

Chinese Philosophy And Politics: 1853-1905

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(This is the second of two parts of the epilogue of THE STORY OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY completed recently by the same author who is now working on Contemporary Chinese Philosophy.)

NOT only to the returned students but also to experts in Chinese cultural studies, the need for reformation grew more and more pressing till it became the cause of revolution on the part of the younger elements burning with the flame of patriotism. For two centuries since the close of the Ming Dynasty, it is to be recalled, there had been a constant quarrel between the Sung (宋) and the Han (漢) School scholars as well as between the realist followers of Ch'eng Yi (程頤) and Chu Hsi (朱熹) and the idealist supporters of Lu Hsiang-shan (陸象山) and Wang Yang-ming (王陽明) inside the Sung School. Towards the middle of the 19th Century, Ts'eng Kuo-fan by patching up all their differences attempted to whip them together. Most probably, thanks to his good offices, the academic war subsided for several decades, each thinker and author attending to his own business. In consequence, there were produced some noteworthy achievements in the re-evaluation of classical assets.

Little Antagonism

What Tai Tung-yüan (戴東原 1724-1777) was to the 18th Century, Yü Yüeh (俞樾 1821-1907) was to 19th Century classical thought and scholarship. Compared with Tai, however, Yu showed little antagonism against the Sung School except in the theory of human nature. As an Advanced Scholar of the Class of 1851 and a Fellow of the Hanlin Academy, Yü showed little interest in a political career. As early as 1857, he resigned from the post of Commissioner of Education of Honan and made a literary career for the rest of his life in Soochow. He took up classical studies first, then turned to the ancient sages, and in 1862 completed his *Comments on the Various Classics* (羣經平議) of 35 chapters and *Comments on the Various Philosophers* (諸子平議) also of 35 chapters. Later, he composed two treatises on the theory of human nature now found among his literary remains.

Confucius (孔子). he said, did not commit himself as to whether human nature is originally good or evil, while Mencius (孟子) and Hsün Tzu (荀子) both went to one extreme. Nevertheless, Mencius and Hsün Tzu, though their starting points were different, looked to the same goal of self-cultivation. The former said that every man could become a Yao (堯) or a Shun (舜); the latter taught that every citizen of T'u (土) could be made into a Yü (禹). According to Yu Yüeh, whereas Hsün Tzu counted on the efficacy of learning, Mencius trusted to the good of

original nature, and upholders of this have been apt to neglect studies and imbibe Buddhist ideas. Hsün Tzu advocated the regulation of the original nature as the *Book of Chou* (荀書) advocated in the "Announcement to the Duke of Shao" (召誥); Mencius taught in accordance with original nature as the *Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸) did in its opening passage. As most people must have their natures regulated and only a few *chün-tzu* (君子) might be able to act in accordance with their original natures, every discussion of human nature should follow Hsün Tzu and not Mencius, affirmed Yü Yüeh. As to the origin of good, he said that though nature (*hsing* 性) is evil, talent (*ts'ai* 才) may become good or evil according to the postnatal environment. Yet he made no detailed exposition of the basic relation between talent and nature.

Most Prominent Pupils

The most prominent pupils of Yü Yüeh were Sun I-jang (孫詒讓 1848-1908) and Chang Ping-lin (章炳麟 1868-1936)—the former successful in matters of word and the latter in matters of both word and thought. Above everything else, Sun I-jang accomplished in 1899 the standard commentary on the *Rites of Chou* (周禮 printed in 1905), which has been regarded by all experts as the most difficult among the Canonical Classics. He left very original works on Chinese morphology by comparing inscriptions on stone and bronze implements and clarifying the traditional six categories of Chinese character-formation and also on Chinese etymology through his careful analysis of writings on tortoise-shells. As the text of the Works of Mo Tzu had been left in bad condition, he brought together all the extant commentaries and edited *The Complete Works of Mo Tzu with Collected Commentaries* (墨子間詁 reprinted in 1907). Largely owing to the same line of inspiration, Wang Hsien-chien (王先謙 1842-1917), accomplished similar works on Chuang Tzu (莊子) and Hsün Tzu, and his younger cousin Wang Hsien-shen (王慎 1931) on Han Fei Tzu (韓非子).

Chang Ping-lin, 20 years younger than Sun I-jang, began to study under Yü Yüeh when 16 years old. Later, he became so ambitious as to carry on research in Chinese phonology and etymology as well as the tradition of the old script texts. Again, largely on account of the proximity of his native place, Yü-hang (餘杭) to the headquarters of Huang Li-chou's (黃黎洲 1610-1695) school in the Yü-yao (餘姚) area, he imbibed the nationalism of traditional

Ming patriots. Besides, he adored the patriotic spirits of Ku Ting-lin 顧亭林 1613-1682), Wang Ch'uan-shan (王船山 1619-1692), and the like; so much so that he perceived the need of reformation aside from any impact of occidental culture, and from the outset he considered overthrowing the Manchu Dynasty as the only way of national salvation. After his plot for revolution had been disclosed, he was kept in jail from 1903 to 1906. Having served his prison term, he left for Japan and joined hands with other revolutionary leaders like Sun Yat-sen and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao (梁啟超). In the meantime, he acquired a deep interest in Buddhism, and particularly in the Fa-hsiang Tsung (法相宗) or Dharma and Appearance School founded in China by the Tripitaka Master, Hsüan-chuang (玄奘 600-664). Once he thought of going to India for further studies but could not raise enough funds. From the establishment of the Republic in 1912 onwards he spent most of his time in teaching and writing and enlisted several hundred pupils in his private school at Soochow. His distinguished service to the revolutionary movement in politics plus his penetrating influence upon the mode of thinking in Chinese cultural studies, won him a State funeral upon his death in 1936.

The New Script School

In carrying on the tradition of the old script texts, Chang Ping-lin naturally focused his attention on Tso-ch'iu Ming's (左丘明) *Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* (春秋左傳) allegedly uncovered by Liu Hsin (劉歆) in the time of Wang Mang (王莽 9-23 A.D.), and in so doing he accepted the challenge of the new script school—specifically known as the Kung-yang School—led by Liao P'ing (廖平) and K'ang Yu-wei (康有為) who were then re-evaluating Kung-yang Kao's (公羊武) *Commentary* studied and edited by Hu Mu Shêng (胡毋生) and Tung Chung-shu (董仲舒) in the time of the Han Emperor Wu-ti (漢高帝 140-87 B.C.).

The most important pioneers in the revival of interest in the new script texts were Chuang Ts'un-yü (莊存與 1719-1788) in his work on the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and Liu Fêng-lu (劉逢祿 1776-1829) in his work on *Ho Hsiu's* (何休) *Interpretations of Kung-yang's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* (公羊春秋何氏釋例). It was exactly the time when such textual critics as Tai Tung-yüan and his pupils were flourishing. Nonetheless in contradi-

stinction to the orthodox school, these two men studied the thought rather than the word of the Classic and its standard commentaries, and even attempted to expound and develop it. Soon afterwards Kung Tzu-chên (龔自珍 1792-1841), a grandson of Tuan Yü-ts'ai (段玉裁 1735-1815) and a pupil of Liu Fêng-lu, who as a textual critic had been carrying on the orthodox tradition handed down by Tai Tung-yüan, took interest in the new script texts, too, and, furthermore, developed the tradition of Chuang and Liu. From Kung-yang's *Commentary* he often derived his ideas and quoted passages to criticize the trend of political events. It was pointed out by Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, that though he failed to delve deep enough into the line, yet by his emancipation of current thought from the bondage of classical chains he won numerous posthumous eulogies among the 19th Century reformists. (12) His fellow-pupil, Wey Yüan (魏源 1794-1856), went so far as to condemn the old script texts of the *Poetry* (詩經) and *History* (書經) as spurious. Meanwhile, there appeared Wang K'ai-yüan (王闓運 1812-1896) to regard himself as an expert in Kung-yang's *Commentary*. From the school of Wang rose Liao P'ing, and under Liao's influence K'ang Yu-wei developed the crowning phase of his thought.

Liao Ping's Characteristics

Characteristic of Liao P'ing's (廖平 1852-1932) life and work was the six-stage transformation of his classical research and ideological speculations. As leader of the New Script School, he completed his *Inquiry into the New and Old Script Literature* (今古字考) in 1886, but as early as 1883 he reached the first stage, maintaining that both the new and the old script texts of the Canonical Classics are traceable to Confucius and that study of them should be based on the new script; yet wherever the new script reaches a deadlock, the old script should be available. In the second stage, in 1888, he debased the old and exalted the new, holding that only the new script texts had actually gone through Confucius's hands while the old ones were forged by Liu Hsin and subsequent anonyms. In the third stage, in 1898, his thought took an original turn and expounded a system of political and historical philosophy, affirming that in the new script text of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* Confucius thought of reforming the Central States whereas in the old script texts of the *Rites of Chou* and *Book of History* he hoped to tranquilize All-under-Heaven by picturing the past as an example to the future, and that the Occidentals, because they had never received Confucius's teaching, were still in the stage of the Spring and Autumn Period (in view of the high tempo of their pugnacity). In the fourth stage and from 1902 onward, he spoke about the heavenly man as the ultimate goal of human evolution, and asserted that at the zenith of

evolution everybody would not have to depend upon grain for staple food and would be able to levitate with nothing to think and worry about. In the fifth stage, in 1918, he attempted to rearrange the Classics, some wholly and some partially, into two orders, the major (or macrocosmic) and the minor (or microcosmic), calling the former *T'ien Hsüeh* (天學) or Providences and the latter *Jên Hsüeh* (人學) or Humanities. The minor order covered the discussions of mundane affairs, e.g., self-cultivation and family-regulation, state-government and world-tranquilization; whereas the major order dealt with ultra-mundane subjects like spiritism, animism, occultism, levitation, dreaming, and so forth. These works expounding all the five stages are included in his extant literary remains, but for some reason or other his *Sixth Stage in My Classical Studies* (經學六變記) seems to have not yet been published.

The greatest systematic spokesman of the New Script School in recent Chinese history was K'ang Yu-wei (康有為 1858-1927). From 1875, when 17 years old, he studied under Chu Tz'u-ch'i (朱次琦 1808-1882) till the latter's death in 1882. Subsequently, as soon as he read Liao P'ing's early works, he began his study of Kung-yang Kao's *Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals*. In 1889, he submitted to the Manchu Throne his measures for political reform but received no attention. Then he proceeded to compose his *Forged Classics of the New Script Literature* (新學偽經考), and completed it in 1891. Immediately after the Sino-Japanese War he organized (in 1895) a national rejuvenation society in Peking, agitating for reform. Altogether six times he submitted to the Throne his measures for reform. In 1898, the Manchu Government, pulled from pillar to post, leased Kiaochow Bay to Germany in March, Port Arthur and Dalny to Russia in April, and Kowloon in June and Wei-hai-wei in July to England, so that the whole Empire seemed on the verge of total dismemberment. At this critical hour the wise but weak Emperor Kuang-hsü (光緒 1875-1908), feeling a pressing need for political reformation, summoned K'ang and his reformist followers for consultation about adoption of the systems of constitutional monarchy and representative government. Thence followed the famous "100 days of reform."

In the meantime, Yüan Shih-k'ai (袁世凱 1859-1916), a habitual betrayer of trustful friends, divulged the secret news to the Empress Dowager, whereupon in the autumn of 1898 the Empress Dowager at the head of the conservative clique confined the Emperor to a terrace inside the Forbidden City, and sentenced to death all the reformists. Of them, six were caught and summarily executed while K'ang Yu-wei and his prominent pupil Liang Ch'i-ch'ao (梁啟超 1873-1929) managed to escape to Japan. Thereafter, Liang became a revolutionary and in 1902 extensively expounded his famous *Hsin Min Shao* (新民說) or Doctrine of National Renovation that was

going to reign over Chinese political and social ideology for 20 years to come. K'ang Yu-wei remained a monarchist up to the end of his life. One year prior to this incident, K'ang completed his *Confucius as a Reformer* (孔子改制考). Still earlier, he composed his *Book of the Great Community* (大同書), which expounds his own thought but had never been fully published before 1935.

In the *Forged Classics of the New Script Literature*, K'ang attempted to prove that all the old script texts uncovered in the time of Wang Mang and supported by Liu Hsin were forged classics. If his viewpoint proved true, then what the Old Script School and the eclectics had accomplished for two millennia would have been labor in vain, and all ancient books must be carefully re-examined. In his *Confucius as a Reformer*, he attempted to show that Confucius was more of an innovator than a transmitter of ancient intellectual assets because all the Six Canonical Classics were works of Confucius, and that in order to reform the present by appealing to the past he described such ideal figures as Yao and Shun ruling in the Golden Age though nobody knew whether such sagerulers had actually existed or were his imagination. The *Book of the Great Community* was his systematic development of Confucius's Utopia. In the Great Community there would be no national governments but one international government throughout the whole world; all public servants would be elected by the people; there being no family organization, man and wife would cohabit not longer than one year; pregnant women would be sent to pre-natal training schools while new born babies would be raised in nursing homes, older children taught in vocational schools and adolescents given proper jobs; sick people would receive free medical service; and old people, good care in established homes; and those who have accomplished cultural inventions or rendered distinguished services to the public would be duly rewarded. Neither based on previous thought nor derived from foreign sources, all ideas were innovations for the last decade of the 19th Century. (13).

Synthetic Attempts

One of the six reformist martyrs, by the name of T'an Ssu-t'ung (譚嗣同 1866-1898), who was also one of K'ang Yu-wei's disciples, ended his life at the age of 32 but left a never-to-be-forgotten work entitled *Jên Hsüeh* (仁學) or *Philosophy of Benevolence*. Its objective, like that of Herbert Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy*, was to formulate a synthetic system of thought by merging scientific, philosophic, and religious ideas as well as by blending Confucianism, neo-Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism, Buddhism and Christianity. Yet, being a Christian convert, he hated the tyranny of the past and craved the liberty of the spirit.

(13) Liang, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-136, Richard Wilhelm, *The Soul of China*, the text tr. from the German by J. H. Reece and the poems by A. Waley, pp. 78-80.

(12) *Writers of the Ch'ing Dynasty* 清代學術概論 pp. 122-123)

In the same year the six reformists martyred themselves, Chang Chih-tung (張芝洞 1837-1909) submitted to the Manchu Court an appeal entitled *Ch'uan Hsueh P'ien* (勸學篇) for the rejuvenation of Confucian morals and adoption of Western culture as the only hope of saving China from decline and ruin. To him, neither the conservatives nor the progressives were right: The right way to national salvation should be a moderate measure of reform, namely, through a gradual process of educating youth and altering the systems of civil and military service examination. The appeal was allowed to be published in the summer of 1899. Nevertheless, the Conservatives, sheltered by such powerful patrons as the Empress Dowager and Prince Tuan Fang (端方), secretly instigated fanatic Boxers—most of whom were members of underworld semi-religious societies—to “support the Ch'ing Dynasty and annihilate all foreigners (*fu ch'ing mieh yang* 扶清滅洋)” with a ludicrous view to appeasing the malcontents and prolonging the existing dynasty exactly as Li Ssu (李斯 280-208 B.C.) and the First Emperor of Ch'in (秦始皇 246-210 B.C.) had schemed for the permanent preservation of the House of Ch'in by burning “dangerous” books and burying alive captious literati 21 centuries earlier.

Early in 1900 the Boxer Uprising broke out, but was quelled in the autumn of the same year by the Allied Army of Eight Powers. Members of the imperial family and top officials of the Central Government, having had to seek refuge in remote provinces, changed their attitude towards the Occident overnight. At long last they promised the people the adoption of the systems of constitutional monarchy and representative government, and actually abolished the system of civil service examination in 1905, whereafter all ambitious degree-hunters would have to take up Occidental as well as Chinese cultural studies, and pass the M.A. or Ph.D. examinations in Occidental universities instead of becoming Promoted Men (舉人) in the provincial capitals or Advanced Scholars (進士) in the national capital.

However, it was too late for the dynasty, though not too late for the people. Those enlightened malcontents whose hope for reformation had been frustrated by the obstinate monarchists could see no use in supporting the moribund monarchy, and increased their anti-Manchu and monarchist campaign till the last Emperor Henry P'u Yi (溥儀) of the Ch'ing Dynasty was forced to abdicate at the end of 1911 and the Republic of China—the China culturally determined to adjust herself to the rest of the world—was founded early in 1912. Since then, Chinese philosophy has comprised in the main the various phases of China's ideological adjustment to the Occident, thus requiring a separate survey from different angles.

(14) Eng. tr. entitled *China's Only Hope* by Samuel I. Woodbridge.

The Week's Business

DURING the week ending December 22, business in Shanghai was slow and the turnover in retail stores generally was considered disappointing. Matters changed a little on the last day under review when political news from Nanking indicated a possibility of the Government's intention to come to terms with its adversaries and to end the Civil War.

Whether such speculation will have a lasting effect on the market remains to be seen. In fact, something similar to the announcement made on December 21 was foreseen by numerous businessmen in town. Throughout the week under review, and in spite of generally slow business, wholesale prices increased step by step, a fact which was thought to indicate increasing confidence in the efforts of those quarters trying to restore peace.

Meanwhile, exporters saw some business possibilities. Apart from various raw materials shipped by commercial firms and governmental concerns, several shipments of consumer goods left Shanghai during the week under review. As to tea exports, a report stated that production of tea on the mainland and in Taiwan in 1948 is estimated to have reached about the 1947 level (which was low compared with prewar) and that exports could be maintained on the 1947 level. Such exports, however, included shipments to the USSR under barter commitments, i.e. by shipping brick and black tea to Russia, China again paid part of her war debts to Russia.

On the commodity markets, quotations for raw silk, rayon, cotton textiles and rolled tobacco gained throughout the week. In spite of comparatively satisfactory rice arrivals, the price of first-grade Pai Keng went up to GY 340 per picul. Oil and flour prices advanced slowly.

New Policy

While, thus, the markets were irregular and black exchange markets realized new gains, the Ministry of Finance on December 20 announced that “in order to intensify control over financial affairs” it is working on a new policy “in line with the newly revised currency reform program.” The Ministry's plan, it was said, was to lead idle funds into productive channels, a task hardly to be achieved under prevailing political and economic conditions.

It was also announced by a semi-official news agency that the Shanghai Finance Control Bureau “is taking precautionary measures to prevent the immense amount of idle fund capital from falling into speculators' hands,” whatever that may mean. In fact, commenting

on such and similar news, businessmen could not help observing that fewer controls and regulations probably would help more than new control measures, and that the only people not to lose substance since the promulgation of the new currency apparently were the speculators.

The Shanghai Finance Control Bureau was also reported to plan “keeping close watch on all transactions of commercial banking houses here.” Commenting on this piece of news, local bankers opined that for carrying out that program the Bureau will need only a few people, since transactions are practically nil. They were afraid, it seemed, that by intensifying controls the Bureau will succeed in further decreasing what little business can still be done.

According to an announcement made by the Economic Research Institute, the retail price index for the week ending December 19 showed a general increase by 10.48 percent, with clothing prices increasing by 9.23 percent and foodstuffs by 7.31 percent.

Market Easy

During the week under review, the money market was comparatively easy with local banks and private money lenders charging between 20 percent and 36 percent per month. Simultaneously, the Loan Department of the Central Bank decided to reduce the interest rate on industrial loans from 36 percent to 24 percent, while at the same time extending the duration of such loans from 30 to 60 days.

In general, the financial market was extremely irregular throughout the week under review; while occasionally the difference between the official Certificate rate and the black market quotation was smaller than ever since November 1, the gap again widened during the last two days of the week under review.

On the other hand, businessmen were astonished to learn that in spite of all difficulties and contrary to all expectations, the Bank of China, on December 22, stated that overseas remittances had increased in December. The Bank of China was reported to have estimated the total amount of remittances from abroad during December as reaching almost US\$2,000,000.

It was no less amazing to read a statement by the Export-Import Bank claiming that, in terms of US currency, the value of exports in 1948 was higher than that of 1947 shipments. There is no possibility, of course, to establish the value of actual and paid for shipments, as Customs Returns include shipments on consignment as well as exports to Russia made with a view to settling war debts.

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