political factor in Pacific history. But for China's resistance, Japan would be even stronger in the South Seas; China's military position now presents the main threat to Japan's security at home; China's future power after industrialization must be considered in any Pacific settlement. Old China is on a new path in her history, and we cannot escape the consequences.

It is wrong to exaggerate the civil disorder and administrative corruption after the Revolution. Disorder and corruption have marked many nations in the breakdown of their old order. China has experienced this often before; but disorder and corruption are the exception in four thousand years of Chinese history marked as a rule by capable organization and sound government. The national unity against Japan promises a way out of political chaos. The new national sentiment involves not merely radical opposition to old forms and ideas bound up with the Imperial system, but a deep feeling based upon past traditions as well as present desires. Everything depends upon the recovery of national administration. This in its turn rests upon the Chinese people's adjustment of their life and thought to modern conditions. The political traditions of China are essential to her destiny. We whose actions will affect her future may turn to the study of these traditions as a subject of immediate interest and practical use, not only for the Chinese now but ultimately for ourselves.

This analysis of the subject opens with a brief appreciation of Chinese social conditions as these affect political thought. There follow four sections:

- I The State Philosophy of China: "Sinism" and Confucius, Neo-Confucianism.

II Modern Chinese political thought to Sun Yat-sen: Reactionaries and Reformers.

III Sun Yat-sen: the "Three Principles."

IV Present political thought: Kuomintang and Communists; Chiang K'ai-shek; the New Life Movement.

The analysis closes with an attempt to relate the Chinese political tradition to the social problems inherent in modern industrialization.

### **The social background of Ancient China.**

Ancient China was the country of the Two Rivers, the Yellow and the Yangtze. Here two primary foci of civilization developed. The earlier appears to have been in the loess area of the Yellow River (at its great bend). Here successful agriculture needed large-scale irrigation, which in turn gave rise to an elaborate social organization. Gradually, agriculture spread to the Great Plain, and there developed the wheat and millet civilization of North China. A similar social development took place in the rice-growing area of the Yangtze. Out of these basic economic facts, there developed a co-operative organization to regulate the labour on canals, on embankments, the ownership of irrigable land and the right of access to the water, and to maintain the Harmony of the Universe, human and physical. Here we have the beginnings of the main functions of the later central government, economic and ideological. Eventually, the two foci united to form a single society, marked by intensive agriculture.

Such large-scale organization necessitated state control. So there developed the "empire" of China. The state gained its revenue from the land tax, and it always held surpluses of grain. As centres for administration and the storage of grain, walled cities arose throughout the rural districts: in many places China presents a landscape of cities a day's walk apart, surrounded by farming land. Wealth took the form of stored grain, which could stabilize prices, provision armies and sup-

port massed labour for the irrigation that made it all possible. River and canal transport grew up to bring in the grain or distribute it at a distance. Grain, its production and accumulation, has dominated the life of China to the present day.

There was little inducement to industrial development. Except for salt, iron, tea and silk, scarcely any trade was carried on beyond the local market. Tea and silk were freely traded, but salt and iron came under state control. The salt was often not of good quality, and mining fell under heavy taxation. Industry lagged behind agriculture, and this prevented technical developments in agriculture itself; so that the emphasis has always remained on mass manual labour. This in its turn has given Chinese society a traditional conservatism.

Bureaucracy appeared early, in response to the needs of social organization for intensive agriculture, and has remained throughout all the political changes of Chinese history. It was indispensable. Dynasties rose, flourished and fell; but the basis of administration stayed the same. Often the political changes seem to follow a set social pattern. In a fertile district capable rule would increase production; the population would grow until it was too great for the land to support; agrarian depression, discontent and revolt would follow; and if the rulers had become complacent or corrupt after their early success, the people's resentment would give rise to an anti-dynastic movement. Then after the disorders, the need for organization would reappear, and a new dynasty would apply the same methods of administration.

The Chinese showed an extraordinary vitality in their local activities. The walled cities or villages were the market and the social centres of the countryside. They were the symbol of the vitality of the people in their own locality. Within the immense organization of the country's agriculture, the cities and villages were focal points of the people's activity. Here the people worked quietly under administration, handling their own local affairs.

But there was still need for large-scale organization. China, like Egypt, with registers, accounts and estimates, set out in a complex system of writing, needed skilled officials to handle this clerical business, and bureaucracy assumed powers which it could never have had in a country where an easy alphabet made literacy possible for the masses. This administration, widespread and pressing as little as possible on the people, found ethical sanction in the State Philosophy of China.

## I. THE STATE PHILOSOPHY OF CHINA.

The importance of the State Philosophy lies in its influence upon Sun Yat-sen and so upon modern Chinese political thought to this day. This point has to be appreciated before entering on what may otherwise appear to be an unnecessarily theoretical treatment of the State Philosophy. Most authorities consider that "the greatness of Sun Yat-sen rests upon the fact that he has found a living synthesis between the fundamental principles of Confucianism and the demands of modern times" (Wilhelm). Although Sun Yat-sen's governmental principles were opposed to those of the Empire, he stated that they embodied the spirit of China and were based upon "the ancient morality." The close connection between the ideas of Sun Yat-sen and the policy of Chiang K'ai-shek will be fully treated below.

The Chinese political system was the embodiment of the Chinese world-view, as distinctive in itself as Hinduism or Western European thought. The important fact about China was not so much its form of government as its mode of thought. Direct governmental or political action was reduced to a minimum: society, in its larger aspects, was sustained and controlled through ideas. Hence we have to appreciate not just the political framework but the ideology.

This ideology is generally known as Confucianism; but Confucius spoke of himself "as a transmitter, not an originator," aiming to solve the problems of his day by restoring the

teachings of the past: he was a rationaliser and humaniser. His restatement of the older philosophy was to remain the State Philosophy of China until 1912. But it is better to call it by the broader name of "Sinism," the Chinese way of life, and treat it as the background not only of Confucius but of the majority of Chinese thinkers, present as well as past.

## Sinism and Confucius.

The character of Sinism is to be studied in the light of the conditions under which Chinese civilization grew up from the primitive agricultural communities of the Yellow River. The basis was the family, in its place in the village. The familial concept has always marked Chinese society, government and philosophy. Sinism added later elements to its original concept, until Neo-Confucianism became the final orthodox version.

The characteristics of these early communities were order and regularity, in social life and in agriculture, stressing the need of harmony between man and man as well as between man and nature. Such harmony took the social form of right relationship. This concept formed part of a cosmology, in which the idea of Harmony within the Universe as a whole and between its parts, human and physical, was the central idea. In their government, the Chinese have always sought to maintain harmony, cosmic and social, developing a code of ethics, a breach of which meant both social and cosmic disharmony. Human disasters, cosmic disturbances, would follow such breaches, and harmony could be restored only by right relationship: hence the Chinese emphasis on virtue and good example rather than on law.

From this idea of Harmony there developed the philosophical concept of the "Tao": the Way, the Right Way, an Only Way, in which the affairs of the universe, natural and social, could be carried on. The Way of the human sphere lay in the observance of Right Relationship. All things were considered

good in themselves. Disharmony was the evil. Thus the Chinese emphasised conformity to custom, keeping one's proper place in society; the lack of such observance caused unpleasant social and cosmic repercussions.

By the time of Confucius (551 B.C.-479 B.C.) then, a Chinese world-view had emerged which contained the basic elements of Sinism.

Confucius lived in an acute transition period, when the ancient feudal system was breaking up in civil war. The world had lost "Tao" with the collapse of the social and political institutions, as men no longer observed the proper Right Relationships. He was primarily concerned with the problem of order, the question of Harmony, cosmic and social, that is, the restoration of proper relationship. For these reasons he formulated a definite theory of human nature.

Man was basically good, that is, a harmonious part of a harmonious universe. His central concept was "Jên", viz. benevolence, consciousness of one's place and function in society. "Jên" leads to recognition of virtue and propriety, which in turn regulates human conduct, in the universe and in social and individual relations. "Jên" gives rise to "Li," the rules of Right Relationship, by which man conforms to the moral ideas and thus reaches his ultimate good, harmony with the "Tao" of the universe. Such harmony can only be achieved through proper social relationship.

Human society thus depends on the natural harmony existing between men in social form. Society requires the maintenance of the Five Relationships: between father and sons, older brothers and younger brothers, husband and wife, friend and friend, ruler and subject. The family is the primary social unit, extending into external relationships, as far as the State. This is also seen in the "Three Bonds": between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife. Recognition and observance of these relationships sum up the Confucian theory of society and of the State.

Intimately connected with this theory is the Confucian method of reform, the Rectification of Names. Reform must begin from the top, and so we come to the Confucian theory of rule and leadership. Leadership must be that of the "superior man," the man of character and classical education, practising "Jên" through "Li," maintaining harmony and the integration of the social and cosmic worlds. Good government was possible only when the ruler practised "social-mindedness," including the good of others in his own good: only then was he executing the Mandate of Heaven. This is the political theory of rule by Virtuous Example rather than Rule by Force or Rule by Law. The moral character of the ruler determined the moral character of his subjects. By the same token, when he was no longer a model of harmony, the Mandate of Heaven was withdrawn from him, and the people were freed from their obedience.

### Neo-Confucianism.

Confucius, then, developed the older ideas, and the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-221 A.D.) made a syncretised version the orthodox and official state ideology. It was further developed in the Neo-Confucian-Sinism of the Sung Dynasty (960 A.D.-1279 A.D.), under the influence of Buddhism and Taoism, especially in the writings of Chu Hsi (1130-1200). The aim was to integrate the thought of the age in the State Philosophy and give it fresh life. As far as the training of the bureaucracy was concerned, Neo-Confucian-Sinism, like the older Sinism, above all stressed moral education, but it added a further emphasis through what it termed "study," by which it meant "the investigation of things." Politically, the Neo-Confucian-Sinists were strong conservatives. They tended to emphasise the "sacredness" of the Emperor, and by their teachings isolated him more than ever from contact with the people. This version of Confucian-Sinism remained the orthodox State Philosophy until the Revolution of 1912.

## State Philosophy and government.

From what has been said it can be seen that there is a great difference between the ancient Chinese conception of government and modern European conceptions, with which it came into conflict. There existed in China governmental institutions that superficially offered a parallel to some European institutions. Hence early European visitors to China readily applied European political terminology to China.

In reality there was little, if any, true likeness. Government in Europe was a controlling body, the state the controlling institution, and law was remedial. But in China the central government was not such a controlling body; its power, as such, was extremely limited. It was rather a civil service and an educational structure than an instrument for formulating policies or promulgating laws. It had to maintain the Way of the Universe and function according to the "Li." Its administrative purposes were (1) to maintain the ideology, through the educational system, along with the administrative form of scholar-officials, recruited by the examination system; (2) to defend the country against barbarians without, heretics and criminals within, both being disturbers of the "Tao"; (3) to collect revenue to support these activities. There was little connection between the central government and the ordinary routine of life. Chinese "world-society" was regarded as a greatly extended family: thus the ruler was the "emperor-father," the officials the "parent-officials," and the people the "children-people." Imperial mandates were issued in familial tone; on the other hand, disloyalty was regarded as unfilial.

There were real checks on the government. The people had the right of rebellion. Though the Emperor ruled by the Mandate of Heaven, this was held only while he ruled in accordance with Right Relationship. Failure to do so disrupted the Harmony of the Universe, caused disaster and misfortune, and the people could rebel. In such a conception of government law played a subordinate part. It was preventive rather

than remedial. Government was by education and example, not an instrument of control but a pattern of virtue. The officials, like the emperor, were to be patterns of propriety in public and private life; hence their training was literary and ethical, in the traditional ideas, rather than legal and practical. This is the theoretical basis of the examination system and the scholar ruling class. Direct interference in the daily life of the people by the officials was rare. Government was carried on by a hierarchy rather than by a central government. Government in the European sense of the terms was recognized as only an "auxiliary activity," the "reserve power" of the hierarchy. The officials were teachers first and magistrates afterwards; the emperor was a supreme model first, and a ruler afterwards; the people were shamed, and punished only when they were shameless. Such was the ideal. In reality government, the "reserve power," was always necessary.

Thus, from the modern European point of view, the central government was limited in power. The ordinary affairs of life were controlled by local agencies, e.g. the family system, the village and the district, and the *hui* (associations, societies or guilds). These will be found important for the part they played in the theories of SunYat-sen. Whilst the government pursued its proper ends, life for the vast majority of the people under normal circumstances moved quietly in these local agencies. They were the real organs of social control. The central government can be called familial and metaphysical in conception, since it aimed at maintaining the Way of the Universe, by ensuring social and cosmic harmony. This concept of harmony is the centre of Chinese tradition and institutions, and may still play its part in political thought.

Such a system was the outcome of a conservative agricultural society, and the administration was as inherently conservative as the society it controlled. Trained in a literary and ethical tradition, imbued with a world outlook and taught to solve all questions by precedents found in the classics, the Chinese

bureaucracy was quite incapable of adapting itself to the novel challenges of the nineteenth century. These challenges could not be solved according to classical precedents. An intellectual revolution had to accompany the new social, economic and political forces that were convulsing the country, before a stable administration could once more be built up.

Further, though the examinations were open to most members of society, the long time required for studying the complex Chinese script must have partially limited higher education to citizens with property. This fact would strengthen the conservative character of government. But, against this, it was the pride of every family and village to have at least one scholar in its ranks, and they would co-operate to see a promising lad through the whole long course. Innumerable inscriptions testify to such a practice. Again, in times of dynastic decay the officials paid little attention to their ethical duties; they developed scholarly arrogance, enjoyed their social position, and abused their opportunities for enriching themselves. There was always a great gap between the officials and the peasant classes.

The State Philosophy became a conservative force, associated with the imperial bureaucracy—but this does not destroy its intrinsic ethical value. Much of Confucianism that is now ignored in its political aspects is enshrined in the family life and customs of the Chinese, with which its rise and character have been so closely connected, and its principles might again be applied to the wider social relationships of the state. We must, however, turn to the impact of Western ideas upon Chinese life and thought last century.

## II. MODERN CHINESE POLITICAL THOUGHT TO SUN YAT-SEN.

Since the "opening of China" in 1839-42, the main factor in Chinese society has been the impact of Western ideas and techniques upon the Chinese traditional modes. This has

caused the disintegration of the old "world society" and the birth of a new society, with prolonged anarchy accompanying the process.

The Chinese were from the first quite willing to admit Western superiority in war and science, but not in the arts of civilization. Till the second half of the 19th century they were confident of their excellence in the art of government. This was justified in view of their record of successful government during long periods in which the rulers benefited the people, gave scope for local governmental activity and allowed high cultural development. Threatened again and again by barbarians, China has always recovered herself, preserving her ideological unity. It was consequently a bitter thing for the Chinese to have to admit foreign representatives to the right of residence in Peking in 1860; this concession destroyed the universal base on which the Chinese conception of government rested.

Influential scholars were appointed in 1867 to foreign courts to report on the customs of these countries: this represents the first recognition of other civilizations and modes of government than the Chinese. By 1870 three translation bureaux had been established and Chinese students went abroad to study. They returned strongly influenced by Western ideas and customs. The influence of overseas Chinese in Malaya, Java, Hawaii, Cuba and the U.S.A. was important. They prospered, and introduced Western ideas and customs into China. Sun Yat-sen first met Western ideas in Hawaii, and the overseas Chinese gave him invaluable support. Western ideas were further disseminated by the mission schools and by the Shanghai press from the 1870's. By the 1890's there had been much discussion of European ideas and ways, and this heightened the dissatisfaction at China's constant political and economic humiliation by the foreign Powers.

Some of the chief Western intellectual influences may be mentioned. By 1900 there was much translation of European

philosophers, including Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau. Montesquieu's *Esprit des lois* impressed the classically-trained Reformers, such as K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, especially the view that law should protect the governed rather than strengthen the executive. Rousseau's *Contrat social* introduced Western political romanticism into China, especially among the revolutionary republicans. Bluntschli, the Swiss constitutional jurist, impressed the Chinese with his more universal ideas; in particular, his theory that the executive power should belong to the "solid people," i.e. the educated people (which suited the Chinese tradition of rule by scholar-officials), and his world movement in the evolution of parliamentary government with defined legal powers.

When dissatisfaction became vocal and Chinese openly advocated new ideas and new political institutions, there were three groups: Reactionaries, Reformers, and Revolutionaries.

#### **Reactionaries and Reformers.**

Among the Reactionaries were the Court Party, headed by the Empress-Dowager, who after the failure of the Boxers and the humiliation of the Court in 1900/1 planned reforms that would lead gradually to parliamentary institutions. In 1898 a group of Hunanese scholars published *A collection of essays in defence of the faith*, defending the old social and political ideology that was based on the Laws of Heaven and Earth, and denouncing the individualism that threatened the group-consciousness of the Chinese.

The Reformers wanted to establish a constitutional monarchy, at the same time preserving the old Chinese traditions as far as possible. K'ang Yu-wei, educated under the traditional system and conversant with its basic ideas of order, harmony and universalism, was also influenced by the Buddhist theory of suffering and pain. He added compassion to Chinese humanism, in elaborating theories for the "rectification" of a disharmonious world.

After his early radical work against orthodox Confucian

doctrines, the Sino-Japanese War, 1894/5, brought K'ang Yu-wei into politics, and with his pupil Liang Ch'i-ch'ao he began to advocate measures of reform. He held that "a republican form of government was too advanced for China" and would only increase the chaos of the country, causing revolution instead of adaptation; but he founded a society for the promotion of Western learning, for he admired the European political machinery for making the wishes of the people effective. His thought aimed at the consummation of world-peace and world unity, by the binding-force of Harmony: national barriers were to be destroyed and a ruling World Council, representative of all peoples, established to bring about a harmonious synthesis of Chinese, European and other ways of life.

Chang Chih-tung, the viceroy of Hunan and Hupeh and a famous scholar, advocated the study of Western learning and institutions in order to make China strong. But he remained loyal to the Chinese tradition, which he held should still be the "essence," with Western learning "the means of application": "Unless Chinese learning is made the basis of education, and a Chinese direction given to thought, the strong will become anarchists, and the weak slaves. Thus the latter end will be worse than the former." He argued for organic development, with government by law, under the throne, as against "democratic" institutions that would only "stir up class consciousness and hatred."

### **III. SUN YAT-SEN: THE "THREE PRINCIPLES."**

The future, however, belonged to the Revolutionaries, whose aim was a republic. The leader of this group was Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), the "father of modern China," the cult of whom is now a potent weapon for the unification of China.

The influences upon Sun Yat-sen's thought were his agrarian village background, the traditional anti-Manchuism of his South China origin, his residence in Hawaii (1879-82),

leading him to break with his traditional Chinese background and study Western political thought and institutions, and the Russian-Communist influence of his last years. The fundamentals of Sun Yat-sen's political theories were worked out during the revolutionary period of his life. In 1905, whilst in America, he gave the first enunciation of his "Three Principles"—"the people are to have, the people are to control, the people are to enjoy," superficially, at least, a paraphrase of Lincoln's formula. In Brussels in the same year he made his first speech to Chinese students on the "Three Principles," and here he first expounded his "Yüan" conception of government—government with five component powers, as we see below, rather than the typical European division into three parts.

In the latter part of his life Sun hoped to write a scientific treatise on his theories; but he was never able to do so, and his theories are to be found in a heterogeneous group of works. Of the four main works of Sun Yat-sen, the *San Min Chu I* is the most important. The *San Min Chu I* (The Three Principles of the People) consists of sixteen lectures given in Canton in 1924, at the time of Russian rapprochement. They are schematic and rather confused, and were given under the pressure of active revolution; but they comprise the ideology upon which modern China has been built up. They have been called the "extrajudicial constitution of the National Government of China."

The Three Principles are (1) *Nationalism* (racial solidarity of the people), (2) *Democracy* (governmental authority of the people), and (3) *Min Shêng* (the people's livelihood).

### (1) The Principle of Nationalism.

Here Sun Yat-sen was concerned with the question of what is China, her place in the world, and her destiny. China, he maintained, was a race, in the past the leader in her own world, owing to cultural attraction and the rule of benevolence. China was now corrupt and weak under barbarian Manchu

rule, which had not only brought internal decay but had let China become the prey of the Western imperialistic powers by preventing her from developing the Western techniques. To ensure survival China had to get rid of the Manchu Dynasty; hence the revolutionary programme that culminated in 1911/2. This was to be followed by ideological reconstruction, in opposition to the imperialistic powers. This meant nationalism. "We are Chinese, and those things that we have to change first lie in China . . . if the Chinese people has lost its power of holding its culture high, we might as well wait for death with bound hands—what would be the use of going on with revolution?"

This nationalism was to be achieved by combining three elements: ancient Chinese morality, traditional Chinese social knowledge, and Western physical science, that is, by adding Western techniques and legal devices to the old devices of ideological control. But nationalism was also to be powerfully felt by the people with all the force of modern nationalism. Only then did Sun Yat-sen look beyond this phase, necessary for survival, to the old Chinese cosmopolitanism, the idea of "world society": the Chinese nation should strive to lead the world back to pacific cosmopolitanism.

The "Programme of Nationalism" was to be achieved through the Kuomintang (National People's Party) that Sun Yat-sen founded.

### (2) The Principle of Democracy.

The fall of the Manchus meant for Sun Yat-sen the establishment of some type of popular government. He advocated democracy on three grounds: Western example, Chinese tradition, and historical necessity, for democracy was the world-movement of his time. Although democracy involved for him the usual representative institutions, he modified Western conceptions in three ways: by distinguishing between power (ch'üan) and ability (nêng); by keeping the government

and people perpetually dual; by leaving the choice of the personnel of government to the people; at the same time the people's choice was to be strictly controlled and relatively limited.

The "Programme of Democracy" for him had three aspects: the Revolution, the establishment of the Five-Yüan government, the importance of the *hsien* (district). The revolution was in three stages: the actual revolutionary stage, the period of tutelage in which the Chinese "race-nation" was to learn the new mechanisms (this period the Kuomintang considers to be still in existence), and the attainment of full democratic government. The Five-Yüan government was to prepare the people and maintain the practice of democracy. Sun Yat-sen was concerned with the problem of how the people should control the government without interfering with its actual working. This is why he distinguished between the power the people should have over the government and their capacity to govern the state: he considered modern government too complex and delicate to admit of popular interference in its actual working. The people were to have Four Powers over the government: initiative, referendum, election and recall; but the government in its turn must possess the Five Rights over the people: executive, legislative, judicial, examination and control. Hence the term "Five-Yüan Constitution."

The actual government was to be in the hands of trained men who had passed the necessary qualifying examination, under the Examination Yüan. The choice of the people was to be limited to such specially selected men. The Control Yüan was to keep the administration alive to its responsibilities, and at any time, by the exercise of the Four Rights, the people were to be able to call the administration to account. The ultimate sanction of the government's authority was thus the sanction of the popular vote. In this way Sun Yat-sen hoped to avoid the inconsistencies and weaknesses of Western democracy in actual practice.

### (3) The Principle of *Min Shêng* (the people's livelihood i.e. the economic problem of China).

The first principle concerned the birth of the "nation-state" (in contrast to the old Chinese "world-society"); the second principle concerned the freedom of this "nation-state"; and the third principle concerned its life. Often *Sbêng* is an "ethical doctrine rather than a schematic principle" (Linebarger).

*Min Shêng* arose from Sun Yat-sen's philosophy of history, which was based on the Confucian-Sinist principle of "Jên": benevolence, consciousness of one's place and function in society. This is what makes *Min Shêng* first an ethical doctrine and only secondly an economic one, viz. that the government must care for the livelihood of the people. The economic life of the people was considered to be possible only because of the ethical nature of man. In seeking the people's welfare the Government should experiment in all fields and not be "bound by any one creed of capitalism or communism": "While there are many undertakings which can be conducted by the State with advantage, others cannot be conducted effectively except under competition. I have no hard and fast dogma. Much must be left to the lessons of experience."

In its programme, *Min Shêng* meant three things for China: (a) a national economic revolution against imperialism; (b) an industrial revolution for the development of China; (c) social revolution, once the new regime had been established.

#### (a) *The National Economic Revolution.*

After early ideas of developing economic organizations with the help of foreign capital, Sun turned to economic nationalism by the Chinese themselves, and introduced the working class into his plans for fulfilling *Min Shêng*, aiming to raise the standards of labour and use its political power. "If you are equal to the task, China will become a great nation and you a mighty working class." This included among other things the development of a trading economy, on equal terms

with that of the Western powers, the return of a tariff autonomy and the retrocession of occupied concessions.

(b) *The Industrial Revolution.*

Sun Yat-sen drafted a long-range plan for industrialization that would avoid the mistakes of the West. He originally hoped for assistance from international finance towards a co-operative modern economy in China, but later he despaired of this in the slump after the War. His plans provided for a complete communication system (railways, roads, canals), river conservation, development of ports, colonization and reclamation of land, and the growth of industrial areas. These are headings covering his detailed elaboration of his plan. For him industrialization was essential to *Min Shêng*.

(c) *The Social Revolution.*

This involved the sphere of State action, the place of private ownership of land, the position of private capital and the question of the class struggle. The basis of treatment was the doctrine that a government should promote the material welfare of the mass of the people. In the treatment itself the government was to be free to choose its own line of action in any particular case.

Matters that could be carried out by private enterprise should be left to private hands, encouraged and protected by liberal laws. Where this failed to meet requirements the government should step in to guarantee the welfare of the people. Sun had a long-term view of "the unification and nationalization of all the industries," with labour and welfare legislation, State ownership of transportation, direct taxes, socialised distribution (the Co-operative Movement). The Chinese industrial revolution would be so great that the State would have to initiate the main undertakings of industrialism.

Land would be assessed for taxation. If it increased in value, the difference would be paid into a public fund for communal purposes. This is "equalization of land ownership," a "com-

munism of the future." Sun Yat-sen believed that solution of the land problem would be half of the solution of *Min Shêng*. Private capital was to be restricted so that it would not be socially disruptive; but he did not fear Chinese capital. He was for developing the capital of the State for large-scale enterprise. Sun Yat-sen hoped by *Min Shêng* to develop a healthy economy in which the class struggle would never appear.

All this was to lead to the "Utopia of *Min Shêng*": ideological harmony, property no longer a cause of strife, men animated by "Jên" for the common good. The programmes of *Min Shêng* were to fulfil this destiny for China.

Sun Yat-sen restored ideology to its traditional place in Chinese life, after the decades during which China had drifted helplessly with the breakdown of its old ideology, in the chaos of provincial militarism and the shifting vagaries of opportunists. He gathered the threads together again, and gave modern China the ideological re-orientation that alone could ensure her survival. Canonised as *Chung Shan*, he takes the ideological place of the Emperor in contemporary Chinese thought, together with the reassertion of ideology as the central control of Chinese society.

#### IV. PRESENT POLITICAL THOUGHT.

Sun Yat-sen has been given the title of *Chung-li* (leader) by the Kuomintang, and with the exception of "Manchukuo," where there is a bastard form of Confucian-Sinism, all groups in China claim him as their leader. The two most important groups are the Kuomintang and the Communists.

##### **The Kuomintang.**

The Kuomintang (National People's Party) was founded by Sun Yat-sen to carry out his theories and programmes. To-day it is the power behind the Nationalist Government, and, in spite of the so-called "United Front," it remains the only fully legal party in China. At Sun Yat-sen's death in

1925 it was in affiliation with the Communists, but a split occurred in 1927/8, and the Right Kuomintang, under Chiang K'ai-shek, established the Nationalist Government at Nanking.

To what extent have the theories of Sun Yat-sen been carried out? The Kuomintang, and so the Nationalist Government, have been accused by the Communists and others of being reactionary and giving only lip-service to those theories. No doubt the Kuomintang has lost its revolutionary character and tends to a more conservative development of China; but it has carried out much of Sun's programmes. The Revolution has been successfully accomplished, and if the inauguration of full democratic government (that is, the abolition of itself), has been delayed, it is because the Kuomintang considers that the Period of Tutelage is not over. The Five-Yüan government has been established, and has survived fourteen years of turmoil. Much economic development had been accomplished before 1937. On the other hand, little has been done to meet the social-agrarian problem—the endemic problem of China. Questions of survival are accountable for this, according to the Kuomintang. It can be said generally that since the split of 1927/8, the "Nationalists have devoted themselves to the national-economic and industrial revolutions, whilst the Communists have stressed the social revolution, particularly the land problem."

During the 1930's, by its appeasement policy to Japan, the Kuomintang appeared to have lost the leadership of the nation, certainly of the student class, whose activities it was suppressing. But the war has had a revitalising effect on the Kuomintang. By contrast with its position in 1935, it has gained much power and is better able to assume leadership and to take charge of development.

### **The Chinese Communists.**

The Chinese Communist Party was founded in 1919/20. After the rapprochement between Sun Yat-sen and the Soviet

in 1923/4 and the reorganization of the Kuomintang with the advice of Michael Borodin, Communists were admitted as members of the Kuomintang. But in 1927 the Russian advisers were sent home, and the Chinese Communists were proscribed. They set up the Canton Commune, which was speedily liquidated, and were active in the province of Kiangsi, allying themselves with the discontented peasantry: in 1931 the first Chinese Soviet Republic was established here. Soviets were instituted and labour and agrarian legislation adopted. After that, despite the campaign of Chiang K'ai-shek, they kept their government and army intact and transferred it to North West China in the famous Long March (Oct. 1934 to Oct. 1935); in the North West, once more blockaded by the armies of Chiang K'ai-shek, they again set about establishing a Soviet system. Since then, however, the Communists and the Kuomintang have come together against Japanese aggression. The Sian Incident of December 1936 began this rapprochement, though much earlier the Communists had offered to collaborate. The Communist leaders were important in obtaining Chiang's release, and the result was a cessation of open hostilities. In February 1937 the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang accepted the Communist offer of a United Front, disguised as a formal "surrender" of the Communists; formal union appeared in September 1937, when the Communist area in the North West received the title of "Special Administrative District of the Chinese Republic." Thus the Kuomintang remains the only party, legally speaking, but the Communists maintain their government and administration, keeping the Red Army intact as the Eighth Route Army. Communist leaders participated in the National Government, first at Nanking, then at Hankow and Chungking. Yet since 1937 there appears to have been much friction between the Kuomintang and the Communists, at times mounting even to a major crisis. In the absence of any really reliable evidence, it is extremely difficult to know how the United Front has worked.

The Chinese Communists claim to be an orthodox Marxian group, but they have as yet no proletarian basis. They owe their position to the agrarian discontent, always acute during times of trouble. The movement is perhaps traditional as much as communistic. Whatever the future of Chinese Communism, the problems they stress, viz. land reform and labour problems, are too urgent to be laid on one side, as the Communists claim the Kuomintang has done.

Other minor political groups exist in China, though none are legalized bodies. Chinese party politics, active in the early years of the Republic, have lately revived to some extent in the People's Political Council. But the legal prohibition remains. All groups, it appears, recognize the supremacy of Sun Yat-sen.

### **Chiang K'ai-shek.**

Since the death of Sun Yat-sen, the chief personality in Chinese affairs has been his pupil, Chiang K'ai-shek, who is to-day known as *Tsung-tsai* (Chief), a title and rank second only to that of *Tsung-li* (Leader) given to Sun Yat-sen.

Chiang K'ai-shek is one of the most elusive figures of the modern world. He fits into none of the categories with which Western observers usually label their subjects. Yet he exists as the most powerful personality in China. In other days he would have been the founder of a dynasty; but he appears to have no such dreams; he appears a man obsessed with a mission, which he would state to be the fulfilment of the theories and programmes of Sun Yat-sen.

He was born in 1888 in Chekiang, of a family between the minor gentry and the farming class, which fell on evil days. He was brought up very severely in poor circumstances, and made his way by his own persistence and ability. Two major influences have lifted him above the average of modern Chinese military men: first, religion, the austere Buddhism of his early life and later Christianity, which, added to the Confucian

tradition, gave him a sense of moral leadership; secondly, a purely Western influence, his mastery of military technique, which made him a potential political leader of the new China. His practical education was military, at the Imperial Military Academy in Paotingfu and for four years in Japan. On the outbreak of the Revolution in 1911 he returned to Shanghai to take part in republican activities, and shared in the abortive Second Revolution in 1913. From 1913 to 1918 he lived a civilian life, though still maintaining contact with the Republicans; he opposed Yuan Shi-k'ai's monarchical schemes.

Chiang K'ai-shek joined Sun Yat-sen in the so-called "Southern Republic" at Canton in 1918; but he disliked what he considered the extreme provincialism of the Cantonese, and criticised the old-fashioned militarists with Sun Yat-sen at this time. Returning to Shanghai, he entered business and is said to have made money. He mingled with Westernised Chinese, and gained many friends among Chinese business men and industrialists. These business connections perhaps explain much in his later life.

In 1923, the turning point in Chiang's life, Sun Yat-sen selected him to study Soviet military methods, and he spent four months in Moscow. On his return he was appointed chief of the Whampoa Military Academy, assisted by Soviet advisers. Here he began the development of a modern army, at the same time laying the foundations of his own power. In 1925/7 he led the "advance to the North," and then found himself one of Sun Yat-sen's three successors, together with Hu Han-min, leader of the Right Kuomintang and editor of Sun Yat-sen's works, and Wang Ching-wei, leader of the Left Kuomintang. In Shanghai in 1927 he suppressed the Communists and the labour and peasant unions, and established the National Government on the Yüan model, leaving the Left Kuomintang in alliance with the Communists at Hankow. They split, and the main body of the Left Kuomintang joined him.

Since 1931 Chiang K'ai-shek has set himself a threefold task: the development of the National Government, the stabilization of his own power, and the moral and technical modernization of his country. Faced with Japanese pressure, he adopted an attitude of appeasement, in order to carry out his plans of reconstruction and his anti-Communist campaign. This lost the Kuomintang much support among liberal groups, and especially the support of the students, which in turn led to repression. Matters culminated in the Sian Incident of December 1936, when the Generalissimo was kidnapped by the ex-Manchurian army, who were weary of anti-Communist campaigns whilst no action was being taken against the Japanese. The effects were to reveal the full extent of the Generalissimo's popularity and the nation's sense of his necessity, all groups co-operating to secure his release, and to lead to the "United Front."

Chiang K'ai-shek has gone through three stages: he was at first merely a new type of militarist, then he became a Party Leader, and now he is the National Leader. All groups, it seems, agree that only he can maintain the national front: he has come to personify the unity of China. He interprets Sun Yat-sen in his own way. He wholeheartedly accepts the tenets of Sun Yat-sen, as they are interpreted by the Right; but it is the pragmatic elements of Sun's philosophy that appeal to him most, in his "fetish of action." His book, *The San Min Chu I system and its method of application* (1939) illustrates his ideological standpoint. He condemns Fascism, Bolshevism, and "so-called democracy" as all one-sided and insufficient. "The Three Principles" originate from the idea that the world belongs to the people: Sun Yat-sen's aim was to bring about real equality of the people without any distinctions of classes, religions and occupations. After this has been realised in China, the equality of all nations in the world may be achieved, through Chinese cosmopolitan influence, by means of the spirit of mutual help and sincere co-

operation. Of common human feelings, the sentiment of nationalism is the most worthy: the Principle of Nationalism is based on this. Laws are to define the people's responsibility and privileges under the Principle of Democracy. In the Principle of Livelihood each man's reasoning power is used to advantage in working out the most rational way of distribution, whereby people will be put economically in an equitable position. To fulfil the Principles the motive power of Revolution is necessary: the Chinese evolution found its driving forces in wisdom, love and courage. Wisdom was the understanding of Love, together with reading, inquiry, thought and the power of distinguishing right and wrong. Love means loyalty, filial piety, faithfulness, peace; it includes patriotism. Courage is the determination to do what is right.

It would be wrong to treat these ideas as merely theoretical. Chiang K'ai-shek is an unusual combination of moralist and man of action, to be understood against our own medieval background rather than by modern materialistic standards; and his power and prestige make his ideas of direct relevance to Chinese political action.

### **The New Life Movement.**

We must include here the New Life Movement, which is closely connected with the Kuomintang: it may be called Chiang K'ai-shek's effort to achieve the moral regeneration of the country; he is Chairman of the Movement. It appears to have had a twofold origin in his mind: first, his conviction that moral reformation must accompany the establishment of political stability, particularly the moral reformation of his army, going back to his Officers' Moral Endeavour Corps in 1927, which has been compared to the Y.M.C.A., except that Chinese morality was stressed; secondly, his feeling during the anti-Communist wars of the need to counter the ideological appeal of the Communists. On March 11th, 1934, the New Life

Movement was inaugurated at a meeting of representatives of five hundred organizations. The movement became a regular part of his anti-Communist campaigns and reconstruction. It is a mixture of Confucian ethics, Sun Yat-sen's utilitarianism, and the social spirit of Christianity. It seeks to influence the individual through the traditional Confucian emphasis on personal conduct, then to make the individual a social worker through a combination of the social impetus of Christianity and Sun Yat-senism. This is "to educate the Chinese in the necessary discipline of a machine age."

The Movement has a negative and a positive side. On the negative side it forbids self-seeking, "face," cliquism, defeatism, inaccuracy, lack of self-discipline, evasion of responsibility—the "seven deadly sins"—also filthiness, carelessness of infection, indecent or untidy dress, bad manners, unkindness. On the positive side it affirms moral principles based on the Confucian virtues, interpreted in the light of Sun Yat-senism to suit modern needs and conditions, e.g. consciousness of one's place and function in society, the application of this to conduct in Right Relationship, the righteousness that makes a man observe Right Relationship, honesty in personal, public and official life, and self-respect.

The Movement also attempts to improve daily social life by practical measures. Shopkeepers are encouraged to join, provided they observe the rules of cleanliness and honesty among shopkeepers; it provides mass-marriages to reduce the traditional expenses, undertakes municipal health campaigns, and works as a business bureau and as a civic service club; it furthers patriotic activities by arranging patriotic shows and providing material for patriotic stories, and has introduced such innovations as mass-singing and calisthenics. It is, in short, an attempt to integrate the old and new in Chinese society by adapting "existing institutions or businesses to new needs."

### **The Chinese political tradition and the future.**

Sun Yat-sen, then, was concerned with ideological control rather than with legal control, restoring ideology to its traditional place in Chinese society. He wanted to create a state in the western sense of the term, whilst maintaining in full the old ideological controls. This has prevented the Chinese from becoming too dependent upon political control, since they stress the "appropriateness of behaviour" rather than its legality. All political thought since Sun's death has revolved round his theories, and the strength of tradition is readily discerned in Chiang K'ai-shek's position, particularly in his "New Life Movement." Further, the Kuomintang has encouraged study of the past, to adapt the ancient social and political experience to the present. The old classical texts are studied, and an important school of *Sinology* has been developed. Honours have also been paid to Confucius. Again, the development of archaeology has stirred Chinese interest in their past, and much sound scientific work has been done. All this has helped to give a strong traditional aspect to the new sense of national value. Thus the ancient State Philosophy has been the basis upon which modern China has developed, and "every Chinese movement will have to incorporate a large part of the traditional doctrines."

The future of China depends, first, upon a stable administration which will allow a comprehensive social and economic policy to be organized successfully; secondly, upon an economic programme that will raise the standard of living of the mass of the Chinese people by reform of agrarian conditions and by well-balanced industrialization related to the rural districts as well as to the great cities; and thirdly, upon a plan of education and social readjustment which will give the Chinese people the basis for political development in their own local centres under these new conditions. These three elements of Chinese development are all inter-related and must be organically united in one comprehensive policy.

It is here that the political theories of the Chinese leaders and the political thought of the Chinese people come into account. We have studied the theories of the leaders. As for the people, the majority did not yet think consciously in political terms before the Japanese invasion, but their political traditions are old and strong, and lie behind the formulation of the specific political ideas. The war against Japan has stimulated their response, in terms of national effort, and the new instruments of education and propaganda, which we have indicated above, will carry the process further. The importance of the continuing relevance of the State Philosophy, that has been adapted to modern conditions by Sun Yat-sen and Chiang K'ai-shek, is that the Chinese people can develop their political consciousness in the modern world against the background ultimately of their own experience and thought. It may even give their nationalism an exaggerated form, unless administration, social readjustment and economic development are properly combined in one comprehensive policy. This, again, requires stable international conditions. The problem of China's future is as broad as that of the post-war settlement.

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