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CHINA THROUGH WESTERN EYES: THE NORTH CHINA HERALD, 1850-1900

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

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Mary W. R. Newton

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the perceptions of China expressed in the North China Herald from 1850 to 1900. The North China Herald was an English-language newspaper published by and for the English and American residents of Shanghai, and reported the concerns of the merchants and missionaries who had ridden the tide of imperialism to China.

In the nineteenth century the Western powers (Europe and America) were intent on extending their economic, political, and cultural influence throughout the world. They arrived in China hoping to open the self-sufficient giant to world trade and Christianity. The primary concern of Westerners in China was the expansion of trade. In the fifty years covered by this study, the writers in the North China Herald continued to push for the opening of China's interior to foreign traders. They clamored for increased access via inland waterways, the building of railways, and the legalization of the opium trade. They pursued these aims by both diplomatic and military means.

Western views of Chinese society were also expressed in the Herald. The traders were baffled by the Chinese class system, which placed merchants at the bottom of a

four-tiered hierarchy beneath scholar/officials, peasants and artisans. The treatment of women in Chinese society was also puzzling to the Westerners, especially to missionaries, who decried the practices of footbinding, female infanticide and female slavery.

In the half-century covered by this thesis, the North China Herald encouraged political reform and the modernization of China's military. The Western merchants felt that officials educated in the Confucian classics were hostile to trade, and hoped for a generation of more commercially minded leaders in China. A strong military was seen as necessary to ensure the flow of goods and as protection against bandits and uprisings.

Western residents of Shanghai showed great interest in Chinese philosophy, literature and art. The Confucian classics were the objects of much attention, having been translated into English in the mid-nineteenth century by James Legge. However, the classics were often studied in a negative way, with the hope that by understanding the basis of Chinese civilization that civilization could be changed and made Christian.

The emphasis of the articles in the Herald changed over the fifty years of this study, shifting from the importance of trade to diplomatic recognition of the Western powers to social aims and finally to the necessity for political and military modernization. What remained

unchanged was the Westerners' conviction that their way was also the best way for China.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A dominant, aggressive, industrial Western society thrust its merchants, missionaries, and diplomats upon an agrarian and Confucian Chinese empire in the nineteenth century. The cultural conflict that followed revealed deep differences in the world view and values of China and the West.

The Western intrusion upon the secluded Middle Kingdom raises many questions concerning its relationship with the Chinese. Why did the British promote economic, social, and political modernization in China? Why did they view Confucianism as counterproductive in government? Did they realistically assess their ability to have considerable impact on China's economy, society, government, and cultural life? Did their experience in China modify their early perceptions and goals?

"China's response to the West" is a major theme in the study of modern Chinese history, and the very concept implies Western dominance and limited Chinese resistance. However, Westerners in nineteenth-century China found that it was no simple task to impose their values and technology on a Confucian civilization. The West had to learn new ways of compromise and accommodation with the Chinese who

had developed a patient and passive diplomacy which limited and deterred Western advances and created great frustration among the foreign intruders.

China was the most populous state in the world and the possibilities for international trade with China appeared boundless. However, China was self-sufficient and had no aggressive interest beyond her own borders. The emperor, or Son of Heaven, headed a Confucian bureaucracy which ruled the agrarian society. The tenets of Confucianism were based on ethical rather than legal principles. Through millenia China could boast of a highly cultured state and the world's longest "uninterrupted" history. Her power and prosperity had attracted many Asian tributary missions as well as diplomatic and trade missions from Europe and Russia. This bolstered China's self-concept as the Middle Kingdom, the "center of the universe" which had nothing to learn from outside "barbarians." However, corrupt officials, a burgeoning population, and a lack of interest in scientific and industrial development had weakened the empire by the nineteenth century, making China more vulnerable to Western demands.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the West was imperialistic and capitalistic. Many Westerners accepted the theory of Social Darwinism. According to this theory, overseas expansion was justified. Expansion would

provide new markets for the increased production made possible by industrialization, and would also offer new areas for capital investment. The adherents of Social Darwinism extolled free economic competition, and interpreted the accumulation of wealth and power as proof of one's "fitness." The conquest and exploitation of weaker countries or peoples was justified by the same rationale. Although Westerners had admired China's advanced civilization in the eighteenth century, the weakness of the Chinese government and economy in the nineteenth century led to exploitation by the self-confident entrepreneurs of the West. In addition, the Christian missionaries took upon themselves the task of "saving the heathen" and extolling Western values and knowledge.[1]

Western involvement in Chinese affairs increased rapidly in the latter half of the nineteenth century, as evidenced by the establishment of a British newspaper in Shanghai, the North China Herald (NCH). The NCH emerged as a product of the age of imperialism. At the time when the sun never set on the British Empire, the Union Jack generally followed the trader, and the newspaperman was

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[1]For the changing Western concept of China, see Raymond Dawson, The Chinese Chameleon: An Analysis of European Conceptions of Chinese Civilization (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

not far behind.[2] English-language newspapers were usually established wherever the power of the empire reached. This study tries to put in historical perspective the manner in which some Westerners, mainly British and Americans, perceived the Chinese while living and working in their midst, using commentary concerning the Chinese people and their institutions which the NCH provided. The Herald was a mirror which reflected the perceptions of those Western men and women who labored in China as merchants, missionaries and diplomats, and it offers insight into the process of Sino-Western relations.

The NCH was chosen as a source for this study because it marked the beginning of sustained Western language journalism in China. It was published in Shanghai, placing it in close proximity to many major Western mercantile firms and missionary enterprises. Furthermore, the prestige of the newspaper's contributors gave credence to views expressed therein. The consistent policies and uninterrupted publication of the NCH provide a continuous portrayal of a segment of Western perceptions of China by some British and Americans in the nineteenth century.

This study approaches the Western perceptions of the Chinese through four often intertwined areas: economy,

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[2]Louis Heren, "Fleet Street and the Free Press," Saturday Review (June 11, 1977), p. 24.

society, government, and high culture. The trader was accompanied by the missionary and the diplomat, and soon they were involved in almost every facet of Chinese life. The North China Herald was established to serve the Western merchants in China, particularly in Shanghai. It began as a market report, but eventually broadened its scope to include national and international news. Western missionaries, diplomats, and military men were among the distinguished contributors to the newspaper. The NCH benefitted from the services of many long-term British and American residents in China who observed and reflected on the Chinese and their institutions and reported their ideas in this Shanghai newspaper.

The major interest of the Westerners in China was trade. Their unrealistically high expectations of the Chinese market resulted in frequent clashes with the Ch'ing government. The Western introduction of opium to achieve a favorable balance of trade gave rise to bitter discord that was difficult to redress. The West's insatiable desire for expansion of trade was instrumental in the intense political, military, and diplomatic manipulation to open more treaty ports in China. Furthermore, Western merchants exerted strong pressure on the Ch'ing government to open up the interior, especially the Yangtze Valley, to foreign trade. The patent disregard for the Middle Kingdom's

resistance to trade concessions resulted in conflict throughout the period under consideration.

The British and Americans measured Chinese society by nineteenth-century Western standards. Confucian thought divided the Chinese people into four classes: scholar-officials, farmers, artisans, and (at the bottom of the social scale) merchants. Among the four classes of Chinese society, the Western traders identified themselves most closely with the Chinese merchants, who were willing to innovate. On the other hand, they generally considered the scholar-officials as hostile to the West. However, they looked upon the mass of the Chinese people, peasants, and artisans, with a mixture of admiration, pity, disdain, and bewilderment. Missionaries proposed education as a remedy for China's problems and also gave special consideration to the status of Chinese women. Some Westerners also scrutinized Chinese society to account for certain favorable and unfavorable traits among the Chinese people.

The West readily noted the weakness of China's political and military structure after Britain's success in the Opium War in 1842. British merchants expressed the belief that the faltering kingdom should reform and strengthen its political and military institutions through Westernization. They hoped that the Ch'ing court and officialdom would support reform. However, the moderate

reform efforts of the Empress Dowager Tz'u-hsi and the aborted efforts of the Kuang-hsu Emperor were considered disappointing. Additionally, the Chinese offical Li Hung-chang's efforts to introduce Western science and technology were marred by misappropriation of funds and proved inadequate in the face of continued foreign pressures on China. Effective Western efforts to enlighten progressive scholar-officials did not bear fruit until late in the century, after decades of literati resistance.

The exposure of China's military weakness to the West was accompanied by the spread of the Taiping, Nien, and Muslim rebellions in the 1850's and 1860's. The Western powers expressed concern that China's internal rebellions were a threat to the foreign interests there and responded by supplying arms to the Chinese government to help suppress the rebels. In 1900 the Boxer Rebellion emerged as the result of growing anti-foreign sentiment in China. The West quickly took measures to suppress the Boxers. Following the Boxer uprising, the British and Americans feared the dismemberment of China, and thus continued to direct attention to the desperate need for political and military reform in the Middle Kingdom.

Although trade was uppermost in Western minds, the NCH reveals extensive Western interest in China's high culture--philosophy, religion, literature, and the fine

arts. Confucianism was both praised and condemned. Western language translations and discussions of the works of Confucius, Mencius, Lao Tzu, and Chuang Tzu were critically studied. The appreciation of Chinese poets, novelists, and dramatists was qualified with attributions of Western influence and assertions that Chinese poets lacked the advantages of religious (i.e., Christian) influence. There were favorable comparisons of Chinese and Western historians. The Westerners also expressed interest in Chinese bronzes, painting, and architecture. They held formal meetings to discuss the arts of China in terms of symbolism, design, materials, religious connotation, and Western influence.

The anonymity of the newspaper's editorial writers, columnists, and other contributors presents a problem. Letters to the editor occasionally furnished names, but pseudonyms are very common. In the newspaper articles, it was common to mention only surnames. I have used other sources to identify these persons, but, unfortunately, not all of them are identifiable. In addition, the names of Chinese individuals, cities, provinces, and rivers had varied spellings during the period studied.

I have chosen the period 1850 to 1900 because the establishment of the NCH in 1850 was the beginning of sustained Western-language journalism in China, and closely

followed what many scholars consider to be the beginning of modern China--the Opium War of 1839 to 1842. This period marked the escalation of foreign intrusion, which ended Chinese isolation and initiated revolutionary change in China.

The half century from 1850 to 1900 constituted a period of relative political stability in China. The Boxer Uprising of 1898 to 1900 is the cut-off point of this study for two reasons: as part of the settlement of the Uprising, Russia, Germany, Japan and England were granted "spheres of influence" in China, and the Uprising began the period of accelerated political change which engulfed China in the twentieth century.

CHAPTER 2

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE NORTH CHINA HERALD

Growth of Western newspapers in China was directly related to the opening of the treaty ports of Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai in the mid-nineteenth century. In the aftermath of the Opium War, these trade centers were opened through a provision in the Sino-British Treaty of Nanking, signed August 29, 1842. This treaty brought to the Chinese shores a variety of eager, aggressive, profit-seeking Western traders. Upon request to China, the United States and France secured correlative treaties. The Treaty of Wanghsia, concluded between the United States and China on July 3, 1844, and the Treaty of Whampoa, signed by France and China on October 24, 1844, included such advantageous provisions as a fixed tariff, extraterritoriality, and the "most favored nation" clause that had already been granted to the British. Consequently, the climate for work, publishing, trade, and living arrangements for foreigners in China was measurably improved, the Western population increased, and Western settlements expanded.

The North China Herald was founded by Henry Shearman in 1850 to serve the British and the Western community in Shanghai. The Herald reflected the perceptions and

attitudes of its British and American contributors and their peers in China. The establishment of the NCH marked the beginning of sustained Western-language journalism in Shanghai.

Historical Developments

Henry Shearman, the founder of the North China Herald, traveled from Prince Edward Island to China in 1850 as an auctioneer. He soon became established in the community in Shanghai church life. His newspaper fulfilled a need in the city of Shanghai and was readily accepted. He was characterized as sympathetic to the Chinese. His Christian principles led him to give support to the Taiping cause until disillusionment, caused by the violence of the movement, came to the fore in 1854.[1] He continued as editor and publisher of the paper until his death in 1856.

A few Western-language newspapers had existed before the 1840's (notably in Macao and Canton), but few flourished until after the Treaty of Nanking.[2] Ratification of the

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[1]Frank H. H. King, ed., and Prescott Clarke, A Research Guide to China-Coast Newspapers, 1822-1911 (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1965), p. 148.

[2]In Macao, two Portuguese newspapers had been published in the 1820's: A Abelha da China was published from 1822 to 1824, and Gazeta de Macau was published from 1824 to 1826. The Canton Register, an English-language paper, was initiated by William W. Wood, an American, who used a press lent by Alexander Matheson, an Englishman. It was published in Canton from 1827 to 1839 when it moved to Macao. Ibid., pp. 34-44.

Treaty created the incentive and interest, and enhanced the practicality of Western-language publishing in China. Records indicate that approximately 200 newspapers appeared along the China coast between 1822 and 1911.[3] This figure does not include purely missionary or official publications. Although quantitative evidence is absent, there is reason to believe that the combined circulation of the North China Herald group of publications was the largest in Shanghai and in all ports except possibly Hong Kong.[4]

The North China Herald, later titled the North China Herald and Supreme Court and Counsular Gazette, was a weekly edition of the North China Herald group. The Herald was first published as a weekly which contained extracts from other China-coast newspapers, a news summary, and commercial information such as shipping reports and market prices. Among the editions published under the umbrella of the NCH were dailies, weeklies, market reports, and advertising sheets for the local population and for European subscribers.

A brief summary of the Herald's evolution reflects the journalistic response to changing community needs.

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[3]Ibid., p. 1.

[4]Ibid., p. 79.

The North China and Japan Market Report was published from 1858 to 1865 for European subscribers as a supplement to the North China Herald. At the end of 1865 a special overland edition, the North China Overland Herald and Market Report (1865-1867) and the original weekly were both being published.[5] An advertising sheet, the Daily Shipping News (1856-1862), supplemented the local weekly. In 1862 this was expanded to the Daily Shipping and Commercial News, and in 1869 it became a regular daily, the North China Daily News. With the advent of the daily newspaper, the North China Herald weekly was supplanted by the North China Herald and Market Report (1867-1870), which was, in essence the overland edition of the North China Daily News. The title Supreme Court and Consular Gazette was purchased from the short lived Shanghai Times group in 1870 and added to the North China Herald title as a final change--North China Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette (1870-1941). The Herald also took over its function of publishing the official transcripts of cases in the Shanghai law courts.[6]

China-coast publishers and editors often printed books and other materials in addition to their newspapers. A

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[5]"The weekly newspapers had from the first been mailed to Europe, but the overland edition was published especially to be sent via the Red Sea and Marseilles, then overland to England." Ibid., p. 4.

[6]Ibid., pp. 78, 82.

number of the editors, among them Mossman, Gundry, Haden, Balfour and probably others, had a financial interest in the newspaper. Those controlling the NCH from 1850 to 1911 are listed below:

Date	Publishers	Editors
1850	Henry Shearman	Henry Shearman
1856	J. Mackrill Smith Charles Spencer Compton	J. Mackrill Smith Charles Spencer Compton
1861	Edwin Pickwoad	Samuel Mossman
1863	Nichol Latimer	R. Alexander Jamieson
1866	Pickwoad and Co., (J. B. Tootal, managing prop.)	Richard S. Gundry
1878		George William Haden
1880	(Mrs. Janet Pickwoad, managing prop.)	John C. Thirkell temporary
1881		Frederic H. Balfour
1886		J. W. Maclellan
1889		R. W. Little
1906		H. T. Montague Bell
1911		O. M. Green (?)[7]

The men and women who guided the NCH were pragmatic and often scholarly in nature. Many of them wrote books about China and her people. Among those were Balfour, Green, Gundry, Jamieson, and Mossman.

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[7] Ibid., p. 77.

The NCH was also fortunate to have a number of respected correspondents on its staff. Among these were the American, W.A.P. Martin, a noted missionary, scholar, and educator, who in 1869 became head of the Chinese government's T'ung-wen kuan (College of Foreign Languages), and Dr. E. C. Bridgman, the first American missionary in China and founder of one of the respected missionary publications, The Chinese Repository. Well-known English missionaries who served as correspondents included Griffith John, who translated the New Testament into Chinese, Alexander Wylie, who in the 1850's published a compendium of arithmetic for the Chinese, and J. Hudson Taylor, who founded the China Inland Mission in 1866 and then directed it for nearly forty years. German missionary Theodore Hamberg, businessman Archibald J. Little, British officials Sir Thomas Wade and Sir John Bowring, and many other well-known missionaries also served as correspondents. These officials, businessmen, and missionaries contributed to the prestige and popularity of the NCH. They gave of their time and experience to the Herald largely as a public service, and the newspaper provided space to those of differing views--a unique feature of the paper's early policy.[8]

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[8]Ibid., pp. 78-79.

Some Salient Features

In general, China-coast newspapers were trade oriented and highly sensitive to the needs and desires of merchants. The dominant theme of the mercantile newspapers was the retention of a peaceful trade movement, and they looked askance at any activities which would inhibit trade. This was reflected by the general stance of the North China Herald, and in numerous articles defending the sale of opium, supporting expansion of trade on the Yangtze River, and criticizing the Chinese leaders for their reluctance to extend trade. In contrast, Western missionary activities in China received a mixed response from the NCH editors. So the Herald's most important function was to serve the merchant community in Shanghai; missionary activities were often mentioned only in discussing their affect on trade relations with the Chinese.

It was not uncommon for the early China coast newspapers to have publishers and editors of limited experience, supported by minimal staff. Relatively untrained journalists followed the traditional pattern of the British press. Journalism was learned through on-the-job training, even on the prestigious Times of London. There were no professional schools of journalism in the United Kingdom until a course was introduced at the

University of Wales in recent years.[9] Nevertheless, the editors and other contributors to the NCH were generally well-educated men or women.

In contrast to some Western editors and correspondents in Canton, Macao, and Hong Kong, the publishers and editors of the NCH seemed to be generally satisfied with the British administration in Shanghai. The NCH publicized what they perceived to be China's most important needs: increased trade, improved shipping routes, efficient government administration, and modern education. Improved agriculture, industry, health care, and flood control were also considered necessary components to the development of Chinese society. Some of the material was written in the tone of a Western parent scolding the Chinese for dragging their feet along the path of "progress" towards industrialization and international trade. From the Western perspective, the Chinese were frequently viewed as recalcitrant children blocking their own path to economic success. The corruption that most disturbed the NCH concerned the practices of Chinese officials relative to their tax collection and customs duties. Many officials habitually kept a significant share of taxes and customs duties for personal use.

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[9]Louis Heren, "Fleet Street and the Free Press," Saturday Review (June 11, 1977), p. 24.

These editors, however, were pragmatic planners rather than dedicated crusaders.

By 1870 the NCH had changed from a market report accompanied by an untitled and undifferentiated stream of news to a newspaper with a well defined format. The NCH format included original articles, editorials, news from outports such as Canton and Foochow, notices of public meetings, correspondence from readers, market reports and a category for miscellaneous articles. As the paper and the century matured, the NCH came to include local and international book reviews, commentaries on scholarly journals and periodicals from England the Europe, and excerpts from books of interest to the local populace. The NCH presented abstracts of the Peking Gazette (a publication of the Ch'ing court) and informative columns on Chinese culture. Selected items of international news continued to be a feature of the newspaper. Additionally, reports of the innumerable local church, social, sporting, and scholarly society meetings were recorded in full measure.[10] The recording of these extracurricular events

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[10]The list of contents for the 1898 NCH included these meetings: Shanghai Literary and Debating Society, The Shanghai Golf Club, The Shanghai Choral Society, Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce, Shanghai Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the Young Men's Christian Society; Amusements listed in the NCH included: The Field Day, Lawn Tennis, Cricket, Polo, The Midget Sailing Club, The Gun Club, The Swimming Club Sports, and Shanghai Autumn Race Meeting. "Contents," NCH (1898) LXI.

indicated the development of a comfortable social life resembling that of the British homeland.

NCH founder Henry Shearman instituted policies which left a lasting imprint on the newspaper. For eleven years, under three publisher-editors, no rival paper rose to challenge the NCH until the publication of the Shanghai Daily Times in 1861. Shearman's disposition to entertain a variety of opinions in his publication contrasted sharply with the more personal and vituperative journals of contemporary Hong Kong.

The NCH role as official publisher of British government notices and a considerable amount of advertising contributed to the financial stability of the NCH group. Although a vehicle for government notices, the paper did not necessarily agree with government policies. Its original, ongoing policy of presenting differing opinions on many subjects surely attracted thoughtful subscribers. The North China Herald's familiar column headings, table of contents, genteel pseudonyms, and minor print changes all indicated a consistent format throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century. The popularity of the NCH and the healthy economy of Shanghai assured the continuing stability of the newspaper.

CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY THROUGH FREE TRADE

Western merchants in Shanghai persisted in their belief that China and the West would profit through mutual trade agreements. China's trade was highly sought by diverse Western mercantile interests: yet the Chinese were not preoccupied with acquiring Western trappings. The nineteenth-century Chinese leaders responded disdainfully to Western pressures to trade by reiterating the stance shown by the Ch'ien-lung Emperor's letter of 1793 to King George III of England: "There is nothing we lack . . . . We have never set much store on strange or ingenious objects, nor do we need any more of your country's manufacturers."[1] Nevertheless, the British were convinced that the Chinese merchants and common people would accept and benefit from British and other Western trade.

It was only by force of arms that the British broke through the wall of custom and tradition. Their determination to trade on their own terms led to the Opium War, the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, and the opening of Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai as treaty ports. The

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[1]Ssu-yu Teng and John K. Fairbank, eds., China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey 1938-1923 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 3.

West posed a serious challenge to the Chinese concept of their empire as the "center of the universe" by demanding equal diplomatic status with the Ch'ing government. The editors and publishers of the North China Herald were reporters, interpreters, and commentators for these contending forces, filling NCH pages with accounts of the struggles between Chinese and Westerners over commercial interests. The merchants, military men, and diplomats of Britain and other Western nations bargained, cajoled, threatened, and used force to wrest trade from the reluctant giant. Despite significant industrial and military advantages, the foreigners found their incessant demands continually challenged by the Chinese: the Confucian scholars, military men, and merchants.

The British evinced some humility in retrospect suggesting that their trade relations might have fared better if they had carried their complaints to the court in Peking instead of to provincial authorities:

> . . . half measures were adopted, and we contented ourselves with inflicting war on distant parts of the Empire. . . . when at last our appeal has been made at the sword's point, we find the dynasty tottering, the Emperor fled and anarchy threatening the country.[2]

However, subsequent foreign diplomatic residencies in Peking did not solve all the problems of foreign trade

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[2]NCH (May 25, 1861), p. 82.

relations. In 1861, the NCH asserted English good will:

> Would that the ill governed and obstinate people could perceive, that the English are in the empire for thier good, and not for power, territory or usurpation. Our prosperity is so blended with their own that the division of the two is impossible; let them meet us in a fair and open spirit and we are easy to deal with. . . . Then indeed will the march of western civilization bring wealth to a myriad of homes.[3]

Westerners needed new markets to support expanding industrialization. They would not forego commerce with China without a struggle.

The British looked to the past to find support for their promotion of the China trade:

> The Chinese, as a nation, have been, and are a commercial people . . . . Their junks are said to have been seen as far west as the coast of Malabar about the end of the thirteenth century, and they appear to have had good knowledge of commercial advantages from a very early period.[4]

Although China had engaged in foreign trade for centuries, Western traders demanded equal status, in contrast to the tributary relationship accorded China by other countries. In addition, the West wanted to engage in extensive and prolonged trade instead of the intermittent trade that China was accustomed to conduct. Although chafing at the trade restrictions imposed by China's rulers, the British

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[3]"The Year 1860," NCH (Jan. 12, 1861), p. 7.

[4]NCH (May 25, 1861), p. 82.

absolved the Chinese people from blame: ". . . it appears that the extremely restrictive policy, and the repelling arrogance . . . emanated, not from the Chinese people, but from their conquerors, the Manchu Tartars."[5]

The NCH frequently reflected the Western perception that the Chinese masses liked trade. When Tseng Kuo-fan charged that opening additional ports would harm the common people, the NCH responded: "A few junk owners may have suffered, but certainly not the bulk of the Chinese population, who are by no means hostile to foreigners."[6] The newspaper expressed the suspicion that Tseng was merely trying to placate the Emperor. The truth, as the NCH saw it, was that the Chinese loved trade:

> Barter is his birthright. He sucks in a love of traffic with his mother's milk. The presence of the foreigner widens his opportunities of gratifying this passion to a width he could not have conceived before . . . .[7]

Nineteenth-century Western traders did not question their right to be in China, but rather the correct and most lucrative method for continuing trade. By justifying their presence as a service to China, they could rightfully claim:

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[5]Ibid.

[6]"Tseng Kuo-fan," NCH (Sept. 19, 1868), p. 452.

[7]Ibid.

"The Chinaman would regard the withdrawal of foreigners from the Ports as a grievous calamity."[8]

The NCH persistently affirmed the Western view that the Chinese were a commercial people who benefitted from foreign trade. The Westerners did not include the literati in this category, and noted: "It is idle to expect that the hostility of a class so potent can be overcome, without years of weary struggle and many rebuffs."[9] However, they expressed a sentiment of communion with China's masses:

> And we know, on the other hand, that the instincts of the masses are commercial. Of the Chinese it may be said, as Burke said of the citizens of Bristol, that "their Ledger is their God." This being so, and our desires with regard to China being chiefly of a mercantile character, there is reason to hope that the opening up of the country may be peacefully accomplished, if only we are careful to show how the interests of the rank and file of the people are bound up with the interests of the Foreigner . . . .[10]

Finally, the columnist noted that to follow the leadership of the literati would surely prolong the national degradation. Additional evidence of Chinese interests in trade was reported when Lord Elgin's party traveled by ship to Tientsin for treaty negotiations in 1858. The British travelers made an optimistic observation: "The merchants

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[8] Ibid.

[9] "The Mandarins and the Masses," NCH (March 7, 1872), p. 181.

[10] Ibid.

[of Tientsin] seem to be a very wealthy class and the people well disposed as well as anxious for European articles, displaying the most intense curiosity."[11] This reinforced the British view that they were providing benefits to China, even though rendered in the context of force.

The Opium Trade

An important element of British involvement in China was the opium trade. The NCH recorded both missionary and merchant views concerning this trade. When the NCH was established, opium accounted for the largest commerce in the world in any single commodity.[12] Furthermore, the opium trade was of major importance to the economy of British India. The monopoly by the British government in India of the sale and manufacture of opium in its dominions came to yield one-seventh of the total revenue of British India during the nineteenth century. The tea and silks of China were so popular in England that it was not until the late 1830's that Britain achieved a favorable balance of trade with China. Opium was the product that brought about the change.[13]

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[11] NCH (June 19, 1858), p. 186.

[12] Michael Greenberg, British Trade and the Opening of China 1800-42 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 104-105.

[13] "Opium Trade," Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia VII (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1981), p. 552.

In the early 1800's the importation of opium was forbidden by the Chinese rulers: British opium sales in that period had to be handled in an unofficial and clandestine manner. Concessions relative to the sale of opium in China won by the West at the Shanghai Tariff Conference of October 1858 testify to the importance of this trade item. Although technically illegal, opium accounted for 54% of China's imports through Maritime Customs from foreign ports in 1850, gradually declining to 12% by 1900.[14]

The importance of the opium trade did not deter the Western missionaries from taking a stand against it. Though they differed in methods of evangelization, a belief in the evils of opium was commonly shared. The Reverend A. E. Moule openly charged that the Indian government and the East India Company were largely if not wholly to blame for the introduction of opium into China. He further suggested that abolition of the opium trade would not be as injurious to China and India as some thought.[15]

In 1877, support from the anti-opium position was announced in a Missionary Conference resolution which denounced the evils and sin inherent in the sale and use

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[14]Rhoads Murphey, Shanghai: Key to Modern China (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 120.

[15]"The Missionary Conference," NCH (May 26, 1877), p. 520.

of opium. In addition the missionaries agreed that the problem of opium sale and use was a moral wrong that could not be considered politically right, and that aid should be given to all proper anti-opium societies. Thus the Church should strive to overcome this great evil.[16] In 1890 another Missionary Conference included a similar resolution in its program. The restrained statement reflected the missionaries' discretion in opposing a trade item which was defended in the NCH and by a large body of merchants. The resolution noted that mature deliberation and full discussion preceded the choice of "studiously temperate language" to protest the growth and sale of opium and called upon the Christian Church to "make more earnest efforts against this great evil."[17] The NCH reported only the moral concerns of these Missionary Conferences concerning the use of opium. If any attention was given to specific economic problems resulting from the opium trade, it was not mentioned in the NCH report of the conference.

Though the missionaries' stand on opium reflected one view, the NCH also presented contrary opinions and historical developments regarding the sale and use of opium.

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[16] Ibid., pp. 520-522.

[17] "Results of the Missionary Conference," NCH (May 30, 1890), p. 658.

The appropriateness and morality of providing opium from British India was challenged by the Chinese as well as Westerners.

But many British and other Western merchants in Shanghai thought differently. In the merchants' view, the 1858 legalization of opium trade provided a useful service by supplanting the practice of smuggling opium. The merchants profited from the sale of opium in either case. In their defense, the merchants cited the tradition of opium use in China and the supply-demand relationship generated by domestic cultivation. Additionally, the trade had been allowed to flourish in an atmosphere of official corruption and hypocrisy.

In rebuttal to the outcry from such reformers as the missionaries and other anti-opium agitators, the NCH turned to the history of opium use. The NCH published an editorial on "Ancient Use of Opium" which chronicled 2,000 years of opium use in Asia and other parts of the world. The NCH noted that opium has been found for sale in Malabar in 1511.[18] Another NCH editorial stated: " . . . the fact is admitted that it was found necessary to issue an interdict against opium no less than a century and a half ago, long before any appreciable quantity was brought from

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[18]"Ancient Use of Opium," NCH (Jan. 6, 1881), p. 4.

India."[19] Such reasoning helped the Westerners to justify their role as merchant in China rather than arbiters of morality.

The NCH report on the historical use of opium included the observation that had opium not existed, similar products would have taken its place. The newspaper absolved the British from blame for opium's popularity:

> A little knowledge would save some scores of well-meaning but lamentable ignorant persons from falling into the basurd mistake of representing the British Government as . . . the inventor of the opium habit, and the fosterer of a special form of vicious gratification . . . which, were it withheld, would leave Chinese humanity free from all the evils arising from indulgence in intoxicants.[20]

Acknowledging controversy among the British over the sale of opium to China, the NCH declared that some believed that a cessation of the British Indian opium trade would do little good for China and would merely benefit Persia and Africa.[21] The NCH added:

> In any case the use of opium, they say, does not do so much harm in China as the consumption of intoxicants does in Great Britain; and yet not even the most ardent disciple of Sir Wilfrid Lawson has proposed to quarrel with

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[19]"Shen Pao-chen on Opium Smoking," NCH (Jan. 17, 1878), p. 55.

[20]"Ancient Use of Opium," NCH (Jan. 6, 1881), p. 4.

[21]"Opium," NCH (Jan. 18, 1881), p. 41.

> France or Spain or Germany for exporting to us the wines which our sterner climate prohibits our producing in England.[22]

The majority of the British merchants believed that the opium trade would endure and had no intention of giving it up to others.

The merchants argued that the demand for opium could be explained:

> The peculiar circumstances of the Chinese people, probably the nature of the climate, certainly the listless and hopeless manner in which the system of Government forces them to pass their lives, have caused the use of opium pipe to become a matter of necessity by a large portion of the nation.[23]

Similar sentiments were expressed in other articles. The small amount of opium taken by the poor was called a blessing. The NCH journalist suggested that the opium taken by the poor supplemented their wretched food and scant clothing and was a prophylactic against the fevers that prevailed everywhere in low countries.[24] The Westerners' argument that the Chinese demanded opium was supported by a growing trend toward domestic cultivation of opium in China.

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

The Chinese habitual use of opium and the revenue it provided for the Chinese government both contributed to the inability of the Chinese to stop the opium trade. The NCH repeatedly published arguments which placed responsibility for opium use on the Chinese and often linked it to official corruption. Claiming neither beneficial effects nor negative results of opium use, an opium merchant named Mr. Gubbay blamed the Chinese government's bad leadership for driving the people to seek solace in opium. He pointed out that on the one hand the Chinese government had written moral diatribes against the vice of opium smoking and had drawn up elaborate proclamations against poppy cultivation, yet on the other hand had been constantly occupied in receiving bribes to permit the infraction of both bans.[25] Such cries of hypocrisy were a favorite theme of the British. A comparison was made between India and China, their dependence on the opium revenue, and their more or less direct encouragement of its growth:

> The Government of China is now so largely interested in the traffic that, practically, it is in the same position as that of India, and could not, were it ever so willing, afford to give up a revenue so large and so readily collected as that accruing from opium.[26]

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[25] "Opium," NCH (April 25, 1874), p. 356.

[26] "The Opium Trade," NCH (May 19, 1871), p. 488.

The NCH noted that Chinese government was not showing any serious effort to interfere with the use of opium. Neither did the government give more than weak verbal support to the individuals who made spasmodic attempts to stop opium use. Conversely, the newspaper reported, the government used its influence to foster the home growth of opium, out of which it derived benefits for the treasury.

The domestic cultivation of opium of lower quality than the Indian product made it available to many people who could not afford the higher-priced imported opium. According to the NCH, opium provided one-fifth of the revenue of British India during the 1870's, and China was the major customer.[27] However, the NCH pointed out:

> There is stated to be grown in more than one province in China, an amount rivalling the crop of the whole of British India; and the assertion is ventured that, if the whole supply from British India were cut off, "there would not be one smoker less in China."[28]

In the interior of the empire only rich men or high officials could afford the heavily taxed Indian opium.

The peasants in Manchuria grew opium as a cash drop because it was the only product which would bear the expense of transportation to market.[29] In some areas of

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[27]"Opium," NCH (April 25, 1874), pp. 356-357.

[28]Ibid.

[29]"Manchuria," NCH (March 4, 1875), p. 193.

China opium displaced food crops to the extent that it endangered the food supply. The British attitude towards this problem was that China should grow food and Westerners would supply the opium.

Commenting on the spreading cultivation of opium, an NCH editorial made a rare conjecture:

> The question remains, however, whether the Chinese government, if left to itself, might not even yet succeed in repressing the use of a drug which is so gravely deleterious to its people.[30]

However, the majority of the pragmatic British merchants in Shanghai believed there was about as much chance of eliminating beer drinking in England as the opium habit in China.[31] While the NCH offered editorial space to opposing views, it rationalized the sale of opium as long as the drug remained legal. In so doing, the NCH reflected the fundamental reason for British operations in China, that is, the eager, energetic pursuit of trade.

Economic Penetration to the Interior

The British zeal and energy that made the opium trade a success was also channeled for decades into efforts to extend foreign trade into the interior of China via the Yangtze River. The British effort was a clear example of

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[30] "Opium," NCH (April 25, 1874), p. 356.

[31] "Shen Pao-chen," NCH, p. 55.

the British merchants' determination to overcome the resolute resistance of the conservative Chinese administrators. The British preferred to use their own fast, efficient vessels for transporting commodities instead of slower and more costly Chinese transportation. Conversely, the Chinese preferred to keep the Westerners away from China's interior as long as possible for their own fiscal reasons and to minimize the power of the Westerners in China.

The British expansion of the Yangtze River trade evolved slowly. First, Shanghai became a Western port by virtue of the Treaty of Nanking in 1842. However, the British were not content to be limited to only one access to the Yangtze trade. Having failed to achieve further openings peacefully, the British eventually secured the opening of the ports of Kiukiang, Chinkiang, and Hankow to trade through provisions in the 1860 Convention of Peking which followed the Arrow War of 1856 to 1857. Wuhu and Ichang were opened as treaty ports in 1876 in conjunction with the Chefoo Convention which settled the Augustus Margary affair. Military action or diplomatic threats on the part of the British were a common denominator in all of these achievements. In 1890 the British negotiated the opening of Chungking with the aid of some skillful diplomatic maneuvering by Robert Hart, the Inspector General of Chinese Maritime Customs.

The interior province of Szechwan was a major target for British trade. The British viewed Szechwan, which was populous and prosperous, as a potentially significant market for their wares. The pursuit of this trade was reported in the NCH. In 1861 the NCH ran a series of articles reporting the origin and progress of an ambitious and well-organized expedition of Westerners from Shanghai, for what the paper called "the rightly though rather vaguely termed principal object--the opening of the Yangtze River to foreign trade."[32] Harry Parkes and Admiral Hope led a squadron of ten naval vessels including a surveying vessel and several gun boats which explored the Yangtze as far as Ichang. In the river bed past Ichang a disappointing discovery was made. A letter signed B., possibly Blackiston, a member of the expedition was published in the NCH revealing this information:

> I necessarily feel somewhat disinclined to divulge our discovery--if discovery it can be called--that the Yangtze above Ichang . . . . during this season of the year, is unsuited to steam navigation. At a distance of three miles above the city, the river suddenly changes its character altogether, and narrowing to less than one half its former width rushes with a strong current through a long gorge, with stupendous cliffs rising on either hand.[33]

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[32] NCH (May 18, 1861), p. 78.

[33] Ibid.

Thus the Yangtze's natural barrier beyond Ichang effectively cut off the steamers then in use and limited further travel to Chinese transportation.

With the defeat of the Taipings in 1865, the Ch'ing government banned the traffic of foreign steamers which had been allowed during the Taiping Rebellion. However, the treaty ports remained open and various new port openings occurred under the treaty system. Although foreign and Chinese-owned steam shipping expanded east of Ichang on the Yangtze, the portion west of Ichang remained closed to foreign shipping.

The NCH was still concerned about the question of foreign steamer traffic on the Yangtze seventeen years after the original British exploratory expedition of 1861. The newspaper noted that the Chinese, by provisions of the Chefoo Convention, had opened the new ports of Ichang and Wuhu on the Yangtze. Navigational problems were mentioned once more:

> Of Ichang we know as yet very little; its chief value lies probably in its being the head--so far at least as the present class of steamer is concerned--of the navigation of the Yangtze.[34]

This information echoed the correspondent's comment of 1861--steamers still could not travel past Ichang.

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[34]"Retrospect of 1877," NCH (Feb. 14, 1878), p. 150.

Shortly thereafter there was a NCH column commenting on the easing of regulations for foreign steamers traveling the Yangtze and citing the benefits. Nevertheless, the NCH criticized the Chinese for not appreciating their mutual interests:

> For many years our aim has been to show how identical were the commercial interests of native and foreign merchants, and how the one could only be struck at to the detriment of the other. It seems almost past belief that this very simple truism appears never to have penetrated to Peking . . . .[35]

To this condemnation the NCH added that trade restrictions aimed at foreigners did even more harm to the native trader.

It appeared that British and Chinese had drawn a symbolic fence at Ichang. The British merchants persevered in efforts to trade west of Ichang while the Chinese made every effort to retain control there. A vaguely termed provision in the Chefoo Convention was utilized by the Chinese authorities to prohibit foreign shipping on the Yangtze beyond Ichang until a steamer capable of traversing the narrow, shallow, rapid-filled waterway could be constructed. While the British did not deem the privilege important enough to merit the force of arms, they did view the Chinese behavior as detrimental to the development of an efficient transportation system.

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[35]"Removal of Restrictions to Trade on the Yangtze," NCH (June 15, 1868), p. 616.

In 1887, the NCH again brought up the lure of the Yangtze River trade: "representatives of the British Government in Szechwan have demonstrated how enormous is the trade that awaits the British merchant in the largest and most prosperous of the eighteen provinces."[36] The cost of freight transit under the Chinese was shocking. The cost of moving freight from Ichang to Chungking on the Yangtze was about twice as much as the price of bringing the goods from England. It was understandable that the English sought better arrangements.

In 1887 Archibald J. Little an energetic entrepreneur, who was very interested in trade with Szechwan and Tibet, organized a company to build a specially designed small steamer, the Kuling, that could travel from Ichang to Chungking. The NCH contended that the Chinese merchants in Chungking were anxious for Little's plan to succeed. However, the completion of the Kuling brought new diplomatic problems. In 1889 negotiation for permission to use the Kuling were underway. The pertinent section of the Chefoo Convention read:

> British subjects will not be allowed to reside at Chungking, or to open establishments or warehouses there, so long as no steamers have access to the port. When steamers have

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[36] "The Opening of the Upper Yangtze," NCH (May 20, 1887), p. 541.

> succeeded in ascending the river so far, further arrangements can be taken into consideration.[37]

But this was not a provision that found ready Chinese acquiescence. Sir Thomas Wade had signed the Chefoo Convention which regulated the Yangtze traffic, but Sir John Walsham was now the British Minister to Peking. The British merchants expressed disappointment that he was not as forceful as Sir Thomas. Sir John chose not to exert strong pressure to secure the privilege of traveling the Yangtze for Mr. Little. He was joined in the diplomatic consideration by Sir Robert Hart. Hart, acting as a mediator for the Chinese government, favored China's purchase of the Kuling, and the opening of foreign trade to Chungking through the use of native craft under specially drawn regulations.[38]

The diplomatic struggle lingered on until 1890 as recorded by Sir Robert Hart: "The Kuling affair is also a dirty bit of business, but we are getting some good out of it: we get Chungking opened as a Treaty Port--and that Wade failed to do at Chefoo in 1876!"[39] In the end, the

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[37] Ibid.

[38] John K. Fairbank, et al., eds., The I. G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs 1868-1907 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), volume 1, No. 719.

[39] Ibid. (Jan. 19, 1890), No. 735. For more detail on the agreement see No. 741.

Chinese bought the Kuling for their own use as part of the agreement to open the port. The British merchants' perseverence had finally been rewarded. Ironically, the years of Britain's arduous diplomatic struggle to benefit from the upper Yangtze trade privileges were shortly followed by the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895) in which Japan used military force to obtain trading privileges at Chungking in addition to other concessions from the Chinese.

Another important way to penetrate the interior economically was through railroads which the British traders enthusiastically promoted in China. England had produced the first iron rails and the first steam locomotive in the world. The significance of this achievement was exhibited when England introduced the first regularly operated steam railway in 1825 (running from Stockton to Darlington). This was followed by the first full-service freight and passenger line in 1830, the Liverpool and Manchester (L&M). The L&M was an immediate success in garnering both freight and passenger business.[40] The United States and Europe quickly followed England's lead in establishing railway systems. The railroad appeared to offer benefits to any nation engaged in commerce. The

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[40]Michael Robbins, The Railway Age in Great Britain (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1965), p. 20.

British were willing to share their railway expertise to further the expansion of trade in China.

China depended heavily on carts, coolie labor, and canals for transportation: all were slow and inefficient in comparison with railways. So it was natural that the British merchants encouraged the introduction of railways to improve China's transportation and communication facilities. In 1863 the British even offered to build a railroad from Shanghai to Soochow, but their offer was rejected by the local gentry. The Chinese mood concerning railroads was suggested by Dr. Edkins in a speech to the Shanghai Royal Asiatic Society. He reported that rich Chinese would donate money for bridges, providing a service and winning the esteem of their fellow men. However, the rich would not contribute similar funds to advance the cause of railway construction. He concluded that when the Buddhist doctrine of moral fate which guided their actions approved of railways, the money would become available.[41]

The Western merchants were frustrated when the Chinese admitted the value of the railway but denied its suitability for China. The British grumbled that coal was being imported by a four month journey when rich coal mines

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[41]"Chinese Architecture," NCH (Feb. 21, 1890), p. 217.

would only be a few hours away by rail.[42] They saw the mandarins as regressive and unyielding, and pondered Sir Robert Hart's scheme to seek construction of a road to the mines as a preliminary for the eventual introduction of a railroad.

In the 1870's the NCH pointed out that a flood of Chinese immigrants had moved onto the rich soils of Manchuria. For the first time in their lives there was the possibility of marketing surplus crops. However, the lack of efficient transportation left opium as the only crop profitable for trade. Again the NCH suggested that railways would be appropriate, and then complained that the current dynasty, "made it a matter of policy to obstruct as far as possible the intercourse of the provinces."[43] British pessimism revealed the Westerners' frustration with what they viewed as a massive state of inertia among China's leaders. Late in 1875 the NCH offered reflections on Britain's earlier offer to give a stretch of railway to China:

> Perhaps more than anything else, this absurd idea, by exciting the fears of the Chinese government as to the enormous profit to be

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[42] "Chaitang Coal Mines," NCH (Aug. 28, 1868), p. 415.

[43] "Manchuria," NCH (March 4, 1875), p. 193.

> made out of the country by permission to make railways, has stood in the way of their introduction.[44]

The Western hope for railroads in China continued to languish as the decades passed. While such leaders as Li Hung-chang and Liu Ming-ch'uan continued to champion the advantages of railroads, the conservative scholar-officials and the court held firm in their resistance. Even the Kuang-hsu Emperor's interest in railroads was not sufficient to move the mandarins. The NCH philosophically observed that while Westerners were always in a hurry to act on their decisions, "Orientals whose records go back so far" were not as concerned with time.[45]

As the nineteenth century progressed, the British merchants' commitment to China as a trading partner led them to complain that the British government and public were absolutely apathetic about railways in China. Contrasting this apathy with British interest in Africa, the NCH declared: "Over and over again we have pointed out that the Yangtze Valley alone is worth the whole of Africa."[46] Additionally, the NCH charged that Lord

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[44]"The Railway Jubilee at Darlington," NCH (Nov. 25, 1875), p. 518.

[45]"The Progress of China," NCH (Jan. 17, 1890), p. 57.

[46]"Railways and Politics," NCH (Aug. 1, 1898), p. 198.

Salisbury was not protecting British railway interests when he spontaneously assured Germany that the English would not build a railway from Weihaiwei to the interior. This action following decades of the promotion of railways brought forth their fury: "Weihaiwei, owing to Lord Salisbury's humiliating love of giving himself and his country away, is to remain railway-less, unless Germany takes pity on its isolation."[47] Thus Britain's internal dissension was added to international squabbles over railway building in China as the century came to a close.

New problems in China had developed following the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. China's defeat escalated the movement towards outside powers "spheres of influence" in China. The Russians, Germans, British, and French all claimed concessions. The United States, busy with the Spanish War and Phillipine Revolution, made no claim. The British were especially disturbed by Russian claims. By clever diplomatic maneuvering, bribery, and bold appropriation, the Russians had gained valuable territory for railroad construction. A mutual defense pact between China and Russia against Japan carried more influence with Li Hung-chang than did British commercial aspirations

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[47] Ibid.

(the British had failed to intervene against China's foe during the war with Japan).

The British had to be content that the Germans served as a buffer zone to the Russian concession. The British merchants were disappointed that all their earlier efforts to promote and finance railways for China and to help unite and strengthen her had proved fruitless. They now visualized a patchwork of unplanned, uncoordinated railroads, mutually exclusive in design and equipment. The dream of an organized, efficient railway system for China has failed. However, railroads sponsored by the various foreign powers would traverse significant stretches of Chinese territory and accomplish by default what the Chinese had feared to choose.

The British merchants tenaciously held to their belief that the Chinese authorities were deterring the development of China as an international commercial power. The British traders chose to believe that the merchants of China and the masses of Chinese people welcomed their presence. They viewed their Chinese peers as intelligent, industrious, energetic, competent traders who would challenge Western dominance if given sufficient opportunity.

CHAPTER 4

THE CHINESE SOCIETY AND THE CHINESE PEOPLE

The British, in particular, went to China as members of the leading industrial society of the world. In China the Westerners encountered the most populous, self-sufficient, agricultural society in the world. To achieve their mercantile, missionary, and diplomatic goals, Westerners endeavored to understand Chinese society. The North China Herald devoted considerable space to examining the Chinese family structure, the social strata and women's social status, the roles of the different classes, the roles of men, women, and children, and the place of education and superstition. The commentaries were usually forthright and rarely neutral.

Social Structure and the Family System

Traditional Chinese society was highly stratified. Although there was no caste system, there were four major social classes in China: the scholar-official stood at the top of society. Attainment of scholar-official status through education and the ladder of the civil examinations was possible for Chinese men but not for women. Those who could afford the time and effort trod that path. Those who could not were most often relegated to a life of hard labor.

The Westerners were aware that the scholars path was not easy; from dawn to dusk he studied with only a break for lunch, and holidays were rare events in his life. Such a life appeared dreary to those who wrote for the NCH. Obedience and respect for authority was inculeated at an early age. Even in intellectual spheres there was little freedom, as this comment from the NCH suggests: "But of intellectual independence, he has not the faintest conception or even a capacity of comprehension."[1] Nevertheless, the vision of future rewards kept him at his task.

The civil examination system rewarded its graduates with prestige and privilege, conferring on them posts as officials or enabling them to become community leaders. They were excused from manual labor and received special tax and legal benefits. Western merchants and missionaries found this group the most resistant to innovation, as Westernization would jeopardize or destroy their social position. Scholars would not readily give up benefits achieved by a lifetime of study.

The peasants were next in importance. The peasant farmer lived in a different manner: "He has a blind respect for learning but no idea of gathering any crumbs

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[1]"The Natural History of a Chinese Boy," NCH (May 9, 1890), p. 573; although no attribution appears in the NCH, this material appears in Arthur H. Smith, Village Life in China (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1899), p. 237.

for himself."[2] Comprising the greater part of the population, his importance stood in his role as the major source of food, taxes, and manpower for his country. The fruits of his toil depended on changes in the weather, the mood of the tax collector, the needs of his family, and the demands of his emperor. The Westerner viewed the peasant with impatience for accepting his plight, respect for his perseverance, and pity for his circumstances.

Following peasants, artisans held third place on the social scale. These included tailors, painters, carpenters, weavers, and bricklayers who formed guilds to regulate their respective trades. Despite his lower social status, was slightly above that of the peasant. Westerners viewed the Chinese artisan as being extremely industrious and painstaking. If he had a defect, it was the inability to initiate, invent, or lead. But he could imitate, adapt, and obey.[3] These qualities are understandable in industrial workers in a system which offered little reward for innovation.

In his position at the bottom of society, the merchant had the least to lose by studying Western methods and by engaging in commerce with them. The NCH noted the increased

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[2]Ibid.

[3]"Panacea for China," NCH (July 4, 1900), p. 13.

wealth acquired by Chinese merchants through trade. His propensity for working long hours at his business, often while the Englishman was busy with his cricket, rowing, and races, was highly regarded. Even in Shanghai, Chinese shops were beginning to rival those of the Westerners. The NCH viewed the Chinese merchant as a shrewd, keen, and intelligent competitor. The Westerners foresaw that the merchants of China had unlimited potential to develop commerce if they were not strangled in their efforts by official greed.

In the nineteenth century, Westerners saw men and women in China as being severely bounded by their family responsibilities and limited resources. Chinese men and women were cogs in a family system that took preference over individual rights. When married, they were but a new branch on a tall family tree. The bridegroom was still under control of his father to a degree difficult for the Westerner to understand.[4] Whether scholar or laborer, the Chinese male was subject to the Five Relationships, and in practice the man's relationship to his father was frequently the most influential and

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[4]"History of a Chinese Boy," NCH, p. 573.

controlling one.[5] The Chinese female was first subject to her parents, and after marriage, she was subject primarily to her husband and mother-in-law. All were part of a family system that was more important than the individual's independence. This contrasted with the Westerners' own strong emphasis on individualism.

The role of Confucianism was acknowledged as a major force in society and was both praised and denigrated by the British. Among favorable comments:

> It is evident, too, that in their domestic as well as their social relations, the Chinese exhibit consideration and kindness. The filial piety enjoined on the child towards his parents is observed; and the poorer classes display a courtesy which far eclipses the behaviour of a European peasant.[6]

The Westerners and the NCH took an active interest in the societal role of Chinese women, as well as men. The missionaries took a special interest in their welfare and deplored their hardships. Westerners generally considered Chinese women and girls to be virtuous, self-sacrificing, industrious, and intelligent, within the limitations imposed by Confucian custom, poverty, and lack of education. Among the protestant missionaries

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[5]The Five Relationships are those between the ruler and his subjects, father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, and between friends.

[6]"Chinese National Character," NCH (June 9, 1870), p. 425.

there was a high incidence of commitment to working for increased rights for Chinese women. This was further intensified by the presence of many female missionaries, who outnumbered their Protestant male colleagues by the turn of the century.[7]

The NCH reflected the Western concern and displeasure with Chinese practices of female infanticide, female slavery, and footbinding:

> Next to the destruction of the lives of female infants, the Chinese practice most revolting to Western ideas is the sale of their daughters at all periods from infancy up to a marriageable age.[8]

There was mixed acceptance of the claim of poverty as a reason for female slavery. One party declared: "That the parents are generally impelled to this extreme step simply by poverty we are quite ready to believe."[9] On the other hand, a more cynical commentator declared: "he had discovered piteous cases . . . during medical mission work,

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[7]Paul A. Cohen, "Christian Missions and Their Impact to 1900" in The Cambridge History of China, Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank, eds. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), Vol. 10, pp. 582-583.

[8]"The Natural History of a Chinese Girl," NCH (July 4, 1890), p. 15; although no attribution appears in the NCH, this material appears in Arthur H. Smith, Village Life in China (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1899), p. 259.

[9]Ibid.

of the . . . story of the opium smoking father selling his child to procure money for obtaining the drug . . . ."[10]

The NCH revealed Western sentiments on footbinding:

> Society, the . . . inexorable tyrant, fetters the poor creature all through life. If a female, custom binds and distorts her most useful members, and turns a healthy woman into a tottering cripple.[11]

The Westerners fought this custom, in which girls of well-to-do families had their feet bound when quite young. The feet were molded to an unnaturally small size. The custom was instituted by men to keep the ladies homebound, and to enhance their feminity and erotic appeal. Although an anti-footbinding society is said to have been formed as early as 1847 in Amoy by a missionary society, the most important foreign organization devoted to this cause was the T'ien-tsu hui (Natural Foot Society) in Shanghai in 1895.[12] Mrs. Archibald Little (who was not a missionary) served as president. The society distributed pamphlets extensively and Mrs. Little made efforts to

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[10]"Women's Conference on the Home Life of Chinese Women," NCH (Nov. 28, 1900), p. 1146.

[11]"Chinese Character," NCH (July 14, 1870), p. 23.

[12]Cohen, pp. 582-583. See NCH, "Natural Foot Society Third Report for 1899" (Feb. 7, 1900), p. 238, for report of Society's progress.

influence Chinese in positions of power.[13] The Chinese reformers of the 1890's zealously joined in the crusade against footbinding. In 1900 the NCH published a financial report for similar societies in Chungking, Tientsin, and Hankow. The NCH noted that the strength of the movement would lay in the energetic reform efforts the Chinese were taking in this matter.

There was support for the abolition of footbinding even by such a moderate reformer as Chang Chih-tung, who had taken a keen interest in the natural Foot Society. The NCH published a translation of a tract written by Chang supporting the anti-footbinding movement. In it he urged that all provinces join in the reform: "Fathers and elder brothers should urge their families to abandon foot-finding; the gentry should enlighten their fellow-villagers regarding this vice."[14] In addition he reported that officials from Hupeh and Hunan had petitioned to have footbinding forbidden in their provinces. The NCH noted that this should be read with interest as the opinion "of one of the most highly educated and conservative of the

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[13]Mrs. Little's husband, an Englishman who spent forty seven years in China, organized a company which built a small ship, the Kuling, to achieve Western shipping on the Upper Yangtze. Ibid., p. 583.

[14]"H. E. Chang Chih-tung and the Anti-Footbinding Movement," NCH (May 9, 1900), p. 840.

high officials of China."[15] This was indeed a coup for the cause which Westerners had long supported, and the missionaries had worked for in their schools for girls.

The welfare of Chinese girls was also augmented by the Western missionary efforts to educate them. At a missionary conference of 1874, Dr. Alexander Williamson, first with the London Missionary Society and later an agent of the National Bible Society of Scotland, advocated the establishment of girls' schools. Education was a luxury for women in China and was generally granted only through the indulgence of a prosperous family. The Reverend Mr. Butler, supporting this suggestion, considered schools for girls of the first importance.[16]

Missionary conferences in 1890 and 1900 also showed concern for the welfare of young women. The missionaries put forth great energy in establishing schools for Chinese girls and young ladies. The depth of this commitment may be seen in the number of students in Protestant mission schools. According to one source, there were 576 girls in school in 1869 and 2,084 in 1874.[17] By 1905 there were 7,168 girls in primary schools and 2,761 female

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[15] Ibid.

[16] "Missionary Conference," NCH (June 6, 1875), p. 470.

[17] Kenneth S. Latourette, A History of Christian Missions in China (New York: Macmillan Co., 1929), p. 449.

students in higher level institutions.[18] These numbers reflected both the escalating number of female missionaries who acted as teachers and the increased interest of the Chinese populace. The poor and orphaned were the first pupils in the schools because the upper classes were less trusting of the missionaries.

The typical married woman's life in China was not generally approved of by the Westerners. There was mention of abusive mothers-in-law, pressure to bear sons, and the drudgery of caring for large families. The cumulative result of these forces was described: "A Chinese bride, handsome at the age of eighteen, will be faded at thirty, and at fifty wrinkled and ugly."[19]

The suicides of young women in China also caught the NCH's attention. The practice was attributed to the intolerable circumstances in which the women lived. Suicide was deplored not only for the loss of life but also for the devastating social, legal, and financial problems it caused. The NCH pages reflected Western thought: "And all this is the outcome of the Confucian

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[18]Cohen, p. 583.

[19]"History of a Chinese Girl," NCH (July 4, 1890), p. 15.

theory that a wife has no right which a husband is bound to respect."[20]

Citing past history and making comparisons with other Asian cultures, some modest praise for Chinese recognition of women appeared in the NCH:

> Chinese History makes mention of many distinguished and remarkable women, and as far as one can judge the position of women in China is superior to that they occupy in most Oriental lands; but in no Asiatic country is the status of women on a par with what it is where Teutonic and Celtic ideas preponderate . . . .[21]

These remarks from a missionary conference report were followed by the suggestion that the condition of Chinese women could be improved and greater happiness brought into their lives. The education of women and the crusade to abolish footbinding were early steps to achieve this goal.

"Chinese Character"

As the NCH saw it, Chinese society fostered certain general traits of the Chinese people, such as industriousness. The possibility of social mobility encouraged the

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[20] Ibid.

[21] "Women's Conference" NCH (Nov. 2, 1900), p. 1097. A similar view was expressed by the United States Minister to China, Charles Denby, who said that if a country's civilization was tested by the condition of its women, China would hold a low rank. Charles Denby, China and Her People (Boston, Mass.: L. C. Page and Company, 1905), p. 163.

Chinese to work hard. The process of the civil examination system with its delayed rewards contributed to the NCH perception of the Chinese as intelligent, polite, teachable, sober, obedient, and patient. The peasants' apparent acceptance of their life of hard labor with its minimal rewards led the NCH to view them as patient and good-tempered even though they were being exploited. The Westerners thus acknowledged that Chinese society fostered many admirable traits in the Chinese character.

The NCH proclaimed repeatedly that one of the great virtues of the Chinese was their industriousness. From childhood on they were kept busy either working on the farm, in handicrafts, gathering fuel, or studying for the civil examinations:

> The number of Chinese children . . . is literally incalculable, but it may safely be laid down as a general truth, that by far the larger part of the children are for the greater part of their time made to do some useful work.[22]

In an editorial speaking of Chinese colonists in America, Australia, and the Islands of the Pacific, the NCH noted that the Chinese immigrant was a formidable rival to native inhabitants: "He succeeds where others fail and this by dint of economy, frugality, an eye to

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[22]"History of a Chinese Boy," NCH (April 25, 1890), pp. 509-510.

the main chance, and sheer hard work."[23] This same editorial expressed apprehension that in time China would become more dominant and aggressive in world commerce. Once she realized her own strength, the Europeans would feel China's impact more severely in the future. Despite years of urging the Chinese to modernize, the British revealed ambivalent feelings regarding the prospect of favorable Chinese traits leading to a successful China which could compete strongly with the West.

While the NCH chronicled Western admiration for certain Chinese traits, it also revealed that Chinese society seemed to foster qualities that were deplorable in any country. The Westerners accused the Chinese--especially the ruling class--of being chauvinistic, at times xenophobic, dishonest, evasive, and corrupt. The Chinese were further charged with the traits of perfidy, greed, and ingratitude. Some critics spoke of them "as a nation as filthy as Chilians, and as false as the Cretans."[24] However, in the NCH, the attribution of negative characteristics frequently included qualifying

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[23]"The Future of Chinese Enterprise," NCH (Nov. 1, 1882), p. 462. The Westerners observed that Chinese industriousness was a necessity for survival among a teeming population competing for limited resources.

[24]"Chinese Character, From Two Points of View," NCH (March 22, 1870), p. 203.

statements. The negative traits were often considered due to the general poverty, insufficient pay for officials, the former isolation of China, and the rigid, limited education system. Further, there were comparisons with European corruption and superstitions which were considered to be largely a thing of the past, and, one may infer, remediable in China also.[25]

Western merchants, missionaries, and diplomats alike condemned the superstitious practices of the Chinese. Missionaries saw superstition as a hindrance to the promotion of Christianity in China; merchants and diplomats looked at it as an interference in the orderly pursuit of commerce and foreign relations. The NCH chided Western missionaries for ignoring the fact that moral teachings were useless unless accompanied or preceded by intellectual enlightenment:

> Leave the Chinese in their superstitious ignorance and what will be the fate of the Christianity that is introduced among them . . . ? It will have little chance among people who believe that dragons and watersnakes are the cause of natural phenomena . . . .[26]

The broad effects of superstitious practices in China were observed with skepticism and incredulity: "The whole

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[25] Ibid.

[26] "Christianity in China," NCH (Feb. 4, 1885), p. 118.

realm is covered by a thick network of superstitious beliefs."[27] The tools were numerous; "Charms, amulets, horoscopes, divinations, philters, and diablerie of all kinds" and they played an important role in every family, village, city, and dynasty."[28] The Chinese habit of seeking a fortunate day for every occasion beyond the routine (e.g., a trip, marriage, a business transaction, or purchasing land) was looked on as being inhibiting and as strangling progress. There was little expectation of China's modernization until the monster of superstition could be overcome.

On the other hand, it also observed that the middle and lower classes in Europe two hundred years earlier had been quite as superstitious as the nineteenth century Chinese and that even in the 1870's, despite the "march of intellect," superstition still existed in Europe.[29]

Although the Westerners decried superstition, they had mixed feelings about the Chinese conception of honesty. Chinese honesty appeared to be a relative behavior, totally adhered to in some cases and ignored in others. It was not that Europe was totally free of dishonesty; however, the degree of corruption in China

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[27]"Chinese Character," NCH (July 14, 1870), p. 23.

[28]Ibid.

[29]"Chinese Customs," NCH (Feb. 22, 1870), p. 126.

was greater than the Westerners were able to accept with equanimity:

> But the system of peculation which runs through the whole of Chinese official and social life, implies a low moral standard, supplying one of the most forcible contradictions to the national claim to high civilization. . . . Whereas, the officials of the most advanced European countries are as free from suspicion of bribery, as the judges are on inclination to torture.[30]

However, sooner or later a moderate voice would speak up, offering understanding and explanations for Chinese traits that annoyed and frustrated the Westerners. The NCH observed:

> If the Chinese is found to be honest in one place, he is probably honest throughout . . . the average native is honest, the official (who is drawn from the same class) is probably honest too at heart, though he is often the reverse, being the victim of his environment.[31]

This charitable view of officials probably took into account the fact that they were habitually underpaid and resorted to "squeeze" or other exactions to support their positions.

The NCH recorded further traits that appeared to hinder the progress of the Chinese in a modernizing world. Chinese society dictated conformity instead of creativity,

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[30]"Dishonesty in China," NCH (Feb. 12, 1874), p. 130.

[31]"Panacea for China," NCH (July 4, 1900), p. 13.

imitation instead of initiative, and submission instead of leadership. The mass of the peasants was ignorant, which contributed to their burden of poverty. The greater part of the Chinese population was perceived as fatalistic rather than self-determined. Although many of these traits had contributed to the stability and self-sufficiency of China's traditional, agricultural society, Westerners were judging them by a set of values related to imperialism, industrialism, and commercial capitalism.

The British, especially, saw themselves as a fit society for the Chinese to emulate. They believed that their respect for individualism, the freedom to create and innovate and to explore, and the rights accorded women were a striking contrast to the rigidity and stagnation of the Chinese social system. By introducing new expectations, such as the possibility of a higher standard of living, improved health care and education, and rights for women, they added to the seeds of discontent already in the land. In addition, the Westerners cast doubts upon the viability of the four-class social system. While the great majority of the Chinese people were certainly not eager for Western ways, their pain and suffering begged for a change.

Western missionaries established schools to improve the Chinese character. Christianity and secular subjects

were taught to the boys, girls, men, and women of China. An ever-increasing number of Westerners invested their time and energy in this task. At least for a time, they hoped to convert the Chinese to Christianity. The missionary educators established medical education facilities, deaf education, and education for the blind.[32] They also sought to cure opium addicts through Christian teaching, food, prayer, and care, at the same time their fellow countrymen, the Western merchants, were engaged in a profitable opium trade.

In 1887 a missionary named Alexander Williamson initiated an ambitious educational organization called the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese. The members of this group wished to apprise the influential scholars and officials of China of the benefits of Christianity and Western civilization. This ambitious organization believed that Christian missionaries should make use of all that was good in Western culture to transform the entire life of the Empire.

Timothy Richard, the energetic and enthusiastic successor to Williamson, wrote to the NCH and suggested that educational pamphlets be written for the benefit of

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[32]Latourette, pp. 449, 460-461.

the Chinese. Suggested subjects included Educational Systems, The Service of Woman, and Loss incurred by Ignorance. This information was to be distributed to enlighten the scholars and officials.

Richard had been deeply distressed by China's great famine of the 1870's and believed that Christian missions were obliged to help in the reconstruction of the country.[33] He wished to transform the whole Empire for the benefit of all Chinese. The introduction of Western education and the best elements of Western civilization into China to fulfill this need.

While Richard was a leader in promoting the welfare of the entire Empire, he was representative of the increasing number of Protestant missionaries who adopted his philosophy with the passing years. The leading members of the society, Britishers Alexander Williamson and Timothy Richard, and the Americans Young J. Allen and W. A. P. Martin, were all proficient in the Chinese language. Western Knowledge transmitted through the members of this society reached many Chinese intellectuals and gave them a better understanding of the Western methods and institutions.

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[33]Latourette, pp. 378-379.

CHAPTER 5

POLITICAL AND MILITARY REFORM

The pages of the North China Herald chronicled Western perceptions of the Middle Kingdom's political and military institutions. The NCH judged that China's leaders needed qualities such as power, honesty, independence, and most important, the willingness to Westernize. Conversely, the newspaper frequently charged that the emperors were too weak and the Empress too conservative. The dynasty's loyal leading official gained and lost Western esteem with the rise and fall of his political and military achievements. The British, in the NCH, held a pragmatic view of the Manchu dynasty:

> The Tartar Dynasty is not a perfect one, it is true, but it is the best administrative power we have at present, and until a better takes its place, it is the wisdom of foreign nations to bear with its shortcomings, and to help it correct its faults.[1]

The politics of nineteenth-century China involved the British and other Western challenges to the policies of the leaders of the world's most populous state. The Western promotion of political and military reform, that is, "to correct China's faults," was almost unceasing in

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[1] NCH (Sept. 31, 1861), p. 150.

the latter half of the nineteenth century. The British in China believed that they were going to lead the Chinese to a brighter political future. Westernization as a method of saving China from political inefficiency and military backwardness was a major theme in the NCH.

Political Leaders

The Hsien-feng Emperor ascended the throne in 1851 at the age of twenty. Although lacking knowledge of the outside world, he wished to avenge the humiliations of the Opium War. The advisers he chose were anti-foreign and conservative to the extreme. Consequently, his diplomatic relations were unrealistic in the face of the power of the British, French, and others from the West who were determined to force increased trade with China. His eleven-year reign was marred by the Taiping Rebellion and the humiliation of the Arrow War. Hsien-feng was an ineffective Son of Heaven, ruling a militarily weak state.

The death of the Hsien-feng Emperor followed the rigors of his flight from Peking to avoid the British and French troops who sought concessions due to the Arrow War. He was little mourned by the Westerners, and the NCH report of his death was devoid of compassion:

> He died inglorious in his thirtieth year . . . a victim to his appetite and a slave to his passions . . . the first emperor of China who has succumbed to European power.[2]

The assessment of his reign was harsh: "The probabilities are that a better Emperor may succeed--a worse for administrative purposes could not have been."[3]

Consequently, when the dowager empresses thwarted the ambitions of Hsien-feng's conservative advisers to seize power and arrange a coup d'etat of their own, the British were surprised, but not unhappy. The two empresses Tz'u-hsi and Tz'u-an assumed power behind the throne as co-regents for the young T'ung-chih. Tz'u-hsi, the young emperor's mother, assumed the major leadership role.

The NCH looked on the coup d'etat sympathetically and called the conservative advisers to the late emperor "a band of base plotters" who pretended support for their emperor:

> They concoct schemes for their own aggradizement, to the exclusion from power of the late emperor's brother [Prince Kung] who, in concert with the Empresses, is the representative of law and order at home, and friendly relations with the foreigners abroad.[4]

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[2] "Death of the Emperor of China," NCH (Sept. 7, 1861), p. 142.

[3] Ibid.

[4] "Retrospect of Events in China During the Year, 1861," NCH (Jan. 4, 1862), p. 2.

The British expressed praise for Tz'u-hsi for removing the proud and deceitful dictators from the scene and moving forward:

> Amidst these scenes of state revolutions arises the form of a brave, determined woman, the wife of the deceased monarch, devotedly attached to her country. She . . . in conjunction with the princely brother (Kung) of her dead husband, inaugurated a new reign of "Union in the cause of Law and Order."[5]

Speaking optimistically, the editor added that this action was indicative of better prospects at hand to give hope for the dawning of a brighter day in China. Prince Kung's conciliatory attitude toward the Westerners spurred British hopes. His close relationship to Tz'u-hsi afforded him a position of influence. However, the Empress demonstrated her power by arranging to have Prince Kung briefly demoted or deprived of his positions on several occasions.

While the Empresses Dowager maintained their leadership, the suppression of the major rebellions, the T'ung-chih Restoration and the Self-strengthening Movement, gave the dynasty a reprieve from its decline. Upon the death of the young T'ung-chih Emperor in 1875, the Empresses Dowager designated a young child, the son of Prince Ch'un, as successor. The NCH noted that the selection was popularly attributed to Tz'u-hsi, who was the sister of his

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[5]Ibid.

mother.[6] The child was given the reign name of Kuang-hsu. The Herald expressed admiration for the vigor and determination with which Tz'u-hsi and Tz'u-an were able to dominate the rival parties and control princes and ministers.[7]

In the following decade the NCH still had words of praise for Tz'u-hsi: "So thoroughly does she throw off the restraints of royalty as to practice archery, and is even said to be taking lessons in boxing . . . ."[8] The columnist suggests that this activity must scandalize the straitlaced censors of the court. The NCH applauded her independence and refusal to play the role of a subdued widow:

> The Empress Tz'u-hsi has, happily for herself and for China, far more human nature about her; and her name will certainly descend to future generations, in the histories now being compiled, as that of the first good Empress that China ever had . . . .[9]

The Empress Tz'u-hsi may have been treated more kindly by history had not her good health sustained her to suffer the humiliation of the Japanese aggression, the

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[6] "The New Emperor," NCH (Feb. 4, 1875), p. 3.

[7] Ibid.

[8] "Three Empresses of China," NCH (Sept. 19, 1885), p. 331.

[9] Ibid.

condemnation following the aborted 100-day Reform, and the ill will generated through her support of the Boxer Rebellion.

Bitter words expressed the general feelings of the British toward Tz'u-hsi in 1898 as they deplored her termination of the reforms initiated by the Kuang-hsu Emperor and his adviser K'ang Yu-wei. The NCH scathingly reported that the emperor had been deposed: "The long-expected blow has fallen, and the clever old lady at Peking of whom Chinese and Manchus of all ranks and stations are in awe has had her way at last."[10] Though her fears of losing her own power were legitimate in the nature of the reforms, the sympathies of the NCH were with Kuang-hsu:

> It is a monstrous thing that a usurper like the Empress Dowager should be allowed to control . . . a nation of 350 million of people . . . . and to postpone for at least another ten years, if she lives so long, the reform which the rightful Emperor was anxious to introduce . . . ."[11]

To the disappointment and chagrin of many, she did live another ten years.

Tz'u-hsi had supported moderate reform, but she became more conservative in the face of escalating demands

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[10]"The New Emperor," NCH (Jan. 30, 1900), p. 181.

[11]Ibid.

from the West and Japan. The slogan which Chang Chih-tung made famous in the 1890's, "Chinese learning for the fundamental principles, Western learning for practical application,"[12] reflected Tz'u-hsi's conviction. Her power to halt Kuang-hsu's reforms was confirmed when no one had both the ability and desire to come forth and support him in his struggle for leadership.

The NCH asserted that Tz-u'hsi's strength developed from her appointment of all the leading officials for the empire. In addition, the Manchus supported her because any change would interfere with their comfortable, lucrative positions. The newspaper noted a further asset:

> But the one fact which gives her greatest strength is the intimate knowledge she possesses of all the affairs of state . . . she has the closest acquaintance with the events of the last 50 years . . . . She has gained the self-confidence which comes from invariable success.[13]

In addition, the regional and personal jealousies of Chinese leaders precluded any cooperative effort to depose Tz'u-hsi. She clung to power behind the throne until her death in 1908.

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[12]Ssu-yu Teng and John K. Fairbank, eds., China's Response to the West, A Documentary Survey 1839-1923 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954), p. 144; Chang Chih-tung was a liberal official who worked for reforms as well as a conservative scholar who opposed parliamentary government.

[13]"The New Emperor," NCH (Jan. 30, 1900), p. 181.

T'ung-chih and Kuang-hsu, the two young emperors of the latter half of the nineteenth century, were weak rulers who were overshadowed by a dominating Empress Tz'u-hsi. She was instrumental in choosing them in their extreme youth, in order to extend her time of power as Regent. Though Empress Dowager Tz'u-an also served as co-Regent during her lifetime, and Prince Kung served as adviser for T'ung-chih, neither ever garnered the power that Tz'u-hsi held. In effect T'ung-chih and Kuang-hsu reigned under Tz'u-hsi's direction and were restrained by her if they strayed from her chosen path. The NCH testifies that Westerners were fully aware of the emperor's role:

> Nominally ascending the throne in 1862, the child Emperor then had the affairs of his vast domain administered for him by the Empresses Dowager as Regents with his uncle Prince Kung for their chief adviser.[14]

T'ung-chih, the son of the Hsien-feng Emperor and the Empress Tz'u-hsi, was declared the heir apparent the day before the death of his father. The T'ung-chih Emperor is best known for the period of restoration from 1862-1874 that bore his name. However, his role has been recognized as largely symbolic: "It should be remembered that the Chinese Emperor was always more important as a function than as a personality." Therefore it followed that, "The concurrence of a ritually acceptable Emperor

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[14]"Death of the Emperor of China," NCH (Jan. 28, 1875), p. 70.

and a group of capable officials" would then be "the equivalent of a strong, able, and virtuous ruler."[15]

While the youthful Emperor pursued his studies, the Manchu leaders reluctantly entered a period of some cooperation with the West. Prince Kung realized the strength of the West and supported a policy of peaceful relations with the foreigners in order to give China time to strengthen herself. However, the British were never satisfied with the state of progress in China. The Herald reaffirmed T'ung-chih's weakness while berating the literati for refusing to support modern education for the masses:

> If this official swarm of locusts can be checked, civilization will have free course to win its victory. We have no strong ruler to fight, for the Emperor is a boy of sixteen, without any personal qualities that make him formidable.[16]

Perhaps the T'ung-chih Emperor's most noteworthy public appearance was to receive foreign diplomats at his palace in 1873 following years of court maneuvering to delay this ritual. The foreigners wanted an audience in order to formally establish their positions as diplomatic equals rather than tributary states. Furthermore, they

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[15]Mary C. Wright, The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T'ung-chih Restoration 1862-1874 (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1962), p. 50.

[16]"The Mandarins and the Masses," NCH (March 7, 1872), p. 181.

felt that if they could see the emperor and his court, they could convince them of the value of Western civilization.[17]

A review of the emperor's "audience" reveals that the long-awaited ritual may have had symbolic value; however, the NCH columnist viewed it with cynicism: "We are somewhat at a loss to discover why Mr. Thomas Wade [the British minister to China] should have considered the ceremony as one calling for jubilation of any sort."[18] The writer further noted that the Tsungli Yamen, ministers, and the emperor himself appeared to be unwilling participants, barely veiling their distaste.

The NCH reported the substance of the T'ung-chih Emperor's audience with the foreign diplomats: "They found an insignificant looking lad, seated cross-legged on a throne overlooking a dais . . . . The Emperor being apparently too nervous to speak, Prince Kung acted as spokesman for him."[19] The message given was that all future matters of foreign affairs should be arranged by the foreign ministers and that Tsungli Yamen. This indicated that no practical audiences were to be granted

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[17]"The Reinstatement of Prince Kung," NCH (Sept. 26, 1874), p. 308.

[18]"The Audience," NCH (May 23, 1874), pp. 445-446.

[19]Ibid., p. 446.

with the emperor. Indeed, the audience seemed anti-climatic after the many years of frustration suffered in pursuit of this elusive goal.

Although the T'ung-chih Emperor married the young lady of his choice, his mother did not approve. The Emperor's mother, the eunuchs, and court officials interfered with his decisions to the extent that he chose to escape by neglecting his duties and turning to the pleasure quarters. The reign of the eighteen-year-old lad came to an end when he fell ill and died January 12, 1875, officially of smallpox, but unofficially of syphillis. Unofficial reports also declared: "Whatever the cause of his untimely end, the Empress Dowager did nothing to prevent it, and did a great deal to promote it."[20] The frail young Emperor had played such a passive role during his reign that the newspaper had little to say about him except to express regrets for his early death: "We have but meagre data at present upon which to form an estimate of the character and the capacity of the deceased Emperor . . . ."[21] A pressing concern of the British was the possibility that the court would once more select a young child as heir to the throne. Such a move would

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[20]Arthur W. Hummel, ed., Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1944), volume 2, p. 731.

[21]"Death of the Emperor of China," NCH (Jan. 28, 1875), p. 70.

allow the re-establishment of the conservative regency to the detriment of any improvement in foreign relations. In this circumstance the stage was set for the reign of the Kuang-hsu Emperor.

As Kuang-hsu's reign began, the North China Herald ran headlines about the "New Emperor" announcing that he was a cousin of the late ruler. The child ruler was not quite four years old. Kuang-hsu remained a model of filial piety during his minority. However, he was being exposed to new and progressive ideas by his tutor Weng T'ung-ho, who had become an advocate of conservative reform. Weng was assigned as tutor to Kuang-hsu in 1876 and served in that post for twenty years. He thereby developed a close relationship and considerable influence over the Emperor, while maintaining good connections with Tz'u-hsi. Weng was well well-aware of possible opposition to reform from Tz'u-hsi and limited his proposals to ideas of moderate reform. His proposed reforms would have provided limited administrative reorganization and adoption of some Western implements.[22]

When the Kuang-hsu Emperor assumed personal rule in 1889, he showed an interest in reform. Weng provided him with literature on conservative reform. The Emperor began

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[22]Hummel, pp. 860-861.

to read Western translations in 1889, and began to learn English in 1891. His interest escalated when he became acquainted with K'ang Yu-wei through Weng. Weng wanted K'ang's aid in implementing moderate reform proposals. However, K'ang had a radical reform program of his own. As the Emperor became interested in K'ang's ideas, Weng turned away from K'ang's radical views and rejected him. Kuang-hsu was perplexed by this turn of events, but when it came to a choice between the two, he dismissed Weng and decided to support K'ang's proposals. With his first major independent decision he supported the most radical reform proposals that had emanated from the throne in the nineteenth century.

The British supported the goals of the Kuang-hsu Emperor and his adviser K'ang Yu-wei during the time of this budding reform movement. The British desire to maintain an open market, with a politically and economically progressive China seemed to be best served by the reform movement. The reformers planned to slash much of the old bureaucratic structure, update the civil service examinations, expand the number of educational institutions offering both Chinese and Western studies, and promote industry. Thus these "radical" reforms would implement innovations that the British had been encouraging for decades.

Russia preferred the conservative leadership of the Empress Dowager Tz'u-hsi and her supporters. The moderate reforms which the Empress Dowager backed remained within the framework of traditional Confucian institutions. Russia had profitted from the decisions of Tz'u-hsi and her emissary, Li Hung-chang. In the 1896 negotiations with Li, Russia won the right to build and control a railway in North China. The concession was in exchange for a Sino-Russian mutual aid pact in the event of Japanese aggression. In addition, Russia had occupied Port Arthur and Dairen between December 1897 and March 1898 on the pretense of protecting China from Germany. The Russian neighbor then demanded and secured railway-building privileges in Liaotung. The valuable Russian-held concessions might be swept away under Kuang-hsi's proposed reforms. British supporters of the Emperor's reforms condemned Li Hung-chang's conciliatory attitude toward the escalating Russian appropriation of Chinese territory.

The NCH showed strong approval of the Kuang-hsu Emperor's leadership as he issued numerous decrees in June 1898 ordering reform in education, government administration, industry, and international cultural exchange. The newspaper commended his understanding of domestic and foreign politics:

> The Emperor was recently described: "a rather melancholy looking boy with sad eyes but decidely intelligent. . . ! Now his recent reform edicts show that he has become a man with a will of his own . . . much to the chagrin of some of the ignorant old fogies who have been running things their own way for many years. . . .[23]

The British were delighted to have the Emperor joining in their battle with the conservatives.

The high hopes of the NCH and the Emperor's moments of leadership were soon dashed as the Emperor's whereabouts became a cause for concern on September 22, 1898. In a coup d'etat, Tz'u-hsi resumed control of the government. The NCH reported: "The fears that we expressed that the Emperor of China was going too fast for his own safety . . . have been promptly realized, and at the present moment China, as far as we know has no Emperor."[24] Then came rumors that he was believed to be confined on a small island in a lake on the palace grounds, incommunicado from the rest of the world.[25] This was indeed the truth.

The young Emperor had become the victim of a plot among conservative officials. The Empress Dowager had

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[23]"The Dismissal of Li from the Tsungli Yamen," NCH (Sept. 12, 1898), p. 479.

[24]"The Deposition of the Emperor," NCH (Sept. 26, 1898), pp. 579-580.

[25]"The Situation," NCH (Oct. 17, 1898), pp. 705-706.

accepted some reform proposals, but was opposed to many others. She finally arranged the coup when conservatives, who feared the loss of their privileges through reform, issued a false story telling her that the Emperor had sought foreign support to eliminate her. She fell into their trap, and the Emperor's reforms were ended after 103 days. Tz'u-hsi regained control of the government. British hopes for radical reform in China were frustrated once more.

Kuang-hsu had received some warning of the coup and was able to warn some of his followers. Some of his closest followers were killed and others imprisoned. He was not able to gather any military support for his own cause. The NCH defended Kuang-hsu's followers' thwarted attempt to preserve their own lives and conserve the cause of reform. The NCH openly expressed British sympathy for the radical reformer K'ang Yu-wei:

> . . . but it is to be hoped that he will come down to Shanghai in an English steamer, and that her captain will not allow him to be taken away from the protection of the British flag.[26]

K'ang, aided by the British, escaped to Hong Kong and then to Japan where his safety was assured by the Tokyo government.

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[26]"The Deposition," NCH (Sept. 26, 1898), pp. 579-580.

The NCH applauded the Emperor's efforts in trying to save his country and bring prosperity through reform. The Herald denounced the Emperor's detractors:

> The opposition to the Emperor by the Empress Dowager and her supporters was due to their jealousy of the power which the Emperor was taking into his own hands . . . . No matter what activity he might show, he was going to receive opposition from the same quarter.[27]

The NCH added that there could be no doubt that reforms would have been welcomed by the people of China. Here the British certainly projected some of their own wishes for a strong, but not too strong, trading partner in China.

The newspaper declared that the Emperor was aware that China was at the mercy of any country which would demand territory. The British were particularly concerned by the persistent encroachment of Russia on Chinese territory. Though the British joined other foreign nations in the scramble for concessions in China, they wanted to avoid further partitioning of China and to hold to an open trade policy throughout its territory.

Although in principle Kuang-hsu's reign lasted until 1908, his reform movement was decimated. The NCH summed up the situation:

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[27]"A Key to the Situation," NCH (Oct. 10, 1989), p. 662.

> The Reform party has the sympathy of many, but no leader . . . . The hundreds of thousands of young Chinese who revere their real Emperor and hate the present ruler have no one to take command of them and their dissatisfaction will have no practical result.[28]

Whether or not the British or the Chinese people approved of radical reform, it was not to occur in the lifetime of the Kuang-hsu Emperor.

Western awareness of the weaknesses of the aforementioned emperors was chronicled in the NCH. The Hsien-feng Emperor succumbed to the poor advice of his counselors and his inability to negotiate with the British and the French. T'ung-chih played a symbolic role in the T'ung-chih Restoration, but died at an early age and produced no personal achievements as a ruler. By the time that Kuang-hsu had developed ideas of leadership and reform, the Empress Dowager Tz'u-hsi was firmly entrenched in power. She was willing to entertain moderate, but not radical, reform. Kuang-hsu was not able to gather sufficient support to challenge her leadership. The weaknesses of these emperors simply confirmed the British belief that China's survival as a nation depended on thorough institutional reform.

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[28]"The New Emperor," NCH (Jan. 30, 1900), p. 181.

Provincial leaders such as Li Hung-chang were necessary to the survival of the Manchu rulers. Li was the Ch'ing dynasty's leading advocate of Western technology in the latter half of the nineteenth century. He was born in Anhwei, earned the chin-shih degree in 1847, and entered the Hanlin Academy. Li served the Empress Dowager Tz'u-hsi faithfully as military leader, provincial official, diplomat, and in numerous administrative positions. She put her trust in him as long as he lived, and he responded with faithful and energetic support.[29]

Li was immediately impressed with Western arms and ammunition used by the English officer-on-leave Charles Gordon who led the Ever-Victorious Army to victories over the Taiping rebels. The recognition of this superior technology led him to take a major role in China's Self-strengthening Movement. An important goal of the Self-strengtheners was the use of modern Western military technology to stave off further intrusion by the West. Li sponsored many modernization projects in China. These included the building of arsenals, mines, steamships, and the encouragement of Western learning. The NCH cited his support of the foreign arsenal established by Halliday

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[29]Herbert A. Giles, A Chinese Biographical Dictionary (London: B. Quaritch, 1898), p. 438.

Macartney as a recognition of respect for Western civilization. This, the writer said, "can only arise from a conviction that foreign methods are incomparably superior to native and that the honor of a high class foreigner may be implicitly depended on."[30]

Li was given the post of Commissioner of Trade for the Northern Ports in 1870. At the same time he became governor-general of Chihli. In his role as Commissioner of Trade, stationed at Tientsin, his office became virtually China's foreign office for the following quarter of a century. He participated in nearly every foreign treaty negotiation until the end of the century. As a result, the NCH commented on him frequently.

While serving as governor-general of Chihli, Li submitted a memorial to the emperor, requesting an increase in the number of steamers of the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company (C.M.S.N. Co.). They were to be used commercially in times of peace and to serve as warships for the country in time of war. The ambivalence of Western feelings regarding promotion of China's progress burst forth in the NCH's response to the news: "This

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[30]"Retrospect of Events in the North of China During the Year 1864," NCH (Jan. 7, 1865), p. 3.

prospective enlargement of the C.M.S.N. Company's fleet is a serious menace to foreign shipping interests."[31]

In 1882 the NCH praised Li for establishing an institution to educate and care for poor boys, girls, and women of Tientsin. He had gathered support from rich citizens for this organization, which also cared for and treated opium smokers. The newspaper mentioned that Li also assisted a Christian Mission hospital in Tientsin though China had its own charitable institutions, the NCH chose to focus on Western example: "He knows that there are many good things among foreign institutions of a Christian and charitable type which China might imitate."[32] And, giving credit to his broad interests, the writer added:

> Foreign residents in China will not fail to recognize in the Viceroy Li, a man who cannot only see the value of steam navigation and coal mining, but takes pleasure in philanthropic enterprise on an extensive scale.[33]

At this time the NCH seemed quite satisfied with Li's actions and efforts to promote Westernization.

However, after his Huai army and Peiyang fleet were defeated in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, Li was in

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[31]"Summary of the News," NCH (Jan. 21, 1875), p. 47.

[32]"Viceroy Li's Charities," NCH (June 9, 1882), p. 620.

[33]Ibid.

disgrace. Russia had reneged on a promise to help against Japan, Britain remained neutral, and the other provincial naval forces remained aloof from the battle. Regionalism had severely weakened Li's defense. Furthermore, even though Li had spent millions of taels on defense, there was corruption in his ranks which resulted in inadequate supplies of arms and ammunition. The NCH blamed widespread dishonesty for China's fall:

> That single word which appears to sum up the causes of China's fall is Dishonesty. Far and wide . . . the curse of thieving disintegrates every section of the native system . . . . In comparison with it the curse of ignorance is nothing.[34]

The newspaper suggested that Japan's victory should not have been a surprise to those acquainted with China. Japan plainly knew the Middle Kingdom's weakened condition better than China's own leaders and chose to take advantage of this knowledge. There was a sense of frustration towards China's refusal to correct her own vulnerability. The British now focused on Li's position as a member of the corrupt officialdom and criticized him accordingly.

When Li was called upon to negotiate the peace treaty, the NCH commented that he was not the man to procure his country, "Peace with honor," but he was "the

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[34] "The Problem of China's Fall," NCH (April 5, 1895), p. 504.

only man who at the present crisis can obtain peace at all."[35] Although Li had done far more than any of his peers to implement technological modernization, he had in the main neglected Western political systems and culture. Much of the British disenchantment with Li involved his support of the moribund Ching dynasty. The Sino-Japanese war was testimony to the throne's lack of political coordination or investment in modernization, which rendered individual and provincial efforts fruitless. Dishonesty aside, British expectations concerning Li Hung-chang were probably unrealistic in the face of strong Manchu and literati resistance to change.

The problems of political leadership and reform in China were a constant challenge to the Western belief in the value of modernization. As China's political position deteriorated, there was hope that progressive literati would appreciate the need for reform. From the missionary community, Timothy Richard used the NCH to make a call for the "Enlightenment of China."[36] As a leading member of the Society for the Diffusion of

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[35]"Viceroy Li as Envoy to Japan," NCH (Feb. 22, 1895), p. 264.

[36]Timothy Richard, "The Enlightenment of China," NCH (Feb. 26, 1892), p. 246.

Christian and General Knowledge Among the Chinese (SDK),[37] he wished to furnish useful study materials for the growing number of officials and other educated people who were interested in reform for China. Since the young Kuang-hsu Emperor had become interested in studying ideas of reform and was learning Western languages, there was hope for change. The SDK recognized the need to reach the influential upper classes.

The NCH presented an account of Timothy Richard's proposal for reform in China. Among the basic areas of concern listed was the problem of how to give peace to the nation. With true missionary zeal, he listed over sixty subjects to be presented for Chinese enlightenment. These topics ranged from world history, to international law and government, to reformation without revolution. Richard proposed that information about each subject be published in brief pamphlets which stressed the value of the subject. Revealing a sense of urgency, he asked that all the topics be written up by the last day of that year (1892). He hoped to put the best of Western information before the Chinese at the earliest possible

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[37]The SDK was initiated by Christian missionaries but not limited to them. The SDK was a voluntary association geared to intellectual and political goals. It published a large variety of material concerning Western learning and world affairs.

date.[38] The writings and translations were meant to appeal to reform-minded literati.

The Westerners persisted in their attempts to promote modernization. They were encouraged when the young Emperor studied Richard's translation of Robert Mackenzie's The History of the Nineteenth Century.[39] Through SDK publications concerning Western culture and ideology and current world affairs, Richard and other missionaries wielded far greater influence than they had through their efforts to spread Christianity in China.

As the NCH saw it, reform-minded Chinese leaders and intellectuals were further convinced of the need for change by the shock of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). High-spirited young patriots were grieved by the condition of their country. The scramble for concessions, initiated by Russia and Germany, and continued by Great Britain, France, and Japan in 1897 and 1898, added to their woes. Western writings had convinced them that only complete reform could save their country.[40]

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[38]Timothy Richard, "Enlightenment," NCH, p. 246.

[39]Hao Chang, "Intellectual Change and the Reform Movement, 1890-1898," Cambridge History of China, volume 2, part 2, p. 320.

[40]"Reform in China," NCH (Nov. 28, 1898), pp. 985-986.

Furthermore, the NCH complained that the foreign legations failed to support Kuang-hsu's efforts: "Even the most conservative foreigner in Peking must admit that the only hope of holding China together is the introduction of the reforms that the Emperor tried to set in motion."[41] Fears that China would be partitioned moved the NCH to add, "The policy of our government should certainly not be led by the powers that are not anxious to see China continue to hold together."[42]

Military Affairs

China's problems with the West were compounded by internal rebellions which included the Taiping, Nien, Muslim, and Boxer outbreaks. The British considered China's internal strife as detrimental to Western interests there. The West was so convinced of its military superiority over the Chinese that it had no fear of sharing its expertise with the Middle Kingdom. Therefore, the British encouraged the Chinese to modernize through the use of Western technology and institutional methods. The Chinese military forces were interested in the advantages of Western technology but showed little interest in institutional change.

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

The West began to view the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864) with alarm when the marauding rebels appeared to seriously threaten the stability of the Manchu dynasty. In the early phases of the Taiping Rebellion, many British had viewed the rebels as pro-Christian and pro-foreign, and hoped they would introduce worthwhile reforms. The British were impressed that the Taiping leaders had studied Biblical literature furnished by Christian missionaries. Furthermore, the lofty goals they proclaimed as Taiping ideology seemed a real threat to China's stagnant institutions. However, the West soon realized that the rebels were spreading violence and destruction and generally failed to secure and administer the areas they conquered. Western sympathy for the rebels soon vanished.

As the Taiping forces grew in strength, Western arms and other forms of aid were provided for the Chinese military forces.[43] Aid in the form of Western military technology gave the Chinese Self-strengthening Movement a boost. The British ignored or brushed aside the fact that China's major interest in Western armaments was her wish to control the Western "barbarians" once the Taipings had been subdued.

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[43]For further information concerning the Taipings see Lo Erh-kang 羅爾綱, T'ai-p'ing t'ien-kuo shih-kao 太平天國史稿 (Draft history of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom). Peking: Chung-hua, 1957.

As Western military aid coincided with a wave of Manchu victories over the Taipings, the NCH quickly pointed to this as proof that, through friendly foreign relations, China had achieved what she had been incapable of doing alone. The NCH optimistically reported that the Westerners had now stamped more permanently "their genius of Peace and War upon the reformed institutions of China" and had made an indelible impression on Chinese history.[44] Furthermore, they expressed pleasure that the numerous foreign settlements were "scattering benefits of western civilization . . . over these undeveloped regions of the far east."[45] The British mood was that of a benevolent teacher helping a struggling student. They were elated that the Chinese had made use of Western military technology and guidance which had been provided by the British, French, and Americans.

The Taipings' dissatisfaction with the ruling dynasty was shared by other rebel groups. The military weakness and official corruption of the Manchu dynasty fostered the spread of the Nien and Muslim rebellions in the 1850's.[46]

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[44] Ibid., "Retrospect of Events in North China During 1862" NCH (Jan. 3, 1863), p. 2.

[45] Ibid.

[46] The term nien was a generic term meaning a common type of bandit group. The term came to signify a specific organization with consciousness of its corporate identity. Philip A. Kuhn, "The Taiping Rebellion," Cambridge History of China, volume 10, part 1, pp. 310-312.

The British looked upon the dynasty's efforts to halt the Nien and Muslim rebellions as glaring examples of incompetent planning, confusion, and mismanagement. The NCH suggested that the Chinese military forces would be more effective if they concentrated their efforts on subduing one rebellion at a time rather than scattering their efforts about fruitlessly.

When the Niens boldly entered Chihli, moving close to Peking, the NCH declared: "If any further proof were wanted of the utter inability of the existing dynasty to maintain order in the empire, the last outbreak furnishes it."[47] The writer noted that the Imperial troops protecting Chihli indulged in marauding to such an extent that they spread fear nearly as much as the Nien rebels. Muslim rebels were plundering various areas of China concurrently with the Niens. This reinforced the British view that the dynasty held only feeble control over much of its territory. A familiar refrain was expressed: "The difficulty of moving troops, in a country lacking means of rapid transit, may also partially account for the dilatory suppression of these outbreaks."[48] This statement reflected the Western belief in a system of railroads as a remedy for

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[47] "The Rebels," NCH (April 24, 1868), p. 183.

[48] Ibid.

many of China's problems. In addition, lack of regional cooperation hampered progress.

The Westerners had the firm perception that the Chinese military was fragmented and uncoordinated. The NCH focused on Li Hung-chang's "independent" behavior and his strength in dealing with the Nien and Muslim rebellions. Li's troops were well-disciplined and well-armed, chiefly with foreign weapons. During the fight against the Niens, Li was ordered to march into Chihli and surrender his command of his army to Tso Kung-pao, but according to the NCH Li declined and presumably remained in Shantung.[49]

The NCH also believed that rivalries between Tso Tsung-t'ang and Li interfered with the campaign against the Muslims. Whether justified or not, the NCH speculated that Li wanted the glory of crushing the Muslims and was reluctant to furnish troops to gain glory for his rival, Tso. The NCH declared: "We believe, ourselves, that Li will go where he purposes going. If it be his ambition to restore peace in Kansu, he will go there . . . ."[50]

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[49]For further information about Li Hung-chang 李鴻章, see Li Wen-chung kung ch'uan-chi 李文忠公全集 (Complete papers of Li Hung-chang). Shanghai: Commercial Press, photo reprint of Nanking, 1905 edn.; Taipei: Wen-hai reproduction, 1962.

[50]"Li and the Mahomedan Rebellion," NCH (March 14, 1872), p. 200.

Escalating foreign pressures contributed to a rising anti-foreignism which was manifested in the Boxer Rebellion (1900). The advent of the Boxer uprising created a serious problem in North China. The members of the Peking legation were stationed in a precarious position. However, even before the allied troops relieved the Peking foreign legations from siege in mid-August, the NCH optimistically wrote "A Chance for a New China." Confident that the Boxers would be suppressed, the NCH article proposed principles to guide the foreign governments in coming to a settlement. A major principle was to abandon all ideas of partition and to accompany this resolve with support for progressive Viceroys. In addition, a largely native civil service was to be established on the model of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service which was headed by an able British administrator, Robert Hart.[51]

While Western troops engaged in military action against the Boxers in North China, a peace-keeping arrangement had been made with the Viceroys in the south. The Viceroys such as Li Hung-chang and Chang Chih-tung, who were realistic about China's military strength, had little desire to support the Boxers. The British were not

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[51]"A Chance for a New China," NCH (July 25, 1900), p. 174.

interested in fighting an all-out war in China. It was to their advantage to have the fighting contained to a limited area. Despite Chinese cooperation in the south, the Boxers' anti-foreign movement confirmed the need to review Western policies toward China.

In December of 1900 the NCH explored reasons for the Chinese anti-foreign sentiment which triggered the Boxer uprising. First, the conservative Manchus and mandarins were blamed for supporting undesirable characters under the Boxer umbrella. Next it was suggested that the Chinese people had developed more luxurious tastes in food through contact with foreigners. Then four years of famine in the provinces of Shantung, Chihli, and Shansi had resulted in unrest. A third reason was the introduction of railroads which had put carrying coolies and boatmen out of work: the effect was devastating on this poverty-stricken class.[52] Next came a veritable litany of factors contributing to the Boxer uprising:

> The seizure of land by Russia, Germany and England . . . the Japanese war and consequent indemnity, the outspokenness of the Reform Party who were believed to be under the protection of the foreigners.[53]

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[52]"The Chinese Crisis: Its Causes and How to Remove Them," NCH (Dec. 5, 1900), p. 1187.

[53]Ibid.

In spite of this acknowledgment of mixed responsibility, the NCH attributed the brunt of the blame to the conservative Manchus and mandarins who did not want to share their power or knowledge with the masses.

The Herald's unrelenting cry for reform in China related directly to British perception of their own role there. The newspaper expressed the conviction that the British had a greater stake in China's fortunes than any other country could claim. The Western cry that China needed military and political reform was frequently repeated during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

One suggestion for reform came from Charles Gordon, the former leader of the Ever-Victorious Army which had done so well against the Taipings. Gordon observed that China's armaments were insufficient to protect the central government in such a vulnerable location as Peking. He also felt the isolated position of the court was keeping the leaders from understanding the needs and desires of the citizens. He proposed that China's citizens should petition the central government to move to a more central location so that government leaders would have closer contact with the Chinese people. Gordon reasoned that a

"proud people like the Chinese" might weary of constant humiliation and turn to anarchy and rebellion.[54]

[54]"The Source of China's Troubles and the Remedy," NCH (Jan. 18, 1881), p. 53.

CHAPTER 6

HIGH CULTURE

The Westerners living in nineteenth-century China usually arrived there with scant knowledge of Chinese intellectual life and cultural achievements. However, they soon developed a lively interest in Chinese culture. Many missionaries, in particular, took a serious interest in the "high culture" of China. "High culture" here refers to the "great tradition" of philosophy, religion, literature, and the fine arts carried out by an elite group for the edification of all. The "great tradition" of philosophy, the classics, poetry, prose, painting, and sculpture is to be noted here as separate from the "little tradition" carried out by the masses, such as folk tales and folk crafts of a less creative or less reflective nature, and seen in the lives of unlettered villagers.

The missionaries looked to the sages and the arts of Chinese history in order better to understand the Empire and to make their Christian message more effective. Their scholarly work, comments, and debates on Chinese intellectual life and culture were frequently published in the NCH. Praise and criticism were intermingled. The goals of the missionaries prompted them to develop skills in

the Chinese language whereas the merchants frequently depended on translators.

Philosophy and Religion

The missionaries, and in some measure the merchants, entertained the belief that Christianity might supersede Confucianism. A missionary conference at Chefoo in 1874 revealed that Christian ministers in China had indeed reconsidered some of the early methods of evangelization. The NCH reported the missionaries belief that they had made a serious mistake in their early ministry in China when they had denounced the work of Confucius and Mencius. Some of them now believed that the writings of Confucius and Mencius would become integral parts of future Christian civilization in China.[1]

Not all missionaries were equally well-educated but all could benefit from the works of Sinologues such as James Legge. In the 1840's he began the English translation of the entire Confucian cannon. He undertook this work in the belief that Christian zeal should be tempered by knowledge. The NCH praised the Edinburgh Review for reviewing James Legge's edition of Mencius. The newspaper commented that the more widespread the knowledge of the

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[1]"Chefoo Missionary Conference," NCH (Sept. 5, 1874), p. 236.

doctrines of the Chinese philosophers and politicians, the better it would be for all.[2] This was soon followed by a commentary which said the review itself gave a clear, concise understanding of Mencius' tenets. The NCH concluded that it supported the fact that these writings would not have been treasured for two thousand years unless they held some great truth.[3] In the 1880's and the 1890's the newspaper continued to publish excerpts of new translations of the Chinese classics, evidence of the escalating interest in them. However, James Legge's translation has remained a standard among Sinologists.

The study of Confucian teaching led one missionary to give it credit for unity in the nation:

> Benevolence, integrity, propriety, wisdom, and sincerity, are the five virtues inculcated for universal observance, and they are esteemed as the highest excellence of men. So far as their favour . . . . we believe that it is greatly owing to this, that they have existed as a nation so long . . . in such an orderly and prosperous condition.[4]

This paean of praise was taken from a book by William Muirhead which was reviewed in the NCH. The editor, Richard S. Gundry, supported these observations, but he

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[2]"Mencius," NCH (Oct. 2, 1875), p. 324.

[3]"Mencius: An Essay in the Edinburgh Review," NCH (Oct. 14, 1875), p. 373.

[4]"Chinese National Character," NCH (June 9, 1870), p. 425.

added that the Western mission was to teach the Chinese people to think for themselves so they would strive forward instead of backward.[5]

The Confucian way of life was supported by the civil examination system. The NCH contrasted the geographical rivalries and hostilities which contravened unity among the Chinese people with the stabilizing effect of the civil examination system. The newspaper supported T. T. Meadows' judgment that the system of competitive examinations held the Empire together:

> By throwing open all posts of honor and employment to ostensibly open competition the Chinese Government secures on the side of stability all the best talent of young China, and knits together the provinces in a common interest.[6]

Conversely, the majority of Westerners criticized the Confucian path. One NCH columnist who expressed impatience with Confucian teaching accused the system of producing a narrow, often bigoted, intellectual elite, and a lifetime of intellectual stagnation for the remainder of society:

> We charge Confucianism with being intellectually one of the most elaborate, compendious and far reaching failure which has ever wrought out its ultimate results upon this distracted earth.[7]

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[5] Ibid.

[6] "Mr. T. T. Meadows on Imperial Federation," NCH (Jan. 17, 1890), p. 58.

[7] "Natural History of a Chinese Boy," NCH (May 9, 1890), p. 574.

One disgruntled NCH writer, no doubt more interested in commerce than courtesy, complained: "Confucius was scarcely an economist, and a nation governed entirely by moral maxims uttered two-thousand years ago is not likely to prosper in the nineteenth century."[8] Since officials educated in the Confucian classics often blocked British efforts to expand trade, they were a particular source of irritation to British merchants. Merchants were at the bottom of the social scale in China, and proper Confucianists frowned upon the pursuit of profit. Thus Confucianism became a target of the Westerners' frustration.

There were further complaints against the civil examinations. The NCH roundly criticized the method of teaching for its emphasis on memorization and likened it to working lime into the texture of cashbags "by incessant pounding on a resisting surface" to introduce mental concepts into the scholars' minds. The writer expressed amazement that a better way had not been introduced. Furthermore, he berated the content of the examinations:

> It . . . is a complete familiarity with the arid verbiage of the Four Books and the Five Classics besides a certain modicum of Knowledge of the history and ancient geography of China, but China only.[9]

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[8]"Senility of China," NCH (Jan. 7, 1885), p. 5.

[9]"The Literati," NCH (Sept. 22, 1890), p. 218.

The British believed that the Chinese should also incorporate the scientific and industrial knowledge of the West into their educational system.

Further complaints dealt with the graduates of the civil examination system--the anti-Western corporation of "literati" which "is pledged to a life and death struggle against the further introduction of Western ideas . . . ."[10] The Chinese officials risked losing their power and prestige through institutional change and were understandably reluctant to press forward with modernization under Western direction. The hesitation led the NCH columnist to term the Confucian educational system as "the fountain and origin of more than half our ills and those of the country itself."[11]

In addition to Confucianism, the NCH also reflected Western interest in Taoism. The newspaper called the ancient sage Lao Tzu a unique philosopher and added that it was remarkable that he should have been found in China since India or Greece would have been more suitable. The writer contrasted Lao Tzu's idealism with the pragmatism of Confucius. The article claimed that Lao Tzu felt the influence of idealistic thought coming from the West, and

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

that he had intended to go to the West, for he had pondered its idealistic thought for many years. The NCH also called for the study of comparative religion. The writer claimed that it was time to move beyond mere translations of the words of Lao Tzu and to study the true meaning of Taoism. The columnist praised a Mr. Balfour for his attempt to render Lao Tzu in a religious sense through the translation of an unidentified Taoist commentary on the work of Lao Tzu (possibly The Philosopher Who Embraces Simplicity--a work in religious Taoism from the philosophic point of view). Numerous other translations had vocused mainly on the correct literary translation of the work of Lao Tzu.[12] While the NCH declared that the treatise of Lao Tzu was a Chinese reflection of Hindu philosophy, it credited Lao Tzu's doctrine of passivity as applied to the art of government as being his own with nothing distinctively foreign. Because of his application of philosophy to politics and what was considered his evolutionary doctrine, the NCH called Lao Tzu the Plato of China.[13]

The NCH also called attention to James Legge's new translation of Chuang Tzu and praised Chuang Tzu for his poetic soul and ascetic creed. The writer compared Chuang

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[12]"The Taoist Doctrines," NCH (April 1, 1892), pp. 413-414.

[13]Ibid.

Tzu to Wordsworth in his gift of expression and ability to take pleasure from nature. The columnist asserted that this gift was possible through the meeting of Indo-European and Chinese ideas which enhanced Chinese ability to think abstractly and to take up loftier speculation as seen in the works of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu.[14] The Taoists were a favorite subject, perhaps because they allowed more freedom of interpretation. The British felt that Taoist teachings came close to the Christian beliefs in a single God and immortality. Thus, the Westerners entered into lengthy debates about the Taoist doctrines.

While the British mentioned Buddhism in comparison with Taoism, the NCH gave it little attention. In fact, in response to a reported revival of Buddhism in India, the NCH noted that the Chinese Buddhists seemed to have slipped into unconsciousness, and that all vital thought in China was Confucian and Christian. The columnist declared that the Buddhists lost all their drive when the Sung dynasty relieved them from persecution. He further noted that the strength of Buddhism's appeal was in the monastic life as a refuge for troubled people rather than

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[14]"The Philosopher Chuangtze," NCH (July 8, 1892), p. 48.

in its idealism.[15] The Buddhist priesthood appeared to be more interested in ritual than the welfare of the people.

The NCH writers persevered in their efforts to show Western influence on the thoughts of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. The NCH asserted that any foreigner who read Lao Tzu would perceive the idea of evolution and of God in trinity, as well as the ascetic spirit--all revealing the effect of Western influence. The columnist mentioned that Western thought would have reached China when Neco's ships were traveling from the Red Sea, circumnavigating Africa, and returning via the Mediterranean ca. 600 B.C.[16] The newspaper claimed that the ships and caravans which traded with China from the West would have brought Western thought, whether "deluded or intelligent," along with other fruits of the West.[17]

Literature

Beyond the wisdom of the Chinese philosophers, the Westerners took an interest in China's poets, dramatists, novelists, and historians. Chinese poetry was exalted in the Herald. One columnist took offense that Tennyson had

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[15]"The Buddhist Revival," NCH (Dec. 24, 1891), p. 867.

[16]"The Thoughts of Lao Tzu," NCH (May 1, 1885), p. 499; Neco was Pharaoh of Egypt, ca. 600 B.C.

[17]"The Thoughts of Lao Tzu," NCH (May 1, 1885), p. 498.

said China was a boring place to live, and rose to defend her achievements. He praised the poetry of Han Yu and Liu Tsung-yuan of the T'ang dynasty and Su Tung-p'o of the Sung period. He added that in contrast to Aesop and Phaedrus, who told a long story with a short moral, the Chinese made an improvement by making the story short with multiple moral lessons. In another salute to Chinese poets he proclaimed: "such is the Chinese rhythmus, a nice balancing of words and sentences in an argument, as orderly as the syllogism of Aristotle, and as convincing."[18]

A missionary's appraisal and comparison of Chinese and Western poetry revealed his own world view. Speaking before the Shanghai Literary and Debating Society in 1892, Joseph Edkins praised the moral virtues taught in Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. However, the speaker pointed out that there was a certain poverty of ideas in Chinese poetry which was not caused by a lack of beautiful flowers, mountains, and landscapes. He noted that this could be improved by the power of religious faith which would lead to a "progressive movement forward."[19] He argued that in English poetry one's skills improved in accord with the depth of one's religious faith. Edkins felt that China

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[18]"Chinese Rhythmus," NCH (July 24, 1885), p. 93.

[19]"Chinese Poetry," NCH (april 29, 1892), p. 570.

should place more emphasis on immortality to elevate the poetic power of the nation.[20] He saw the greatness of Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning as a result of Christian religious influence. He believed that the Chinese poetic genius had suffered from lack of stimulation and could not compare with the spirituality of Dante in Italy, and Milton in England. Despite the negative comments, the group proposed to form a society to continue the study of Oriental poetry.

Westerners also examined the role of the novel in China. In China the writing of novels began in the thirteenth century, and was contemporaneous with the rise of drama.[21] Both emerged principally in North China under the rule of Yuan dynasty. This Mongol domination gave China a period of relative peace and also disrupted some of the traditional practices of the scholars. According to a NCH article, the writing of novels flourished for about three centuries, but then: "After this it was felt that enough had been provided and the production almost ceased.[22] In reality the restoration of Chinese rule and

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[20]Ibid.

[21]Herbert A. Giles, A History of Chinese Literature (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1967; New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1901), p. 257.

[22]"Chinese Views on Novels," NCH (August 11, 1890), pp. 122-123.

Chinese traditions was a more probable cause of the decline of the novel. The NCH touched upon a serious deterrent to the work of novelists: the dominant moral philosophers had never supported the rise of novels to a position of influence. The columnist noted that the rigid moral standards of the Confucian school led creative novelists and playwrights to conceal their authorship.

Westerns had observed the contemporary practice of Chinese literary censorship, and the NCH cited support for this by an anonymous Soochow Confucianist whose paper was published in a Shanghai newspaper. The Confucianist expressed the need for a crusade against licentious literature and romances that were eroding the moral influence of the Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist literature. This reformer contended that much of the crime and general immorality of the Soochow area could be attributed to the dangerous effect of Chinese novel reading.[23] The NCH then recalled a number of officials had used book burnings during the previous half-century to put pressure on publishers to destroy books of evil influence. The criterion for book destruction included all printed books that glorified and gilded a vicious life. No specific works were mentioned.

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[23]Ibid.

The NCH admonished the Western reader of Chinese books of an "imaginative kind" not to condemn them indiscriminately: "because they contain beautiful characters both of men and women, which exhibit an admirable idea of bravery, filial piety, purity of life, loyalty, and other noble qualities."[24] However, the NCH added that there was no doubt that Chinese books which portrayed scenes of vice and a sympathetic treatment of crime were a bad influence. Nevertheless, the NCH continued, the Chinese national conscience and national literature promoted the virtues of morality, justice, and humane behavior.

The Three Kingdoms, a popular classic novel of semi-fictional history, drew attention in the NCH. This story was presented in a number of versions in histories, drama, and novels over a period of centuries. The NCH article noted the inconsistencies in different versions of the novel. While the NCH columnist showed scholarly familiarity with the novel, the focus was on historical events rather than literary skills.[25]

Western literary interest in Chinese historians prompted an NCH article comparing the Greek historian Herodotus with the Chinese historians Tso Ch'iu-ming and

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[24] Ibid.

[25] "The Three Kingdoms," NCH (Feb. 18, 1885), p. 185.

Ssu-ma Ch'ien (145?-90 B.C.?). He spoke with admiration and respect for their styles and achievements. The article declared that Tso had expanded the history left by Confucius and gave it such a perfect form that his book became a model of style and a favorite classic of every generation of Chinese students. The NCH reported that Ssu-ma's reputation was won through the beauty of his literary style, his zealous compilation of information, and his organization of a historical method which was still in use.[26]

In comparing the Chinese historians with Herodotus, the NCH described the Western historian's style as simple and flowing, and said his genius was practical. In addition, the newspaper pointed out that Herodotus believed the historian's field of inquiry should be wide and comprehensive. The NCH speculated that Herodotus would have been more logical and complex in his style if he had lived later in history. The columnist concluded that both Ssu-ma and Tso were eminent artists of prose writing, but since Ssu-ma Ch'ien was more comprehensive and had initiated a pattern which became a model for all later histories, he had the better claim to be called the Herodotus of China.[27]

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[26]"The Herodotus of China," NCH (Nov. 25, 1885), pp. 598-599.

[27]Ibid.

The Herald also pointed out that Ssu-ma Ch'ien had declared that the Ch'in conquerer would never have made China a unified empire except for the manifest aid of heaven. The writer judged: "Both the Chinese and Greek saw that a divine power rules in all human affairs."[28] It was important to the Western history critic to assert the Western belief in a Supreme Being and seek a similar belief by the Chinese historian.

The history of Chinese drama was also of interest to the Westerners and led to further assertions of Western influence in China. Responding to a claim that Chinese drama was an indigenous art form, a NCH columnist protested. He declared that Greek drama had moved to India, to the religious shows of the Muslims, to Europe in the miracle plays, and thus China must also be in imitation of it. The NCH asserted: "The Chinese drama is based on music just as the Greek play was and the whole conception of the play is foreign while the details and the language are Chinese."[29] Further emphasizing his belief he added: "Every attempt to explain the Chinese drama as purely native must fail."[30]

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[28] Ibid.

[29] "The Chinese Theatre," NCH (August 14, 1891), p. 207.

[30] Ibid.

Fine Arts

In addition to literature, the Westerners showed a lively interest in Chinese bronzes, painting, and architecture. The NCH published lengthy and detailed articles on these subjects. They revealed that considerable research had taken place, though not always with sufficient cultural background to make well-formed judgments.

The Westerners showed a strong interest in the themes and symbols used in Chinese painting and bronze vessel decoration. A NCH writer referred to scenes descriptive of gods in the heavenly abode which had ornamented the palaces of emperors and princes of former times. The Shang and Han dynasties, in particular, were cited for the profusion of religious art which included winged gods, winged horses and many mythological creatures. The writer emphasized the worldwide role of religion in art. He cited Dante, Raphael, and Michelangelo as notable Western artists who used religious themes.[31] The NCH critic attributed a religious quality to the ancient sacrificial vessels. These ornate bronze vessels were associated with a person's needs in an afterlife and were usually found in ancient grave sites. He said the symmetry, beautiful curves, and ornamental carving reflected the

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[31]"Ancient Chinese Art," NCH (Feb. 4, 1885), p. 119.

reverential demeanor which would characterize the donor of such a vessel. He recalled that critics in 1100 A.D. had said that the Shang dynasty had been the most religious of the early dynasties and therefore the ornamental detail of the period was exceptionally fine. The Chinese artists were commended for their skills and fearlessness in depicting mythological creatures and numerous gods. In conclusion, the Herald noted the popularity of foreign ideas and things during the Han period and expressed the belief that much foreign help in the development of art could be safely assumed.[32]

The Westerners were fascinated not only with the bronzes but also with the scholarly attention the Chinese gave to these ancient vessels. The NCH praised the research of Chinese archaeologists of recent centuries. The columnist noted the historical importance of the inscriptions on the ancient bronze vessels as a means of judging their age. Chinese scholars had engaged in centuries of research and writing on this subject and continued to take pleasure in this work. Rubbings of the inscriptions were treasured by the Chinese. Continued debates on the subject of these ancient bronzes had resulted in strong support for the value and antiquity of the Chinese bronzes.

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[32]Ibid.

The Shanghai branch of the Royal Asiatic Society turned to the subject of architecture. In 1890, Dr. Joseph Edkins gave a lecture on Chinese architecture. He divided the subject into four periods: the earliest, prehistoric period; the mythological period (400 B.C.-200 A.D.); the Buddhist period (200 A.D.-900 A.D.); and the modern period (900 A.D.-1890's).[33] He characterized the earliest period as one of straight lines, with no arches, and little ornamentation. The mythological period was still without arches, but slanting beams were used with horizontal ones to form bridges. Elaborate ornamentation had been integrated into the architecture. This period was influenced by poetry and mythology. He mentioned that the influence of foreign ideas was evident in the use of stone for building.

According to Edkins, guardian lion sculptures and a foreign type pagoda which featured the arch and a curved roof were introduced in the Buddhist period.[34] The idea

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[33]"China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society," NCH (Feb. 28, 1890), pp. 246-257.

[34]Michael Sullivan states that the roof curve is inherent in the Chinese roof truss itself. The Arts of China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 127.

of feng-shui (geomancy) also appeared in this period.[35] This was the time of Buddhism's greatest popularity in China. The Buddhists had thousands of temples and vast quantities of land at the peak of their wealth. The Buddha image and other Buddhist symbols spread throughout the land. The Buddhists' accumulation of wealth and power eventually led to their suppression by the Wu-tsung Emperor and the beginning of a new architectural period.[36] Edkins characterized modern architecture as a synthesis of former styles as illustrated in the Peking temples and tombs.

The lecture was followed by a discussion of the history and features of Chinese architecture. One member suggested that the designs of all larger buildings in China exhibited an immense waste of space. However he noted that there was some beauty in the gates and gateways, and the related structure, the memorial arches. Another member of the Royal Asiatic Society noted that there were few references to buildings in ancient Chinese books, and that Dr. Edkins had utilized the few which existed. The consensus

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[35] Feng-shui is the term used to define the geomantic system by which the orientation of sites of houses, cities, graves, etc. are determined, and the good and bad luck of families and communities is fixed.

[36] Wm. Theodore DeBary, Wing-tsit Chan, and Burton Watson, eds., Sources of Chinese Tradition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 279-382.

of the group was that Chinese architecture was less developed than that of the West.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN WESTERN PERCEPTIONS OF CHINA

The articles in the North China Herald reflect continuity and change in the Western perception of China. The Western traders traveled to Asia with the conviction that China would be a profitable market for their commodities; the missionaries believed the heathen could be converted to Christianity; and Western diplomats tried to promote these goals. Taken together, they all endeavored to Westernize China in certain ways and make her as "progressive" as she possibly could be. While this paternalistic attitude remained as the central theme of Western perception of China in the nineteenth century, the Westerners had different emphases in different periods.

Westerners' perceptions of China were affected by their professions. The merchants, missionaries, and diplomats worked with separate levels of Chinese society for the most part, and often had quite different interpretations of the behavior and needs of the Chinese people. In the 1850's and the 1860's the NCH reflected the Westerners' focus on securing the treaty ports and establishing trade. They thus showed grave concern

regarding China's internal rebellions. In the 1860's and the 1870's the NCH supported the Western bids to achieve diplomatic equality in China by advocating the Western diplomats' right to reside in Peking and to have an audience with the emperor.

The period from the 1870's to the 1890's was marked by the missionaries' efforts to expand the social ministry and complement efforts to spread Christianity. The missionaries perceived the Chinese masses as being handicapped by lack of education, and Chinese women as disabled by foot-binding.

In the 1890's the NCH expressed the Western view that China would soon crumble unless effective political reforms were enacted. The Westerners had long perceived that reform would be advantageous to China. The slow progress toward technological modernization finally led to an anxious call for total Westernization and reform.

Although the Westerners pushed for reform and modernization in China, signs of progress aroused mixed feelings. In 1875 Li Hung-chang, then Governor-general of Chihli, submitted a memorial to the emperor to increase the number of steamers of the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company (C.M.S.N. Co.). The steamers were to be used by merchants in time of peace and by the Chinese navy in time of war. The Westerners' ambivalent feelings,

toward reducing profit for the British while promoting progress for the Chinese, burst forth in the NCH's response to the news as they declared that future enlargement of the C.M.S.N. Co.'s fleet would be a serious challenge to foreign shipping interests.[1]

Although the emphasis of Western interests may have shifted from 1850 to 1900, there was also continuity in that Sino-Western relations remained basically unchanged. The West continued its imperialist stance by wielding superior military strength and diplomatic pressure to obtain commercial and religious advantages. The Western traders' expansionist goals not only remained, but were reaffirmed near the end of the century. A second stable factor was the fact that the Ch'ing government, propped up by the West, had not collapsed.

The NCH added to the continuity of perceptions by its stability as a newspaper. Shanghai continued to be a prosperous port, and the paper remained popular with subscribers. This treaty port had remained relatively safe and free from the internecine strife and had avoided the dangers suffered in Peking during the Boxer Rebellion.

Western aims in China also remained stable. The reform movement of 1898 followed decades of persistent

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[1]"Summary of the News," NCH (Jan. 21, 1875), p. 47.

British efforts to promote reform. Western merchants considerably influenced Western policies toward China, especially regarding commercial expansion. Western politics and military action gave strength and support to the traders' demands for treaty ports and access to the interior of China.

The NCH reflected the Westerners' perception of China as a huge, untapped market for their goods. They most vigorously advocated the principle of international free trade. The Herald publishers and editors believed that what was good for the British merchants would be good for the Chinese, and that peaceful trade negotiations, not force, would increase profits to both parties. According to Western merchants in China, the Western opium trade provided revenue for the Chinese treasury and kept China's land free for necessary food crops. They claimed that the Chinese needed the opium to obtain relief from dreary lives. They perceived that there was a need to expand foreign trade to the interior (where the Chinese merchants would be amenable to Western commerce), yet the Ch'ing government was cautious in opening trade to the inland. They also regarded the Chinese officials as being exceedingly slow in adopting the Western means of transportation, especially the building of railroads.

The Westerners had different perceptions of various social classes in China. They felt an empathy with the Chinese merchants--intelligent, industrious, and innovative--who were able to work closely with their foreign counterparts. These native businessmen were viewed as worthy competitors who might one day outcompete the foreign traders. With great sympathy, the British and American missionaries in China, especially female missionaries, viewed Chinese women as being servile, overworked, uneducated, and even physically harmed by the custom of footbinding. They firmly believed that Christianity would make Chinese women happier and that education would enhance their social status.

The Westerners had mixed feelings concerning the Chinese literati. They were frustrated by the steadfast rejection of Westernization by a great number of the Confucian scholars. This situation was all the more deplorable because the scholars were also social and political leaders in China. Whereas the NCH reflected Western hostility toward the conservative Confucian bureaucracy, the newspaper also hoped that some modern-minded officials, such as Li Hung-chang, would exert increasing influence on their fellow scholar-officials.

The Westerners also revealed mixed feelings regarding "Chinese character." On the one hand, the NCH praised the

Chinese for their intelligence, courtesy, and good temper. They were also perceived as being teachable, sober, obedient, and patient. On the other hand, some Westerners looked upon certain Chinese characteristics with disfavor. They complained that the people of China (particularly the ruling class) were at times xenophobic, chauvinistic, dishonest, evasive, and corrupt. The Chinese were also called greedy and ungrateful. Fortunately, it was thought that Western trade and Christian education could help, because many unfavorable traits were attributable to the general poverty and ignorance of the Chinese masses.

The political and military systems of nineteenth century China were caught in a clash between Confucianism and the surging powers of the West that believed in the values of constitutional government, nationalism, and imperialism. The Westerners viewed the leaders in the central government as hopelessly committed to the conservative Confucian system. They harbored hopes that Li Hung-chang and other progressive literati would initiate significant reform, but were disappointed when they discovered that Li and his compatriots had little interest in institutional reform.

The British and Americans who wrote in the NCH perceived the Chinese military system as being extremely outdated and ineffective. They saw the military divided

into imperial, regional, and provincial units and effective only in the suppression of local disturbances. The participation of the literati in the Self-strengthening Movement indicated interest in technological modernization, but the efforts were fragmented and the results poor. Neither equipment, personnel, nor military planning were coordinated. Western writers feared that China was in danger of being partitioned if she did not learn militarily from the West.

Virtually all Westerners in China supported the goals of the reform movement of 1898 and were disappointed with its failure. They felt that as long as the Empress Dowager Tz'u-hsi held the power behind the throne, there could not be sufficient reform to save the empire. The British also feared that the expanding Western intrusion in China would destroy the integrity of China and make her useless as a trading partner. The British proposed to offer Western knowledge and expertise to aid reform-minded literati who were beginning to recognize and face China's problems.[2]

In contrast to the derision and despair that the NCH expressed regarding many aspects of Chinese life, the Westerners found much that was admirable in Chinese high

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[2]"A Chance for a New China," NCH (July 25, 1900), p. 174; "British Interests in China," NCH (Aug. 15, 1900), p. 321.

culture. Western scholars devoted years to the study of Chinese philosophy and religion. Missionaries sought to meld Chinese and Western thought. Although the introduction of Christianity had little success in China, Western scholars continued to be interested in Chinese thought. The Westerners in China also found time to study and appreciate Chinese history, literature, and fine arts. Their approach was comparative study between East and West. They showed considerable admiration for some aspects of Chinese high culture which, they insisted without scholarly substantiation, had been influenced by the West in an earlier period. Many of them maintained that Christianity would contribute further depth and beauty to Chinese high culture, especially to classical poetry.

Throughout the last half of the nineteenth century the NCH repeated two major themes: the necessity for reform and the prime role of the Western powers (especially Great Britain) in China's "salvation." Therefore, the Westerners in China were opposed to China's domestic rebellions (including the rebellion of the Taipings who advocated radical changes) on the one hand, and were against the partition of China by Western powers on the other. Many British in China maintained that although Chinese civilization outshone other Oriental civilizations, the Western civilization as exemplified by the British,

was the best in the world. The NCH gave eloquest testimony to this Western-centered view when it praised Governor-general Li Hung-chang in 1882 for his assistance to a Christian missionary hospital in Tientsin: "He knows that there are many good things among foreign institutions of a Christian and charitable type which China might imitate."[3] Naturally, the writer did not know (or refused to recognize) that charities were well institutionalized in China long before the establishment of Christianity. Reflecting Western self-confidence, the NCH wrote in 1865: "We have long since come to the conclusion that without foreign aid the Celestial Empire will never attain a respectable position amongst the nations of the earth."[4]

But China was not alone to be perceived unfavorably by the West during this time. Indeed, in a larger historical perspective, one may say that the chauvinistic and paternalistic attitudes toward China expressed by the North China Herald quite accurately represented, in the main, the Western perception of the entire non-Western world in the nineteenth century.

The goals of the Westerners in China as represented in the North China Herald did not change significantly,

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[3]"Viceroy Li's Charities," NCH (June 9, 1882), p. 620.

[4]NCH (Jan. 7, 1865), p. 2.

but China had changed. The British and Americans were constant in their efforts to promote trade and Christianity in China. They were constant in their efforts to expand trade into the interior of China through the use of steamships and railroads. On the other hand, the Western intrusion had contributed to many changes in China. By the turn of the century, China had been ravaged by the Western powers. Although the British perceived change in China as too slow to strengthen the Ch'ing government, they saw the beginning of industrialization and the introduction of military and political reform. They also saw a growing feeling of nationalism in China accompanied by a rising wave of anti-foreign sentiment.

Nevertheless, the British and Americans continued in their belief that Western guidance and aid were necessary, and that the Chinese needed further education and experience before they could implement political and institutional change or manage Western technology independently. The Westerners insisted upon using the European experience as a model for China's modernization, and were unwilling to leave the Chinese to work out their own solutions.

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VITA

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After her youngest child was born, she enrolled at The University of Tennessee. She was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in art history and Asian studies in June 1977. She entered The University of Tennessee Graduate School in September 1978, and received a Master of Arts in history in June 1985.