

THE INTERCHANGE OF EAST AND WEST

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We who live in the twentieth century are justly proud of the new methods of communication that have brought the various parts of the world closer together. We are seldom reminded that, for long periods in the past, the great civilizations of the known world were rather closely connected by bonds of trade and by cultural contacts, although it took longer to travel and exchange ideas. Any detailed attempt to trace all the interconnections between the Far East and the West across the Eurasian continent would take a whole course, not merely a single lecture, and if they were recorded in detail they might fill several volumes. I shall only try to present some of the chief cross-cultural developments in this interchange of East and West, with principal emphasis on China.

Archaeologists working in Northwest China during the first part of this century unearthed some striking types of painted pottery from prehistoric times (before 2000 B.C.), of which similar kinds, from about the same period, have been found in the Ukraine. In fact, the same general kind of painted pottery, with similar decoration on vessels of much the same shapes, has been found along a narrow corridor running from Southern Russia across Central Asia, passing through Northern Iran, Western Turkestan, and Chinese Turkestan, finally emerging in Kansu Province, China, where it connects with the Yellow River Valley. Such pottery has been found in several oasis centers along this route.¹ On both sides of the corridor, and elsewhere throughout Asia, the early pottery was very different, being a coarse, plain ware simply decorated by mat impressions, or by lines drawn with a comb or a pointed stick.² This corridor, along which passed the early painted pottery, and a slightly later, burnished gray ware, is sometimes spoken of as the "Old Desert Road". Over this, for centuries, ideas and traits passed from Western Asia and from India into China, while others passed back over it. The presence of similar pottery types all along the route does not necessarily mean that people of the same stock lived over such a wide stretch of territory; but it does show that there must have been a wide-scale transfer of ideas and techniques, if not of actual pottery vessels, at a very early time.

The Chinese like to think of their very high civilization as having developed independently on its own; but as it began much later than the great civilizations of the Near East, it very likely owed much to them besides fine pottery. The principal early civilizations began in the Nile Valley in Egypt, in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley of Mesopotamia, and

in the Indus Valley of Northern India (now Pakistan). They always began in river areas, apparently because it was the necessity of getting together to form efficient systems of irrigation or river control, in the interests of safer farming, that first brought people together in large village and town groupings. Chinese civilization was no exception, beginning in the valley of the Yellow River.

While the Chinese like to claim that their high civilization goes back more than five thousand years, actually, China's reliable history, with the beginnings of her high cultural and technical developments, began only about 1500 B.C. at the beginning of the Shang Dynasty.³ Archaeological discoveries from the last Shang capital, at Anyang, on a branch of the Yellow River, inhabited from about 1350 to 1027 B.C., show that the Chinese had only recently suddenly acquired many significant things that they had not possessed before. The early Chinese, who had first used the painted pottery, apparently lived in primitive dwellings partly hollowed out of the ground, with a rounded superstructure of wood and skins, or sod, used stone knives and hoes and other tools of chipped flints, had no writing, and had domesticated only the pig and the dog.⁴

As a sudden change from this extremely simple culture of Early China, we find in the Shang a very highly developed civilization, with large buildings supported on columns, bronze weapons and ritual vessels, a complicated system of writing, and chariots drawn by horses—apparently all introduced about the same time, from somewhere further West.⁵ The taming and training of horses had begun in Central Asia. (Much earlier, in Mesopotamia, they had had a form of chariot, but it was drawn by asses.) The smelting and casting of copper and bronze were discovered and developed in the Near East, and the far later Chinese examples from the Shang period were obviously made by the same general technical processes, although the decoration on them shows strictly local conventions that may have been evolved from wood carvings or from paintings on skins. Also, the Shang system of writing, which we know from inscriptions on the famous "oracle bones" that were then used for divination, first appears in a fully developed and complicated form which must have required a long previous evolution. As we have no evidence of previous writing from China, this development must have been accomplished elsewhere. In fact, the idea of writing as such was invented in Mesopotamia, and it is the same general style of writing, with the individual symbols shaped according to similar conventions, which so suddenly appears in Shang Dynasty China.⁶

Even more substantial evidences of a possible cross-cultural connection are provided by the royal tombs of Shang. These were constructed on a cross-shaped plan, with ramps on three sides and a staircase on the fourth, to hold the bodies of the rulers, with their soldiers, attendants, and concubines, their horses and their chariots. In general plan, as well as in burial customs, they closely recall the royal tombs excavated at Ur of the Chaldees in Mesopotamia, by the joint expedition of the

British Museum and our own University Museum, under Sir Leonard Woolley. In short, many cultural elements of Shang Dynasty China seem to indicate a sudden intrusion of Near Eastern forms and ideas—if not of actual people from the Near East—by way of Central Asia, along the Old Desert Road.

Chinese civilization in this first historical dynasty of the Shang was a very highly organized one. Its activities were regulated by a well-developed calendar system,⁷ and its government seems to have also been constructed on a solid basis, depending on tribute from outlying dependencies. From actual finds in the ruins of Anyang, archaeologists have determined that at that early date considerable interchange must have been taking place between the Shang realm and the lands to the south, and also between the capital and fairly remote areas of Central Asia and Siberia.

From the edge of Central Asia came the next dynasty, that of the Chou (c.1027-256 B.C.), when the people who had been guarding the Northwest frontiers of the Shang kingdom came in to drive out the Shang rulers and seize their throne. They may have been pushed in by developments in Central Asia, because this was about the time when Aryan invaders were pouring out of Central Asia into Iran and India, and some of them may have pressed eastward. We know that there were pockets of Aryan-speaking peoples in Chinese Turkestan before the Christian era.

For the first few centuries of their domination, the Chou rulers more or less maintained the Shang traditions with little change, although a cultural and artistic decline is easily detected in the deterioration of the Middle Chou bronzes, both in patterns and technique. What had begun as a highly organized feudal system became weak and chaotic. As the power of the Chou sovereign became increasingly more limited, until it was largely nominal, the rulers of the separate states got more and more control. This eventually led to a condition of near anarchy, as the individual states were constantly striving for power at the expense of their neighbors.

At the height of this feudal struggle in the sixth century B.C., China had a sudden and remarkable efflorescence of philosophic thought. This was the time of Confucius (551-479) and of the semi-legendary Lao Tzu, founder of Taoism. But elsewhere, this was also a great period of intellectual expansion. In Persia, Zoroaster was preaching and teaching;⁸ in India, Gautama, the Buddha; and in Greece, Pythagoras. This great period of remarkable thinkers may have been partly brought about by similar conditions of stress during a time when civilization was on trial, as it were, and struggle and discontent characterized the life of all these areas. It may have also been due in part to long-range transmission of ideas, because it was about this time that new metal-working techniques suddenly appeared in China from the West, revolutionizing the arts of the metalsmiths, and it is possible that some philosophical ideas could

have come in along with the technical ones.⁹ This is not to say that Confucious and Lao Tzu were not original thinkers, or complete expressors of the thoughts of their nation and their time, but it is possible that some of their concepts might have been sparked by ideas arriving from elsewhere.

The latter part of the 6th century B.C. was also the time of the first great empire in the world, that of Cyrus the Great of Persia. By his conquests he founded the Achaemenid Dynasty, which ruled from Egypt on the West to India on the East. It was Cyrus's successor Darius who conquered Northwest India (521-519 B.C.) adding it to the Persian Empire. The Achaemenid officials and traders brought to Northwest India an alphabet, the Aramaic alphabet which was also used in Syria, and this apparently gave rise to the Kharosthi script; while another Near Eastern form of writing, also ultimately from Syria, produced the South Indian Brahmi script. Thus the ancient Phoenician writing of the Mediterranean world ultimately gave rise to the various alphabets of India, making it possible to write down the great oral traditions of Vedic India. In ancient times, fully a thousand years before, perhaps much longer, the people of the Indus Valley civilization, who apparently had had trading relations with Mesopotamia, had also had their own distinctive form of writing, as we know from their seals found in the ruins of Mohenjodaro and Harappa. But this had been lost after the Aryan invasion of c. 1200 B.C., and apparently no new one had been invented to take its place until the coming of the Persians.¹⁰

After the collapse of the Achaemenid dominion, under the attack of Alexander the Great and his Macedonians in 330 B.C., Alexander himself conceived the idea of regaining the old empire, including its eastern possessions. He marched across what is now Afghanistan, conquering Bactria and adjacent regions of Central Asia, north of the Hindu Kush mountains, and in 326 B.C. went down into India, where he founded some more cities before returning to Persia. According to tradition, Alexander, while in India, became interested in the teachings of some Indian ascetics, one of whom accompanied him back to Persia.¹¹

From this time, there was apparently a considerable amount of contact between India and the Mediterranean lands in the Hellenistic world. In particular, the Greeks of Bactria, ruling from the old city of Balkh in Northern Afghanistan, had constant contacts with India, through trade and military expeditions, and intermittent contacts with Greece, so ideas could pass back and forth through them. The extent of influence which the Greek rulers had on Indian thought and civilization has long been debated.¹² Only a more thorough archaeological investigation of the old city sites in Pakistan could help to supply the answer.

As yet we have no precise evidence of trade or cultural contacts between Bactria and China before 128 B.C. (Previous claims have apparently been based on false assumptions.¹³) But there may have been some contact during the 3rd century B.C., because about that time the so-called

Pythagorean musical scale and Western geometrical axioms arrived in China, and, as a still more practical consideration, donkeys, mules, and camels were introduced to China from further west, to provide new means of transport, especially over desert regions.¹⁴

In the middle of the 3rd century B.C. there was a powerful prince in West China, ruling the state of Ch'in, in the region of the old Chou realm. Ch'in may have had some contact with the West—at least with Central Asia, because, among other ideas from further west, it acquired the use of iron to replace bronze. We do not know how long it took this idea to get from the Near East into Central Asia, and thence into China, but the people of Iran had been using iron weapons for nearly a thousand years before. With the introduction of iron, the armies of Ch'in began to use iron weapons which were far superior to the old bronze ones still in use in the rest of China, and with iron ploughs they could raise more grain to support their armies.¹⁵ Thus, the Prince of Ch'in was able to create a powerful military state with which he overcame the rival states, until by 221 B.C. he had conquered all of what was then China, and founded the first Chinese Empire.

The reign of the first Ch'in Emperor (Ch'in Shih Huang-ti) was noted for its ruthlessness. In fact his tactics have been compared with those of Hitler. This is because he was so extreme in the methods which he felt were necessary to unify the new nation. One significant thing about his reign from the point of view of our subject was the fact that he put a great deal of faith in shamans and medicine men and foreign sages and magicians; and it is recorded that he called around him people from distant lands to suggest means of prolonging his life because, like most bloodthirsty tyrants, he had a morbid fear of his own eventual death. Thus, there was present at his court a cosmopolitan groundwork from which ideas of other nations could seep into Chinese thought. Also, his search for the means of gaining immortality had still further significance, because it became a recognized branch of Chinese proto-science, later acquiring religious prestige as a recognized pursuit of the Taoist practitioners. But, more important, this doctrine was apparently carried West, where in Alexandria it led to the founding of the school of alchemy. This in turn played a large part in preparing the background for the rise of true science in Europe, which arose through the experiments of such noted scholars as Roger Bacon, while searching for the "Philosopher's Stone" and other alchemical goals.¹⁶

The Ch'in Dynasty was very short-lived, coming to an end soon after the accession of the son of the First Emperor, but China was soon reunited under the Han Dynasty, which ruled for more than four hundred years, with one minor break (202 B.C.-A.D.9, A.D.25-220). This was a period of great expansion, down into South China, and out into Korea on the Northeast, and Central Asia on the Northwest. The Chinese people had first used the Yellow River and its tributaries for a river-based agricultural economy based on irrigation, and the seat of power remained in the North. However, pioneers had gradually con-

quered the forests and jungles of other parts of China, making the central and southern regions more habitable, and inventing new forms of cultivation to complement the wet-rice culture of the river valleys. Now, under the Han, all the outlying dependencies were added to the lands united by the First Emperor in the previous dynasty, making a much larger national entity. But Han ambitions did not stop at that. Especially under Wu Ti, "the Martial Emperor", the Han armies conquered Chinese Turkestan and penetrated almost to the borders of the Parthian realm in Persia.

This westward push was first initiated by the fact that the Han Empire had some dangerous enemies on its northern and western borders, the Hsiung-nu, or Huns.¹⁷ These Hsiung-nu lay athwart the potential trade routes to the West and also caused trouble by constant raids into North China. In the hope of outflanking them, the Emperor Wu sent an emissary named Chang Ch'ien to try to arrange a military alliance with a tribe called the Yüeh-chih, who had been driven west by the Huns and now lived beyond the far borders of the Hunnish realm. The Chinese hoped that they might be induced to attack from the West in support of a Chinese attack from the East, and thus catch the Hsiung-nu between them. Chang Ch'ien did not succeed in contracting the hoped-for alliance, but he did manage to travel widely in Central Asia. He got to know the people of Bactria, who had just driven out the last Greek ruler and were soon to be absorbed by the Yüeh-chih, and he brought back to China such rarities as grapes and alfalfa, which were entirely new to the Chinese. More especially, he brought back the idea of a world to the West with which there could be profitable trade relations; and he excited the Emperor's interest in the Western world by reporting that he had seen in Central Asia some magnificent horses, much larger and finer than those then available to the Chinese.¹⁸

Chang Ch'ien's report led to an abortive attempt to seek and open a southwest trade route to India, overland by way of Yunnan and Burma, but it also led to a series of military expeditions to secure the famous horses, which finally led to the complete conquest of Chinese Turkestan. Once a series of Chinese garrisons had been established and the kings of the oasis-towns of Turkestan reduced to Han vassalage, trade with the West could begin in earnest, and this soon led to the establishment of the silk trade with Rome.¹⁹

The Romans greatly valued Chinese silk for their togas, and it was soon in great demand. They especially liked the light sheer silk, which was denounced by Cicero and other notables as being decadent and wastefully extravagant. In fact, the Roman rulers made repeated decrees against the import of this luxury because it proved to be such an economic drain, drawing gold from Rome.²⁰ In return for the Chinese silk, the Romans sent as well as gold, Roman glass, precious stones, and robes woven from a very strange substance which was called "sea wool". The latter was a product from the silken filaments by which a kind of

large mussel, found in the Bay of Naples and other parts of the Mediterranean Sea, attached itself to rocks. These filaments could be spun into a kind of waterproof fabric so valued by the Romans that they felt it was one of the few things good enough to be exchanged for silk. Incidentally, strange stories to explain the origin of this weird substance shuttled back and forth across Asia, from West to East and back again, gathering new elements like a snowball, to an extent which indicates still further the intercultural contacts of the time.²¹

Much of the profits probably never reached China but were absorbed by the middlemen in the trade, the Parthian rulers of Persia, the peoples of Western India, and the Kushans (a branch of the original Yüeh-chih) who ruled in Afghanistan where the two main routes met on their way back to China.

It has generally been assumed that most of the trade between China and Rome passed overland. However, certain classical writings, notably "The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea", gave detailed accounts of a sea-borne trade,²² and these have been confirmed by archaeological investigations in some of the coastal towns of India during recent years.²³ It was then discovered that the Romans had used some thirteen ports along the western and southern edges of the peninsula, which must have been very much like the so-called "factories" or agencies of the East India Companies that conducted the trade with Europe many centuries later. These were apparently stations where a Roman magistrate or official representative could regulate the trade, with a certain number of soldiers for his protection, containing their residences, and storehouses for the incoming goods and those awaiting export. Probably the Romans had extra-territorial rights as well as trade rights, purchased from local Indian rulers.²⁴ The chief exports to Rome were spices, gems, and fine steel,²⁵ as well as Chinese silks which reached the west coast of India by an alternate route from the North.

Several years ago, when I was visiting an archaeological site in northern Ceylon, my Singhalese guide remarked, "See that headland over there? Just around the far point lies Mantota, which was an old Roman port." The idea of a Roman city in Ceylon was then entirely new to me, but some days later, in Colombo, I saw a large number of Roman coins that had been recovered there.²⁶ Apparently Roman merchant ships often had to wait for a change of seasons, to bring a shift in the monsoon winds, before they could proceed up the east coast of India, so they stopped at Mantota. From there, they also probably transhipped cargoes to engage in trade with the Further Orient.²⁷

The trade route from Ceylon to China did not continue all the way by sea, but crossed the Isthmus of Kra on the Malay Peninsula, where Roman relics in the form of beads, coins, and a fine lamp have been found.²⁸ Then the traders took to ships again, and, after pausing on the southern coast of Indo-China for water and provisions, they went northward along the coast to reach China.²⁹ According to old Chinese

records, over this route some Roman jugglers came to the Chinese Court in the year 166 A.D.³⁰ (As far as we know, no Chinese ever got to Rome.) Actual Roman finds in Indo-China, including jewels and coins, have given scientific confirmation to the old traditions of commercial intercourse.³¹

Another place where many Roman relics have been found in Asia is Begram, in Northern Afghanistan, which was the site of the Kushan capital in the first century A.D. As previously mentioned, the silk route from Parthia and the alternative route from Western India (connected with the Roman realms by ship through the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea) met in the land of the Kushans, and it is only natural that they should have kept some of the goods as their "cut" in the trade. French archaeologists, digging in the ruins of Begram, found there several rooms crammed with such things as Roman glass wares, small classical sculptures, and other forms of metalwork with unmistakable Roman decoration, as well as some fine examples of Han lacquerwork from China.³²

The main center of the later Kushan kingdom was in the region known as Gandhara, in the southern part of Afghanistan, and in the Northwest part of India, the other side of the Khyber Pass, in what is now Pakistan. The Kushan rulers became converts to Buddhism—although they apparently tolerated and encouraged other religions, as well—³³ and they wanted images to express their objects of worship. (Previously there had been no image of the Buddha, because the Indians thought it wrong to actually portray him.) To fill this need, a new school of sculpture arose in Gandhara, sometime around the 2nd century A.D. The Gandhara School of Buddhist sculpture produced work that strongly recalled the sculpture of Hellenistic Greece; in fact, Western scholars argued for a long time that it must have been a provincial development of Greek sculpture and talked about "the Graeco-Buddhist school of Gandhara"; but more recent research has shown that it was done in Roman times, probably in part by Roman subjects (not necessarily from Rome itself). Their work seems to reflect the late Hellenistic tradition as it was taken over by the Romans, adapted, of course, to Indian Buddhist traditions.³⁴ The first images of the Buddha which they made seem to have been derived from the conventional later representations of "Apollo the Orator", wearing the long Greek robe (*chiton*), and the Buddha is shown with his hands in the same gestures that a Greek orator would have made in trying to hold the attention of his audience. (These hand gestures were later rationalized by the Buddhists, who gave them new symbolic meanings, such as "blessing" and "charity", and new gestures were invented, until the whole subject of mudras, as they were called, became very complex.³⁵

Buddhism is an active missionary religion, so it soon spread up into Central Asia. By the 1st century A.D. Buddhist teachers had reached China. In 65 A.D. there was a Chinese Buddhist colony near the mouth of the Yangtze River, which would suggest that they might have arrived

by sea, although the usual route for missionaries was by way of Chinese Turkestan, along the Old Desert Road.

When the great Han empire finally collapsed in 220 A.D., China broke up into small states, and the North and West were constantly being overrun by barbarians, Huns, and others, who founded new dynasties that seldom lasted more than one or two generations. The ebb and flow of combat made life so difficult that many people took refuge in the monasteries (Buddhist or Taoist), and these monasteries became centers of culture and learning, where people copied the old books, maintained agriculture and other necessary and useful techniques, and the arts of literature, painting, and sculpture. The situation was very much like that in Europe when it, too, went through a similar period of "Dark Ages" after the fall of Rome.

One tribe of invading Tatars from the North, during this period, founded a somewhat more stable dynasty called the Northern Wei, and they became generous patrons of Buddhism after being converted to the new faith. Like the Kushans, they wanted tangible images, and were not satisfied with the small portable shrines such as their teachers had. With the exuberance of new converts, they wanted something colossal, so they turned over a whole section of hillside called Yün-kang, "The Cloud Ridge", to stone workers who must have come from India or Central Asia, and the latter carved a remarkable series of cave-shrines, some of which had giant images, which are still in place. They were working in a modified Gandhara style, which was copied by later Chinese image-makers and even carried to Japan. Thus, ultimately, some of the Greek traditions of sculpture finally reached as far as Japan, and — by a more southerly route, from India — out into the islands of Indonesia.

The Buddhist missionaries who came to China toward the end of the Han Dynasty, and in the troubled times that followed, brought many new ideas with them. Among these were new forms of medicine, music, and literary composition, as well as new styles in dances and religious pantomimes which finally led to a native Chinese drama, several centuries later. They introduced so many innovations that a noted Chinese Nationalist scholar, Hu Shih, wrote a long article to show that Buddhism had had a baleful influence on China, distorting or destroying many elements of the indigenous culture.³⁸ Actually, there were many good things among the introductions, as well as others which might justifiably be called destructive.

But no great civilization can act on another without some back-currents, so we can be sure that China must have had some reciprocal influence on India — even though, thus far, very little actual information is known on this score. Among the few scraps of evidence, we know that a copy of the *Tao Te Ching*, the famous teachings of Lao Tzu, was carried to India about the sixth century, and that a little later some people of India were singing a well-known Chinese song to commemorate the founder of the T'ang Dynasty, while a few possibly Chinese elements

made their way into the esoteric ritual of the Buddhists and Hindus." These items are very few, but there are doubtless others. Here is a pioneer field for some scholar, or group of scholars, willing to undertake the task of discovering just how much China gave to India, in return for the many Indian contributions to Chinese culture through Buddhism.

During the course of the period of "Dark Ages" in China, the foreign ideas were gradually assimilated, so that what had started as foreign, Indian or Central Asian, concepts, soon became native to China and completely acceptable to large masses of the Chinese people — although it was inevitable that there would always be some Chinese conservatives who objected to Buddhism as a foreign religion. Therefore, by the time when China finally emerged from this period of turmoil, during the great Sui and T'ang dynasties, the old Indian ideas had become quite thoroughly "Chinese", and the Chinese had already begun to make their own original contributions to Buddhist thought.

The middle regions of Asia, including Iran, managed to keep relatively free from the barbarian invasions that were so troubling China and Rome. They had their share of Hunnish invasions too, from the "White Huns" or Ephthalites, but they managed to hold them off, and the Persians of the Sasanian Dynasty (226-651 A.D.) enjoyed a very high civilization which also contributed much to China, when a reunited China once again knew peace. The Sasanian Persians later traded with the great T'ang court, bringing not only material things — to be mentioned in a moment — but also ideas.

From Persia, by way of Central Asia, came, in particular, the religion of Mani. Mani, who is said to have been of royal Persian stock, had had his early training in a Babylonian sect supposed to have been related to Christianity. He was familiar with Zoroastrianism, the national religion of Persia, and had travelled in India, where he was apparently much impressed by Buddhism. With this background, he felt inspired to found a syncretic religion which would bridge the gaps between the principal faiths of his time and make a new universal faith. While in India, Mani apparently met the first Sasanian Emperor, Ardashir I, who was reconquering Northern India in the second quarter of the 3rd century. A.D., following in the footsteps of Alexander and the Achaemenid kings before him. A friendship between them led to temporary royal patronage, under which the new faith temporarily prospered, but it soon encountered the full opposition of the established Zoroastrian faith, and, in a succeeding reign, Mani died a martyr's death (probably in 277 A.D.).³⁸

The religion which Mani founded spread west as far as the Atlantic in North Africa, and, passing over the Old Desert Road in Central Asia, travelled East to China and the Pacific.³⁹ For a brief time its teachings spanned the known world. Even Saint Augustine was a Manichaean for a while, before he became a Christian. After his conversion to Christianity, he wrote an attack on Manichaeism in his *Confessions*,

but this seems rather overdrawn in places, and probably is more of a reflection of his prejudices than a true picture of the other faith and its activities. The Manichaeans seem to have been a rather peaceful lot, whose main misfortune was that they were not sufficiently militant in defending their beliefs. They were soon put down in the West, although undercurrents persisted, to rise again in the "Albigensian heresy" of Southern France, which was so bloodily suppressed at the beginning of the 13th century. In China, Manichaeism was officially proscribed as an undesirable foreign faith in 843, but it managed to persist for several centuries longer in the province of Fukien, on the South China Coast, until even there it was totally forgotten.⁴⁰

Following the Manichaeans, there came a wave of Nestorian Christians across Central Asia, and they also reached China. In the year 781, at the T'ang capital in Northwest China, a Syrian named Adam set up a now-famous tablet, on which he inscribed some of the beliefs of his Nestorian faith.⁴¹ At that time the court of China was so cosmopolitan, that, for a few years, it allowed Christian churches, Manichaean temples, Zoroastrian fire altars, and even Islamic mosques, so the capital, Ch'ang-an, was a crossroads of the world, religiously-speaking, as well as culturally and economically. Nestorian Christianity was also suppressed as a foreign faith in 845, but this religion returned briefly with the Mongol Dynasty, some four centuries later.

When the Mohammedan armies became very militant and finally overran Persia, the last of the Sasanian kings fled to Balkh, and was killed in Central Asia in 642. But his son succeeded in escaping to China, and probably due to influences brought by himself and his followers, the Chinese court for a time became very Persian. We find from this time Persian styles in silverwork,⁴² Sasanian textile patterns which still persist in West China peasant embroidery,⁴³ and radical new developments in Chinese pottery, particularly in the way of improved glazes. A wide range of polychrome glazes were apparently invented in Syria about a century before, and introduced from there to the Persians, who eventually brought them to China. These ultimately led to the development of the even finer glazes used on later Chinese porcelains. (Porcelain as such was not invented until the end of the T'ang Dynasty, or at the beginning of the Sung.) In the Middle T'ang, the Chinese did not yet know how to control the glazes, and if you look in the main Chinese Hall of the University Museum, you will find some rather handsome T'ang horses and camels on which the glazes have dripped and run badly, although their magnificent forms are still arresting.

Meanwhile, Japan had been converted to Buddhism by Koreans and Chinese in the latter half of the 6th century A.D., and by the 8th century Japan was slavishly trying to copy the superior culture of T'ang China, even to the extent of trying to reproduce the great capital of Ch'ang-an in their new "imperial capital" at Nara.⁴⁴ In 752 the Japanese court had a huge celebration to celebrate the erection of a new Buddhist temple with a colossal bronze Buddha, and for the dedication

of the latter, gifts poured in from China and elsewhere in Eastern Asia. These offerings are still preserved in a simple wooden storehouse called the Shosoin, in Nara, even though the original Buddha to which they were dedicated has long since been destroyed, and the temple itself several times burned and rebuilt. In the Shosoin there are many objects which seem to be direct Persian workmanship, as well as much Chinese work that shows Persian influence, all bearing witness to the trans-Asian interconnections that were still strong a century after the Persian refugees had come to China.⁴⁵

The influences were not only one-way. Paper was invented in China in 105 A.D., and in 751 an advancing army of Arabs fought against the Chinese in a battle by the Talas River in Turkestan, capturing a number of Chinese prisoners, some of whom were paper makers. These men were taken back to the Near East, and paper next appeared in Egypt, from where it was carried to Morocco, and finally up into Muslim Spain, from which it gradually spread to the rest of Europe. Paper reached Spain about the year 1150. The introduction of paper revolutionized book-making in Europe. Before that, it was necessary to butcher a large number of sheep to get enough parchment to make a book, and then there was a long curing process, which would have added still further to the expense of the raw material, before the scribe could begin his work. Furthermore, the parchment books, when completed, were heavy and clumsy to handle.

Printing was invented in China during the T'ang Dynasty. From the year 868 we have the first examples of Chinese printing, in the form of small scrolls of Buddhist charms and prayers which were made to be inserted in a religious monument at the time of its consecration.⁴⁷ This was nearly six centuries before the date of Gutenberg's "invention of printing" in Europe; but the Western historians do not seem to have heard of this, to judge from our history books.

In this connection, last year when one of my sons was taking a course optimistically called "World History"; I glanced through his textbook and found a very short section on China, mostly devoted to Marco Polo's visit to the court of the Mongol Emperor, Khublai Khan, with a still shorter one on India, mainly describing the coming of the British. Actually, any book on World History, to give a fair treatment, would have to devote many more pages to Asia and its achievements, especially those which were passed on to the rest of the world.⁴⁸

Quite a number of Asia's contributions to world civilization have had to do with improvements in navigation and shipbuilding. When the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims went to visit India — as they began to do even before the T'ang dynasty made the route safer by new conquests—they usually journeyed overland by the Old Desert Road, but some of them returned by sea. One of these, Fa-hsien, described in some detail how he travelled from Ceylon to China in the early 5th century. He told how he had first reached Java, after sailing for some ninety days out

of sight of land, on a ship carrying more than two hundred men; then he described going on to North China aboard another large merchantman containing about 200 passengers and crew, again voyaging for three months without sighting land.⁴⁹ Whether these ships were Chinese or South Asian, it is clear that, already in the 5th century A.D., Asia had good-sized vessels — many times larger than those of Columbus — which would probably have been quite capable of crossing the Pacific.⁵⁰

Fa-hsien's account of his voyage graphically portrayed the hazards and uncertainties of long sea voyages without instruments for navigation; but the Chinese gradually invented many things to make long-range sea travel safer. Among these was the compass. This was originally a "south-pointing needle", used for geomantic calculations, but it was later developed into a regular mariner's compass. The Chinese passed this on to the Persian and Arab seamen, through whom it eventually reached Europe.

Less generally known, but equally important in the history of international shipping and world trade, were other aids to the science of navigation, especially prominent in the field of naval architecture. For example, the Chinese learned to construct ships with double bulkheads on the sides and bottom, so that if a ship ran aground or was rammed, the water might pour into the outer section without penetrating the inner hull. For more serious accidents, such as striking a sharp rock at full speed so that both thicknesses would be pierced, there were further bulkheads within, so that only a few compartments would be flooded, leaving enough watertight ones to keep the vessel afloat. Once, after a devastating typhoon on the South China Coast in the autumn of 1937, I saw half of a fishing boat being towed into Hong Kong harbor. The whole bow portion had been sheered away and lost, but the crew had remained safe on the stern section which kept intact due to this form of construction. Boats so built were also useful in another way, because fishermen could deliberately flood one or more compartments in order to keep their catch alive and safe from spoiling. Such construction is now employed almost universally for modern ships, in the Occident as well.

In addition to developing paddle boats that were worked by tread mills, long before the Westerners ever thought of this idea, the Chinese also devised a very efficient fore-and-aft rig, by which their sails could be more carefully trimmed than any used elsewhere, enabling them to sail closer to the wind in entering harbors or passing through narrow straits.⁵¹ In short, they showed singular inventive genius in this exceedingly practical field.

These nautical developments were even more appreciated by the Chinese when the great T'ang dynasty eventually collapsed. The new dynasty of the Sung, which took power after some fifty years of civil wars, was cut off from the rest of the continent of Asia by enemies. Tatar kingdoms lay to the north, hostile Tibetans ruled in the West,

and the Thais had a powerful state in the Southwest. Therefore, instead of facing inland, as China had always primarily done before this, the nation faced seaward and was compelled to develop an extensive maritime trade.

Already in the T'ang, what is now the city of Canton had acquired an extensive Arab colony, made up of arrivals by sea, and in the Sung the South China ports were probably fully as cosmopolitan as Ch'ang-an had been a few centuries earlier. A description of the cargoes in the foreign commerce of that period has been passed down to us by a scholar-official who had served in the port of Ch'uan-chou. He wrote of ivory tusks from Africa, paints, pigments, and precious stones, etc. from India, spices and rare woods from the East Indies, and many other exotic imports, with brief accounts of the realms that produced them.⁵² These came to China in return for fine silks and porcelains (true porcelain had only recently been invented in China). Fragments of Sung porcelain, as well as some pieces still intact, have been found throughout the Near East, in India, and on the west coast of Africa.⁵³

The Sung court was continually plagued by raids from the northern and western kingdoms, and finally, when it felt especially pressed by the ancestors of the later Manchus, it asked the help of another group, the Mongols. The Sung officials did not know much about them, and apparently thought them harmless; but after defeating the other "Northern Barbarians", the Mongols kept on coming, and eventually conquered China itself. It took them a long time, because their military methods were so primitive and brutal that, instead of breaking Chinese morale, they found stiffened resistance, until the clever strategy of Khublai Khan completed the conquest.

Meanwhile the Mongols had succeeded in conquering Central Asia, and over the Old Desert Road they poured into Persia and went up into Southern Russia; they even got as far as Hungary.⁵⁴ They were never really beaten in Europe, but came back to Asia voluntarily, because the death of their supreme leader, the Great Khan, made it necessary for the commanders to return to the main camp to help elect a new one. However, in the course of their European campaign the Mongols acquired some new influences.

In particular, they captured some Frenchmen in Poland, whom they brought back with them, and among these was a remarkable person named Guillaume Boucher, an artist and metalworker. They brought him back to their capital in the Gobi Desert (Karakorum), where he made for them some handsome silver ornaments. One of these was a large tree for the Court of the Great Khan, as a symbol of his rule, which also gave forth wine from its branches. (It was supposed to be crowned by a small angel which would trumpet from the top of the tree when the liquid was being poured; but Guillaume Boucher's talent, great as it was, was not quite equal to making the angel trumpet automatically. It was finally necessary to have a small boy concealed

under the roots of the silver tree, blowing through a tube to activate the angel's trumpet blasts.) Another of Boucher's constructions was an altar set for the private chapel of the Khan's wife, who had become interested in Christianity, but this, like the tree, has long since disappeared. His work had great renown at the time, but we know it now only by literary descriptions of his contemporaries, who marvelled at it.⁵⁵

Artists and artistic influences also travelled in the other direction — from East to West — as the Mongol rulers of Persia employed Chinese artisans to produce things for their court. As a result, from this time the Persian miniature painters and potters and silkwormers obtained both inspiration and new techniques from China, revolutionizing Persian portraiture and landscape painting, especially as seen in illustrations for books, and initiating radical new developments in Persian pottery, embroidery, and weaving. The new Persian painting techniques developed under Chinese inspiration were passed on to Turkey on the west, and were later carried down into India by the Moghuls. The influence of Chinese ceramics is also apparent in some of the Persian tile-work after this period, and in the tiles used by the Moghuls as well.⁵⁶

The Mongols, in order to rule their vast and sprawling realm, brought Russians to Persia, Chinese to Russia, and Arabs and Persians to China, to serve as officials in an alien land.⁵⁷ They deliberately scrambled the administration of their empire in this way, thinking it made for better rule. Apparently they felt that if there were Chinese ruling in China, for example, they might tend to raise revolts against the comparatively small ruling clique of Mongols, whereas, if they were governing in Russia, they would be far from home, and would thus be disinterested rulers, unable to become too intimate with the foreign people under their domination. In spite of such devices, the power of the Mongols did not last for long. In less than a hundred years their empire in China collapsed, and the Mongol empire in Persia soon fell also. The "Golden Horde" in Russia lasted the longest, preserving Tatar influences there well into the 15th century.

For a brief time, however, a single power governed most of Asia, and in the unified and cosmopolitan realm, many ideas passed back and forth, and the people of widely separated nations came to know each other better, either through direct experience from their own travels, or indirectly through reading about the journeys of others. A number of Europeans came to China over the Old Desert Road during this period — not only the renowned Marco Polo, but others such as William of Rubruck and John of Plano Carpini, who also reported what they had seen and helped to make Europeans more aware of the Far East.⁵⁸ The travels of these men still stand out, because they wrote about them, but there were also many nameless Europeans and Near Easterners, who came to China at this time as missionaries or traders. Meanwhile, whole armies of Mongols and their mercenaries went to out-of-the-way places, marching down to conquer Burma, travelling as far as Java in the

Indies, and sailing over to Japan in a vain attempt to extend their conquests still further eastward. (The last effort was thwarted by a typhoon which the Japanese hailed as "the Divine Wind", *Kamikaze*, — which also accounts for the name of the suicide planes with which they attempted to check a much later invasion of Japan in 1945.)

Among the military innovations which the Mongols employed to speed their conquests was gunpowder, which had been invented in China. We still do not know for certain whether it was the Chinese or some other people in East Asia who invented the cannon with which to use gunpowder more effectively; but the first recorded use of cannon seems to have been by the Jurchen Tatars against the Mongols during their conquest of North China. Before that, the Chinese had used gunpowder in war merely for rockets, or for explosive mines, to harass their enemies. The idea of using it in a tube — first a wooden or bamboo tube bound with iron hoops, and then finally an all-iron tube — originally appeared in the attempts to repulse the Mongols.⁵⁹

When the Chinese finally rose up to drive out the Mongols permanently, and established the Ming Dynasty (in 1368), their hatred of the alien rule exploded in a violent anti-foreign reaction. The Nestorian Christians and other missionaries — including the Roman Catholics, who had come to China before and after Marco Polo — all had to leave along with the foreign merchants and traders. The only aliens allowed to stay in China were the Mohammedans in the West and the Southwest, because they had adapted themselves more fully to Chinese life and freely cooperated in helping the Chinese to drive out the Mongols. Inevitably they, too, introduced Western Asian ideas and elements into the areas where they had settled.

The Ming Dynasty, as a period of anti-foreign reaction, tended to shut China off from the lands to the West, although there was still a little trade through Central Asia, along the Old Desert Road, during most of the period. Trade came largely in the form of "tribute missions", by which envoys from lesser states would bring gifts to the Chinese court and return with presents for their own rulers.⁶⁰ Sometimes the foreign kings, princes, or rajahs came in person. They were invariably impressed by what they saw, and thus the influence of Chinese culture spread widely throughout Asia, being copied to a greater or less degree in many courts, especially in the nearer ones such as Korea, and Annam in Indo-China.

In the early 15th century there was a brief revival of interest in trade by sea, and the third Ming Emperor sent a court eunuch named Cheng Ho on a series of seven voyages to establish trade and diplomatic relations with new areas. In the course of these trips, Cheng Ho got as far as the West Coast of Africa, bringing back a giraffe as a present to his Emperor. (It is hard to imagine how the poor animal ever survived in a low-decked Chinese junk, even though they doubtless cut a hole in the deck for his long neck.) When they came to Ceylon, the envoys

of the Son of Heaven felt that the King of that country was not sufficiently obsequious to their sovereign, since he refused to kneel before the tablet of the Emperor of China, so they carried him off aboard ship until he was "tamed". This is only one of several instances of Ming maritime imperialism. It was a time when the Chinese were making special efforts to impress the rest of the world with their prestige, and their methods were not always gentle. For a short while, then, Ming China was rather internationally minded; but after some thirty years court intrigues stirred up by the eunuchs, trouble with the still vigorous Mongols on the Northern frontiers, and difficulties with pirates — mostly Japanese adventurers — on the southeast coasts forced the Chinese to concentrate on domestic problems.

As Ming China became more isolated, Europe became more active. A glance at any map of Eurasia will show that Europe is only a vermiform appendix of Asia, territorially speaking, allowing for the map-makers' distortions — and the appendicitis was becoming very acute at this time. The Portuguese were among the first to feel the new restlessness. They began to voyage down the African coasts and sailed over to India, where they settled particularly at Goa on the west coast, and then came on around the Malaya Peninsula, reaching China and even Japan. Japan, which was visited by St. Francis Xavier, for a time readily adopted Portuguese ideas in the form of castle architecture, new developments in firearms, and even Christianity, which had numerous converts in the 16th century. However, the Portuguese in Japan proved somewhat too aggressive, and by 1600 this resulted in their expulsion and the outlawing of the Christian religion, which was bloodily suppressed.

In South China the Portuguese established a thriving settlement near Canton at the port of Macao, which still belongs to Portugal. There, too, they brought the Roman Catholic faith, and Macao became a religious center from which various European priests and missionaries travelled up to the Chinese court at Peking. In Peking they introduced many European ideas, especially new scientific concepts and methods which had grown out of the inspiration of Arab science in the later Middle Ages and the early Renaissance. In particular, they devised for the Chinese new astronomical instruments to improve upon the ones that had been introduced during the Mongol Dynasty under Near Eastern inspiration, they helped to adjust the Chinese calendar which had begun to develop irregularities, they taught cannon-casting and gunnery, and they brought in mechanical clocks to replace the old-fashioned sun dials and water clocks.⁶¹

Soon the Spanish came to the Philippines, using Manila as a base from which to engage in the China trade, as rivals to the Portuguese. Every three years a great ship, the "Acapulco Galleon", sailed from Manila to a port on the West coast of Mexico, bringing Chinese products to Mexico. From there some of them went ultimately to Peru. As a result, some Peruvian tapestries of the Colonial Period strongly re-

flected the influence of Ming Chinese silks, both in patterns and techniques.⁶²

Meanwhile, the focus of European interest was centered on India. At the beginning of the 17th century, the Portuguese monopoly on Indian trade was challenged by England, by Holland, and even by France and Denmark, and we find all these countries competing for a slice of the Indian trade under the banners of various East India Companies. In time these rivalries developed to the point where the representatives of European nations began to fight openly against each other, until the Dutch went on to concentrate in the East Indies, and the principal rivals were the English and the French. During the 18th century, the French power was broken in a series of wars. Finally, by the beginning of the 19th century, England had virtually all India in her power and had found means for controlling the rest of it.

The concentration on India spared China for a time, but she was having her own troubles from another quarter. In 1644 the Ming Dynasty was brought to an end by a bandit usurper who seized the Dragon Throne, and the Manchu tribesmen from beyond the Great Wall, who were invited in to help drive the bandit out, stayed in China, gradually conquering the whole nation. The Manchu conquests did not stop there; once again they extended the boundaries of the Chinese Empire deep into Central Asia, annexing Tibet, Northern Indo-China, and part of Burma to their realm. This extensive territory offered plenty of internal problems, so they became rather strongly isolationist as regards sea-borne trade and maritime contacts. This was also a time of very tight isolationism in Japan, which kept itself completely shut for two and a half centuries, from about 1600 to 1854.

In China, in spite of the Manchu policy against letting foreigners move about freely, the Europeans began to come anyway — especially the Portuguese and Italians, and later the British.⁶³ Some of the early British sea-captains were particularly headstrong, forcing their ships into ports where they were not wanted by threatening to use their cannon. It seems rather ironic that the compass, having been invented by the Chinese, helped the Europeans to get there by sea, and that they used gunpowder, which had also been invented by the Chinese, to try to force their trade on China.

During the early 18th century, there was a considerable influx of Roman Catholic missionaries into Peking, until a dispute broke out between two factions, the so-called Rites Controversy, regarding whether or not the Chinese converts could be permitted to retain some of their traditional beliefs. The Jesuits claimed that it was all right to allow a certain amount of reverence for one's ancestors, but the others argued that this was a form of worship, and hence idolatry. The matter was referred to Rome, and the Pope finally decided against the Jesuits, who were withdrawn from China. This spectacle of disunity among the foreigners did not make a good impression with the Manchus and

Chinese, and the general reaction was "a plague on both your houses;" followed by a withdrawal of imperial support, which made things very difficult for all missionaries for a long time after.⁶⁴

A number of European missionaries still stayed on, subordinating open teaching to the quiet spread of foreign ideas and cultural influences. Notable among these was Brother Castiglione, the Italian artist. He and his associates taught Western ideas of perspective painting, Western systems for laying out flower beds, and introduced simple European gadgets like watches and clock-work toys. They even helped to lay out the Summer Palace and its grounds in modified European style.⁶⁵ Unfortunately, it was usually only the superficial things from Europe that impressed the Chinese, just as it was the most trivial Chinese things that made an impression in Europe. This was the time of "Chinoiserie" in the European courts, when things in fancied "Chinese taste" were all the rage. For example, at Versailles and elsewhere, they tried to copy Chinese rock gardens and Chinese pavilions without remotely understanding the architectural principles by which the Chinese constructed them, so the general effect was quite ridiculous.⁶⁶ This is an example of interchange at the lowest practical level.

On the other hand, some of the missionaries also reported back more profound observations on Chinese life and thought. They presented fairly accurate pictures of Chinese philosophic systems and called attention to such progressive features as the Examination System for candidates for official office, which eventually led to the adoption of civil service systems in Europe. Their published letters influenced such distinguished European thinkers as Voltaire and Samuel Johnson, who sometimes made comments on Chinese philosophy which they had obtained third-hand from these sources.⁶⁷

In the 18th century China had an extremely high civilization, so it is no wonder that the missionaries were impressed — with some reservations — by what they saw. The culture of the Chinese court at that time probably excelled that of any contemporary European court, both in variety and in refinements. The Chinese knew it, as you can see by reading the letter of the Ch'ien Lung Emperor to George the Third of England. In the European view, the language he used in this letter seemed excessively arrogant, but to the Chinese of that time it would have merely seemed to convey a realistic appraisal of the diplomatic situation between China and the "foreign barbarians."⁶⁸

The 18th century was a time of great European interest in the Tea Trade with South China. With the tea itself, came tea utensils in porcelain and lacquer. The Europeans were so fond of the porcelains that they mounted especially handsome pieces in stands of gold or silver, "gilding the lily" in a fashion that would have horrified the Chinese. The Dutch went a step further, by painting European designs and landscapes right over the original Chinese patterns, producing monstrosities which are known to collectors as "clobbered wares."⁶⁹ The

secret of making fine porcelain was long sought in vain by Europeans, until in 1709 a man named Boettger, who lived near Dresden, accidentally discovered that one of the principal ingredients was a kind of local clay that was then being used to make powder for wigs. Through his efforts the porcelain industry was developed on a high scale in Dresden, but his secrets finally seeped out, so, by 1770, the French had established a Royal Porcelain Factory at Sèvres, outside of Paris, and others followed.

Along with the tea, porcelains and lacquer, the Europeans took home many silks, carved ivory, and other curios, which found a great popularity and a ready market in the West. In order to pay for all these things, it was necessary to find things that the Chinese wanted in order to develop a system of barter. The Americans, when they entered the China trade, about 1795, knew that the Chinese court was anxious to get furs for winter hats and robes, so they developed a specialized three-cornered trade. Sailing up to Alaska or the west coast of Canada (now British Columbia), they would take on furs and transport them to Canton, where they traded them, and with the proceeds they bought sandalwood in the Sandwich Islands (modern Hawaii), which they took back to Canton and sold for incense, taking payment in tea and silks.¹⁰

This method worked all right for the Americans, but the British had to have some other means of exchange, preferably based on their Indian empire, so they began to carry Persian opium in considerable quantities from India to China. The more high-minded Chinese officials naturally objected, and the British fought two wars, the First and Second Opium Wars, to force the Chinese to continue the demoralizing trade. This was a black page in nineteenth century European imperialism, but it was by no means the only one as far as China was concerned.

As a result of being beaten in these wars and being torn apart by rebellions and internal dissensions within their nation, the Manchu rulers of China were forced to open various treaty ports along the coast to foreign trade and shipping, the so-called "treaty ports", where the foreigners were to have special rights and concessions, such as the privilege of being tried in their own courts. Many missionaries also came, particularly representatives of numerous Protestant sects. The treaty ports thus became centers for diffusion of Western ideas and Western beliefs, as well as foreign commercial wares.

With the opening of the treaty ports, the whole economy of China shifted once more. Instead of looking toward Inner Asia and basing a good deal of its commerce on the caravan trade with Central Asia and lands beyond, as far as Russia, China once again became coast-oriented, and the ports drained out most of China's resources. As this tendency quickened in the 1880's and early '90's, China was compelled to make ever new concessions. In particular she had railroads forced on her, over routes which did not help very much to improve internal communica-

tions, but which were primarily intended to bring goods and raw materials out to the sea for transshipment. To pay for the railroads, other concessions, and the various indemnities imposed by foreign nations, the Chinese Government had to forfeit its customs and postal revenues, so the drain continued on an ever-increasing scale.

Meanwhile, China had never seen such a concentration of vastly different foreign traits, foreign goods, and foreign ideas as were now apparent in her larger cities; and individual Chinese had never been under greater pressure to adopt foreign ways and customs. They reacted in different fashions. Many of the more adaptable residents of the cities more directly under foreign influence quickly took to European ways as a means toward personal gain. Many of the more thoughtful Chinese were impressed by Western medicine, Western educational methods, and Western technology, and they helped to establish schools in which their children could learn about these, often retaining the older ways for themselves. Still other thinkers deplored the obvious evil effects of Westernization in other directions, and its apparent gradual destruction of old Chinese customs and traditional values; but, since the old ways were so fast being discredited, they felt that the only hope of national survival lay in adopting Western thoughts and methods and seeking some way to adjust them to Chinese needs without a complete rejection of the best features in the old tradition. Many of the extreme conservatives were completely opposed to any Westernization whatsoever, and this helped to encourage the Boxer Rebellion, which once more brought foreign troops to China and put the Western powers in still firmer control. The strain on the already damaged economy and on the antiquated Imperial government was too great, and in spite of belated attempts at reforms, the dynasty collapsed.

After the fall of the Manchus in 1911, some of the more progressive Chinese attempted to form a democracy on Western models, but they had many setbacks, and until 1927, the country was largely divided among the conflicting realms of rapacious warlords. In that year, one of these warlords, Chiang K'ai-shek, became paramount. In the late 1930's and early '40's the pretense of democracy was gradually abandoned. In the face of Japanese threats to engulf China as she had already swallowed up Manchuria, the National Government made a belated attempt to achieve greater Chinese unity by trying to copy some of the more unpleasant aspects of European totalitarianism, including secret police systems (several at the same time), concentration camps, widespread censorship of ideas, etc. Such retrogressive methods naturally proved unpopular, and it was partly in reaction against them that the Chinese people rose so unanimously against Chiang K'ai-shek. Paradoxically, however, they have tried to complete the "Unfinished Revolution" toward modernization by embracing another European political aberration, Communism. The Chinese Communist state, in its philosophy and practice, represents the ultimate attack on traditional Chinese ideas and values by Western concepts and Western technology, as filtered and

in some cases greatly distorted by the Russians. It has already made many changes in the lives of the Chinese — far more changes, more drastic ones, and in a shorter time, than in any previous attempts at Westernization — but the ultimate results, for good or ill, cannot yet be foreseen.

In the meantime, the peoples of the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and lastly Japan, were also subjected to much the same pressures from the West, in varying degrees. Those in India, who had been held even more firmly under foreign imperial control for a longer period, managed to digest more gradually and more successfully some of the contributions of Western cultural and material life, while clinging tenaciously to many of their old traditions and spiritual values, and they finally attained their own rule under two nations. The peoples of Southeast Asia had an even greater problem of assimilation, since their culture was already largely composed of foreign elements from India and China, and they have had the problem of coordinating these with a third strain, from the West. There, as in China herself, the ultimate issues are still in doubt.

This leaves Japan, which was forcibly roused from two and a half centuries of isolation by Commodore Perry's American fleet in 1854. In spite of the brusque way in which this was accomplished, the Japanese managed to adapt themselves rapidly to foreign ways and foreign methods, in a manner which enabled her to regain full control of her own destinies, without sacrificing too much of her traditional high culture. Unfortunately, when the Japanese accepted and developed Western-style industrialism, Western governmental forms, Western means of education, and Western military methods, the last assumed too prominent a function. The military aspect of Westernization got out of hand, and made it all too easy for the Japanese to pick up the fascist virus from Europe. This ultimately led them to risk the over-extended policy of foreign conquest which finally brought them close to complete disaster. Once again, however, they have rallied remarkably; and as yet they do not seem to have been very much tempted by that other questionable European export, Communism. Meanwhile, the West has become more aware of Japanese civilization since World War II, and some Japanese principles of architecture, for example, have begun to influence Western building techniques.

To conclude, it should now be apparent that the various parts of the Old World have long been linked and interconnected by the interchange of ideas, religions, symbols, customs, tools, and techniques, to an extent which has seldom been fully realized, and which has certainly not been recognized by the writers of our history books. We have seen that in the past there have been a great many cultural currents from West to East, and back from East to West, currents that brought spiritual ideas and religious symbols, material ideas and practical artifacts, to link the nations of the world together. In the last three centuries the

tide has swept powerfully from West to East; but there have also been back eddies, and one day the direction of the stream may change again, to carry ideas and influences the other way.

(1956)

1. See E. E. Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient Near East*, London and New York, 1941, pp. 39, 80, 84, 86, 112, etc.
2. This continuity along a very narrow way, with alien features on both sides, has been stressed by Professor Lauriston Ward. He has also emphasized that it was the basic ideas in the pottery which were the same; for, in spite of many resemblances, there were also differences in the pottery of the different areas along the way.
3. Chinese tradition tells of a previous dynasty, the Hsia; but archaeology has not yet confirmed the fact that it ever existed.
4. For a concise account of the early development of Chinese civilization, see L. C. Goodrich, *A Short History of the Chinese People*, 2nd ed., New York, 1951, Chapter 1. Even the recent ideas are rapidly being rendered obsolete by new archeological discoveries in China. See Hsia Nai, "Our Neolithic Ancestors," *China Reconstructs*, Vol 5, May, 1956.
5. The best account yet written of the remarkable civilization of the Shang is H. G. Creel, *The Birth of China*, New York, 1937.
6. The 19th century French scholar Terrien de Lacouperie tried to prove a very direct connection between the ancient Chinese script and the cuneiform writing of Mesopotamia, but he discredited his case by overstating it.
7. Establishing a reliable calendar was considered an important function of the Ancient Chinese priest-kings.
8. The dates for Zoroaster's life and teachings have long been in dispute, but Herzfeld, in *Zoroaster and His World*, Princeton, 1947, (esp. p. 30), clearly demonstrated that he probably lived between 570 and 500 B.C.
9. See Goodrich, *Short History*, p. 27 ff.
10. The University Museum has a small exhibition of examples of relics from this early Indus Valley culture, including seals showing samples of the writing. As this writing has not yet been found in any long inscriptions, it has not been possible to decipher it.
11. The Greek sources knew this Indian sage as Calanus. See W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, Boston, 1956, p. 110.
12. Contrast the comments of W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, 2nd ed., Cambridge, 1951, with the rather critical remarks of R. B. Whitehead, "Notes on the Indo-Greeks," *Numismatic Chronicle*, 5th series, Vol. 20 (1940) London, pp. 89-122.
13. Previous claims have been based on some remarks of the Chinese traveller Chang Ch'ien on his return from Bactria, and on more recent claims that the Bactrian Greeks used Chinese ores for their coinage. For a refutation of these views, see S. Cammann, "Archaeological Evidence for Chinese Contacts with India during the Han Dynasty," *Sinologica*, Vol. 5, no. 1 (1956) Basel, pp. 1-8.
14. See Goodrich, *Short History*, p. 28.
15. Even though the Chinese got iron rather late, they soon developed superior techniques of using it, and led the world in fine iron castings, (although India had far better steel). See T. T. Read, "Chinese Iron," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 2, no. 1 (1937) p. 398. For Indian steel, see note 25, below.
16. See O. S. Johnson, *A Study of Chinese Alchemy*, Shanghai, 1928. F. S. Taylor, in *The Alchemists*, New York, 1949, pp. 68 and 75, tries to deny the connection, claiming that the ends were different in the Chinese and Alexandrian systems; but the important thing is that the means were the same, and it is the means which led to the development of important phases in Western science.
17. The relationship, if any, between Attila's raiders and these far Eastern Huns is still being disputed.
18. For Chang Ch'ien's adventures and his reports (in both English and Chinese), see

- F. Hirth, "The Story of Chang K'ien, China's Pioneer in Western Asia," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 37 (1917) p. 89 ff.
19. For the silk trade between China and Rome, see F. Hirth, *China and the Roman Orient*, Leipzig and Munich, 1885, and C. G. Seligman, "The Roman Orient and the Far East," *Antiquity*, Vol. 11 (1937) pp. 5-30.
 20. See W. H. Schoff, *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, New York and London, 1912, p. 265.
 21. See B. Laufer, "The Story of Pinna and the Syrian Lamb," *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 28 (1915) pp. 103-128.
 22. For a translation of this interesting work, see the reference in note 20, above.
 23. See R. E. M. Wheeler, *Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers*, New York, 1955, esp. pp. 145-153.
 24. *Ibid.*, p. 125. For further information regarding relations between Rome and India, see also Gisbert Combaz, *L'Inde et l'Orient Classique*, Paris, 1937, and the reference in the following note.
 25. See W. H. Schoff, "The Eastern Iron Trade of the Roman Empire," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 35 (1915) pp. 224-239.
 26. See Wheeler, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-125; C. Rasanayagam Mudaliyar, "The Tamil Kingdom of Jaffna," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch*, Vol. 24, no. 75 (1922) p. 43; and John Still, "Roman Coins found in Ceylon," *JRASC*, Vol. 19, no. 58 (1907) pp. 161-190, esp. p. 170.
 27. This trade was not all one-way, as Chinese objects have also been found in Ceylon, especially in the form of pottery and porcelain fragments, although these mostly date from a later period. See *JRASC*, New Series, Vol. 3 (1951) p. 88; and, for later Chinese finds, *JRASC*, N. S. Vol. 2 (1952) p. 57.
 28. See H. G. Quaritch Wales, "Recent Malayan Excavations," *JRAS* (G. B. & I.), 1946, p. 142, for the finding of Roman beads in Malaya. See also *BEFEO*, Vol. 27 (1927) pl. 49, facing p. 500, for a fine Roman lamp excavated in Siam.
 29. See L. P. Briggs, *The Ancient Khmer Empire*, in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, XLI Philadelphia, 1951, pp. 16-17.
 30. Hirth, *China and the Roman Orient*, p. 42. The jugglers claimed they had come from the Roman ruler An-Tun, who is assumed to have been the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus; but whether he actually sent them is of course unknown.
 31. See G. Coedès, "Fouilles en Cochinchine," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 10 (1947) pp. 193-199, which describes in detail some of the Roman finds.
 32. See J. Hackin et al., *Nouvelles recherches archéologiques à Begram (1939-1940)*, in *Mémoires de la Délégation Française en Afghanistan*, XI, pp. 93-150 and 151-155. See also Wheeler, *Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers*, pp. 162-165.
 33. The recent discovery by Daniel Schlumberger of a huge Kushan fire temple at Surkh Kotal, in Afghanistan, shows that the Kushan rulers also patronized other religions. (I visited this site in the autumn of 1953.)
 34. For one of the latest accounts, with references to previous ones, see R. E. M. Wheeler, "Romano-Buddhist Art: an old problem restated," *Antiquity*, Vol. 23 (March, 1949) pp. 4-18.
 35. Professor E. Dale Saunders has a book ~~in press~~ on the subject of the Buddhist mudras.
 36. Hu Shih, "The Indianization of China," in *Independence, Convergence, and Borrowing*, Cambridge, 1937, pp. 219-247.
 37. See P. C. Bagchi, *Studies in the Tantras*, Calcutta, 1939, pp. 48-49, and S. Cammann, "Suggested Origin of the Tibetan Mandala Paintings," *The Art Quarterly*, Vol. 13 (1950) esp. pp. 116-117.
 38. For the most authoritative account of the life of Mani, with newly calculated dates, see H. C. Puech, *Le Manichéisme*, Paris, 1949, pp. 32-54.
 39. The fullest account yet written of the Manichaeans in China is Chavannes and Pelliot, "Traité manichéen," *Journal Asiatique*, Series 10, Vol. 18 (1911) pp. 499-617, and Series 11, Vol. 1 (1913) pp. 99-199, 261-394.
 40. See P. Pelliot, "Les Traditions manichéennes au Fou-kien," *T'oung Pao*, Series 2, Vol. 21 (1923) pp. 193-208.

41. See P. Y. Saeki, *The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China*, Tokyo, 1951.
42. See B. Gyllensvard, *Chinese Gold and Silver in the Kempe Collection*, Stockholm, 1957, p. 20 ff.
43. See Carl Schuster, "A Comparative Study of Motives in Western Chinese Folk Embroidery," *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. 2 (1937) Peking, esp. pp. 33-40.
44. See E. O. Reischauer, *Japan Past and Present*, New York, pp. 21-25.
45. The fully illustrated catalogue of the Shosoin treasures, the *Shosoin go-butsu zuroku*, Tokyo, 1933-38, is in the University Museum Library.
46. See T. F. Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westward*, 2nd ed. revised by L. C. Goodrich, New York, 1955.
47. See ref. in previous note.
48. For some of China's principal contributions to world technology, see J. Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. 1, Cambridge, England, 1954, p. 246.
49. See H. A. Giles, *The Travels of Fa Hsien (399-414 A.D.)*, Cambridge, England, 1923, pp. 76-80. Very large sea-going merchant ships are depicted among the eighth-century reliefs at Borobudur in Java.
50. The possibility of contacts between China (and Southeast Asia) and Middle America, before Columbus, is being more and more seriously considered. See, for example, Gordon Eckholm, "Is American Indian Culture Asiatic?" *Natural History*, Vol. 59, no. 8 (1950) p. 344, and articles by the same author, and others, in *Asia and North America: Trans-Pacific Contacts, American Antiquity*, Vol. 18, no. 3, Part 2, (Jan. 1953).
51. Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, p. 246. He also says that the Chinese has the fore-and-aft rig long before it was invented in the West, but this does not seem to be true. See L. Casson, "The Sails of the Ancient Mariners," *Archaeology*, Vol. 7 (Dec. 1954) pp. 214-219, for new evidence that the Mediterranean world had this at a relatively early date.
52. See Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, St. Petersburg, 1911.
53. For Chinese relations with Africa, see J. J. L. Duyvendak, *China's Discovery of Africa*, London, 1949.
54. These campaigns are graphically described in M. Prawdin, *The Mongol Empire: Its Rise and Legacy*, New York, 1940.
55. See Leonardo Olschki, *Guillaume Boucher*, Baltimore, 1946.
56. For Chinese influences on Moghul India see the comments by John Irwin, "Origins of the 'Oriental Style' in English Decorative Art," *Burlington Magazine*, 1955, p. 110.
57. Among the most famous of these Near Easterners in Yüan Dynasty China was Seyyid ed-Jel, who is still remembered in Yunnan Province for his wisdom and philanthropy and his introduction of new irrigation systems.
58. For some of their adventures, see L. Olschki, *Marco Polo's Precursors*, Baltimore, 1943.
59. See Goodrich, *Short History*, pp. 152-154.
60. For a careful study of this "tribute system" see J. K. Fairbank and S. Y. Teng, "On the Ch'ing Tributary System," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 6 (1941) esp. pp. 135-148.
61. Two of the most famous missionary savants were Frs. Adam Schall and Ferdinand Verbiest. For a partial biography of the former, see A. W. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Dynasty* Vol. 2, 1944, p. 890.
62. For Chinese influence in the textiles of Colonial Peru, see S. Cammann, "Chinese Mandarin Squares," *Bulletin of the University Museum*, Vol. 17, no. 3 (June, 1953) pp. 32-33, and figs. 31 and 32.
63. For European contacts with China, see Ch'en Shou-pi, "Sino-European Contacts since the Discovery of the Sea Route: a Bibliographical Note," *Nankai Social and Economic Quarterly*, Vol. 8, (April, 1935) pp. 44-74.
64. See A. S. Rosso, O.F.M., *Apostolic Legations to China of the Eighteenth Century*, South Pasadena, 1948.
65. See C. B. Malone, *History of the Peking Summer Palaces Under the Ch'ing Dynasty*, Urbana, Ill., 1934.

66. See O. Siren, *China and Gardens of Europe of the 18th Century*, New York, 1950, esp. pp. 15-18, 41.
67. These letters and reports appeared in a long series entitled, *Memoires concernant l'histoire, les sciences, les arts, les mœurs, les usages des chinois par les missionnaires de Pé-kin*, published in Paris at intervals during the mid-eighteenth century. For a fine account of their influence in Europe, see Derk Bodde, *China's Gifts to the West*, in *Asiatic Studies in American Education, I*, Washington, 1942.
68. This letter was also quoted by Dr. Bodde in his recent lecture. A translation can be found in E. Backhouse and J. O. P. Bland, *Annals and Memoirs of the Court of Peking*, Boston and New York, 1914, pp. 382-85.
69. See R. L. Hobson, *Handbook of the Pottery and Porcelain of the Far East*, London, 1937, p. 124, text and illustrations.
70. One of the best accounts of the Canton trade, by an American eye-witness, is Wm. C. Hunter, *The Fan Kwae at Canton*, London, 1882.

CHINA:

OLD SOCIETY AND NEW FORCES

Derk Bodde

Some of you, I am afraid, may have been lured here today under the false impression that I am going to tell you all about the latest developments in present-day Communist China. That, however, is not my topic. During most of this hour I shall be describing the traditional social system which existed in pre-modern China. Only then, toward the end, will I say something about the new forces which, beginning in the nineteenth century, moved in upon that old society. But if many present-day topics are omitted from the formal talk, perhaps we can return to them during the question period.

I'll begin with an incident which happened in China back in the year 1793. It was in that year that King George III of England sent an embassy to the Emperor of China in Peking in the hope that diplomatic relations could be established between China and England. The embassy was well received at the Chinese court, and its ambassador was entertained and given presents. Nevertheless, his request for diplomatic relations was not granted. On the contrary, the Emperor of China replied to King George III in a very famous letter from which I will read you a few excerpts:¹

You, O King, live beyond the confines of many seas, nevertheless, impelled by your humble desire to partake of the bene-

fits of our civilization, you have dispatched a mission respectfully bearing your memorial. Your Envoy has crossed the seas and paid his respects at my Court on the anniversary of my birthday. To show your devotion, you have also sent offerings of your country's produce.

I have perused your memorial: the earnest terms in which it is couched reveal a respectful humility on your part, which is highly praiseworthy. In consideration of the fact that your Ambassador and his deputy have come a long way with your memorial and tribute, I have shown them high favour and have allowed them to be introduced into my presence. . . .

Swaying the wide world, I have but one aim in view, namely, to maintain a perfect governance and to fulfill the duties of the State: strange and costly objects do not interest me. If I have commanded that the tribute offerings sent by you, O King, are to be accepted, this was solely in consideration for the spirit which prompted you to dispatch them from afar. Our dynasty's majestic virtue has penetrated unto every country under Heaven, and Kings of all nations have offered their costly tribute by land and sea. As your Ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things. I set no value on objects strange or ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures. This then is my answer to your request to appoint a representative at my Court, a request contrary to our dynastic usage, which would only result in inconvenience to yourself. I have expounded my wishes in detail and have commanded your tribute Envoys to leave in peace on their homeward journey. It behoves you, O King, to respect my sentiments and to display even greater devotion and loyalty in future, so that, by perpetual submission to our Throne, you may secure peace and prosperity for your country hereafter. . . .

This, then, was the reply of the Emperor of China to King George III of England in the year 1793. It reflected the fact that China was at that time, superficially speaking at least, in many ways superior to the Western world. On the material side, there was very little that the West could then contribute to China. As a matter of fact, one of the very few mechanical things which it had and China lacked was the clock. Clocks were brought as presents to the Chinese court in tremendous quantities, with the result that one of the world's finest collections of eighteenth century European clocks is today to be found in the palaces of Peking.

Now let us see what was the kind of society which could generate such a strong ethnocentrism. In the first place, we have to keep in mind one fundamental fact, namely, that in the old China there existed far less social diversity and far fewer social groups mutually competing for power and economic rewards than was true of the Western world —

at least in recent times. John Stuart Mill, in his famous essay *On Liberty*, written in 1859, has this to say about the West:²

What has made the European family of nations an improving, instead of a stationary portion of mankind? Not any superior excellence in them, which when it exists, exists as the effect, not as the cause; but their remarkable diversity of character and culture. Individuals, classes, nations, have been extremely unlike one another: they have struck out a great variety of paths, each leading to something valuable.

I think Mill hit the nail on the head in this account of the Europe of his time. The diversity he describes made for what was regarded as progress. Some of us today are perhaps less certain as to whether it really was progress, but, at any rate, there was great change. In China, on the other hand, a relatively static situation existed for a very long period, and this phenomenon undoubtedly derives from the fact that, beginning already in early times, only a few distinct social groups existed. Hence there was less opportunity than in Europe for the competition between diverse groups and ideas which could lead to change. What I am referring to here is the Chinese empire as it existed following its first establishment around 200 B.C. Before that time there had, of course, been a China, but it consisted merely of a multitude of small, mutually warring states. It is this pre-imperial period, then, that was China's great age of political and intellectual diversity. Around 200 B.C., however, these states were forcibly united by the ruler of one of them into a single all-embracing empire, and since then such a universal empire has remained the accepted norm down to the year 1911, when the monarchy was overthrown and the Chinese Republic established.

Now let us see what were some of the prime social elements in this imperial China. First of all, of course, there was the emperor himself. According to Confucian theory — and Confucianism was the orthodox ideology of the Chinese state — the emperor was a wise man, a sage, as well as a ruler. In theory (though unfortunately not always in practice) he possessed the qualities attributed by Plato to the philosopher-king. His power was supreme and extended not only over China itself, but also over all surrounding areas. Theoretically, indeed, the entire world was subject to the Chinese emperor, and this theory was bolstered by the historical fact that China was in actuality the undisputed cultural center of its part of the world in East Asia. Thus all other countries and peoples, when they came to China for trading purposes, did so in the guise of tributary nations. Through their voluntary act of bringing tribute, they recognized China's superior status as the center of the civilized world. This universalistic idea is reflected in the document I have just read to you, and during the nineteenth century, when China was forcibly opened by the West to the outside world, it became a major cause for tension between China and the West.

Within China itself, the emperor was supposed to rule over his people in a benevolent way, just as a father would rule his own family. Commonly, indeed, the emperor was referred to as "the parent of the people", and his empire was regarded simply as an enlargement of the fundamental family unit. Thus the principles operative within a single family were believed to be equally applicable to the more complex relationships found in society as a whole.

Unfortunately, however, as we know only too well, many of the emperors of China were in actual fact not sages at all. Some of them, indeed, were very bad rulers, though the Chinese average in this respect was surely no worse than that found in other parts of the world. Beginning, however, at a very early time — long before the creation of the empire around 200 B.C. — a theory emerged which could be used to justify political change, and which was known as that of T'ien Ming, the "Mandate of Heaven". According to this theory, the emperor's rule is sanctioned by the divine Mandate which he has received from Heaven, the concrete manifestation of which lies in the extent to which his people willingly accept his rule. As long as he rules reasonably well, therefore, he continues to enjoy the Mandate of Heaven and the people support him. Should he rule badly, however, the people then express their dissatisfaction, and these signs of dissatisfaction are regarded as evidence that Heaven is withdrawing its Mandate from him. Thereupon it becomes legitimate for the people to start a rebellion against him and, if they can, to establish a new ruler in his place. This has happened many times in Chinese history, and explains why China has witnessed so many dynasties ruled by different families.

The Chinese emperor was therefore very definitely not a divine being, so that the Chinese situation fundamentally differed in this respect from that in Japan, for example, where throughout history there has been only one ruling line, allegedly descended from the Sun Goddess. To this day the Chinese term for "revolution" is *ko ming*, which literally means "transferring the Mandate", in other words, shifting it from one ruling house to another.

Apart from the emperor himself, a nobility did exist in China, of course, but it was numerically small and exercised very little political power. The nobles held estates, possessed wealth, and led lives of luxury, but they were not the administrators of the empire. This task was performed by a class of salaried civilian bureaucrats or government officials, constituting what we in the west know as the "mandarins". This word, which is not of Chinese origin, was invented by the Portuguese when they came to China in the sixteenth century — according to one theory, from the Latin word *mandare*, "to give orders". For the mandarins were indeed the men in China who gave the orders. They ran the country.

These men were not a hereditary caste, but were recruited for government service through a very unique device, the famous Chinese

civil service examination system. Throughout the empire at regular intervals — every three years or so — examinations were held which were open to almost all members of the population and were grounded in the Confucian classics. The mortality rate of those taking them was extremely high (by comparison, you students here certainly have it easy!), for the candidates who passed were less than ten percent of the total. The successful candidates, moreover, usually underwent further examinations before receiving definite government appointment. There was, in fact, a whole series of examinations; those held in the local prefectures, then those in the provincial capitals, and finally, for the hardy few who survived, those held in the national capital. At the end of them, one acquired a grade in the nine main ranks of the Chinese civil service, and thereby became eligible for government position.

Such, then, through most of China's imperial age, was the way in which the men who governed the country were selected. It was, I think you will agree, in some ways a very democratic system as compared with the stress on birth, wealth, and the like characteristic of pre-modern Europe. Almost anyone could take the examinations, and, if he were successful, could enter a government career, which, in China, constituted *the* main avenue to power and prestige.

On the other hand, the system had its defects. The examinations were based too narrowly on the Confucian classics, which were strongly humanistic and moralistic, rather than specifically practical. Furthermore, the government maintained no public system of education whereby people in any large numbers could acquire the high degree of knowledge demanded by the examinations. As a consequence, only very few persons had the wealth and leisure necessary for the long years of private study required to prepare for the examinations. Thus we find a situation in which, on the one hand, each individual had to prove his own intellectual worth in order to become a government official, but in which, on the other, the men who entered government service tended to come from a small sector of the total population. The tendency was for certain families, having a long tradition of education behind them, to supply generation after generation of civil servants. In effect, therefore, the mandarins were self-perpetuating as a class, even though they were not so as individuals. This ruling group of highly educated scholar-officials never comprised more than a small fraction of the total population — probably, with dependents, no more than ten per cent at the most.

The great bulk of China's population, on the other hand — perhaps three-quarters of the total — consisted of peasants; peasants who were illiterate and who toiled throughout their lives to wring a maximum return from the small plots of land which they cultivated. They were either small landowners or tenants renting their lands from landlords, for in China there were comparatively few large estates cultivated by great masses of hired labor, such as often existed in the West.