

Chapter 2

Evolution in Ideology and Culture After the Opium Wars and Up To the Westernization Movement

At the juncture of the Ming and Qing dynasties, a certain amount of Western learning had spread through the upper levels of Chinese society and some slight changes had taken place in the ideological concepts of a small number of scholar-officials. An ideological tendency to criticize autocratic monarchical power and patriarchal ethics had emerged in the final years of the Ming Dynasty in response to the accumulated malpractices and abuses by the centralized state power of monarchical despotism, and hints of gradual change had appeared within the traditional culture during the Qing Dynasty. In the final analysis, however, limitations in social conditions had prevented these changes from posing any fundamental challenges to tradition. The outbreak of the Opium Wars and the consequences of those wars profoundly shook China's traditional society and traditional culture. The Chinese had come up against foreign peoples whom they had never seen before and who were radically different from themselves, and Chinese culture encountered alien cultures which posed challenges that China was as yet unable to deal with. Yet the "Heavenly Kingdom" complex and the overweening mentality nurtured over thousands of years prevented the Chinese from correctly understanding the Westerners and their mental, social, and political characteristics. Over an extended period of time, therefore, the Chinese were unable either to adjust their relationships with foreign countries and peoples in general and the relationship between Chinese and Western culture in particular, or to resolve issues of the modern transformation of Chinese culture. Below, we present some brief discussions corresponding by and large to phases in history on the evolution of the Chinese people's ideological and cultural state of mind and their cultural mentality in the period from the Opium Wars to the Westernization Movement (1840–1894).¹

¹ The Westernization Movement period generally refers to the years from the 1860s to the first half of the 1890s (i.e., prior to the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895). Some historians call this the Self-Strengthening Period. However, for years already historical circles in China have been in the habit of calling it the Westernization Movement period. The habitual version is used in this chapter to comply with popular practice.

2.1 The Strange “Barbarians”

Westerners, led by the British and bolstered by the might of their warships, ventured to the East, launched wars against China for the sake of their nefarious opium trade, and forced China to sign the humiliating Nanjing Treaty, cede territories, and pay indemnities. The Chinese were fully justified in regarding these invaders with hostility. However, merely hating and vilifying their enemies was of no avail. They should have tried to understand them and draw on their strong points to make up for their own deficiencies, and in so doing erase their humiliations and recover their territories and sovereign rights. “The one who knows his own strengths and those of the enemy is invincible in battle.” The ancient military strategist’s words made good sense, let alone the reality that besides opium and encroachments the Westerners also brought some useful things to the East. The Chinese, however, bound by their Heavenly Kingdom complex and infuriated by their government’s ineptness, were unable to deal with this matter in a rational manner. A peculiar situation ensued: people who learned Western ways and consorted with Westerners were likely to be seen as traitors, while government officials who quailed before and toadied to Westerners yet played around with Western gadgets preened themselves self-righteously.

In the first 20 or so years after the Opium Wars, most Chinese officials, gentry, and commoners regarded the Westerners as creatures less than human. This is well documented in *A Collection of Opium War Literature*, edited by A Ying (1900–1977). For example, it is stated in the “Public Call to Arms to All High-Minded Persons in Guangdong”: “The rulers of the English are sometimes women and sometimes men, they themselves are like beasts of a greater savagery than tigers and wolves and of a rapaciousness no less than that of snakes and venomous reptiles (Ying 1957, p. 781).” In a memorial, Imperial Commissioner Qiying (1787–1858) stated: “People speak of all barbarians, whether women or children, as ‘foreign devils’ and do not see them as worthy of being humans.”² In those times, people saw Westerners as barbaric foreigners on account of their outlandish appearances, incomprehensible languages, and behavior so unlike that of the Chinese. Many were the comments of this nature. Even persons in the official/literati stratum frequently circulated erroneous reports and did not know what to make of Westerners. For example, the well-known scholar Fang Dongshu (1772–1851), in his “Sickbed Confessions” quoted statements by Ye Zhongjin alleging that Westerners “cannot see into the distance and therefore cannot hit any mark with bow and arrow, and have legs so weak they are unable to walk on land upon coming ashore.”³ Apparently, a very common piece of misinformation in those days was that Westerners’ legs and feet differed from those of normal people in that their knees

²“First and Second Memorial by Qi Ying et al. Regarding the Memorial by Cao Lutai on the Circumstances of the Disturbances Caused by the People in Guangdong,” *Foreign Affairs in Their Entirety* (26th year of the Daoguang reign), vol. 75, p. 2994; Zhonghua Book Company, 1964.

³Fang Dongshu: *Collected Works* by Yi Weixuan, vol. 4, p. 13.

could not bend and their feet had no strength, making it impossible to walk fast. For example, Wang Wentai’s (1796–1844) “A Short Study of the English Red-haired Barbarians” also stated that Englishmen “walk like the wind on their ships but cannot stride rapidly on land, and they have difficulty flexing their legs and feet so that they cannot get up once they fall to the ground,”⁴ and so forth. I often think it quite possible such misinformation was circulated because British emissaries refused to kowtow during audiences with the Chinese emperor. Arrogant Chinese then deduced that the British and all other Westerners were unable to genuflect and walked with difficulty because their knees could not bend. This also gave rise to an absurd contention that Westerners were good at fighting at sea only and not on land.

Such was the disdain in which Westerners were held and the many misunderstandings about Western matters. Various subjective assumptions and all sorts of misinformation abounded.

Starting with the Opium Wars, Chinese officials and gentry had had dealings with the British for 10 or more years yet still had no idea about Britain’s geographical location and size. Wei Yuan (1794–1897) was reputed to be a pioneer among those who looked afield at the world outside China. Yet in his description of Britain in his *Illustrated Treatises on the Maritime Kingdoms* he stated: “Those three faraway islands that constitute England are no more than a cluster of rocks in the Western Ocean. In size, they are estimated to be about the same as Fujian, Taiwan or Qiongzhou [i.e., Hainan Island].”⁵ His assumption that England’s territory was no larger than those of Taiwan and Hainan Island strayed too far from reality. He Qiutao (1824–1862) claimed in his *Shuo fang bei cheng* (Peregrinations in the North): “England and the two islands attached to it are not even as big as China’s Huguang Province.”⁶ In Feng Guifen’s (1809–1874) *Protestations from the Xiaobin Studio*, it was written: “The territory of our China is eight times that of Russia, ten times that of Mi (America), a hundred times that of France, and two hundred times that of England.”⁷ Such egregious fallacies were the result, firstly, of long years of self-immurement and, secondly, of habitual self-aggrandizement and little inclination to seek deeper understandings.

Another factor was their unwillingness to look squarely at the Western powers for fear of facing challenges to their self-esteem and self-glorification. Zhang Xi, who was attached to the Ilibu garrison forces during the Opium Wars and frequently proceeded to Dinghai to negotiate with foreigners, wrote an account entitled “Talking Points when Visiting the Foreigners.” In it he described how some Englishmen took him on a tour of a British warship, and how he praised the ship’s skillful construction. An Englishman asked: “Are your country’s people

⁴ See “A Collection of Opium War Literature,” (vol. 2), p. 758.

⁵ See *Illustrated Treatises on the Maritime Kingdoms*, vol. 52; *Complete Writings of Wei Yuan*, Qiulu Book Company, 2004.

⁶ *Collected Notes on Russia: Peregrinations in the North*, vol. 40, p. 44.

⁷ *Protestations from Xiaobin Studio: Opinions on Manufacturing Western Products*, vol. 2, p. 42, engraved in the 10th year of the Guangxu reign.

capable of doing the same?" Zhang Xi replied: "The techniques are clever, but the Heavenly Kingdom's people do not apply their minds to such things." "To what, then, do they apply their minds?" Zhang Xi stated: "To essays."⁸ Such was the typical state of mind of China's officials-cum-literati: Essays were everlasting, and all else was not worth mentioning.

There was even less understanding of Western religions. Wei Yuan's *Illustrated Treatises on the Maritime Kingdoms* included an article entitled "Catholicism: A Study," which more or less claimed that Western religions had simply borrowed contents from Buddhism and which drew false analogies with the Confucian teachings. A footnote at the end of the article cited a rumor that Western missionaries had at first induced Chinese to become believers by offering them a certain sum of silver, and that after the believers died their eyes were removed, as it was claimed that Chinese eyes could be used to convert lead into silver. There were also absurd tales about male and female believers cohabiting in the same accommodations. Many allegations defaming Western religions were concocted on the basis of such rumors. *Chronicles of the Relations Between China and the West* by Xia Xie (1800–1875) contained an article also entitled "Catholicism: A Study" which cited the referential footnotes in Wei Yuan's book as established facts and then incorporated these "facts" in his own treatise's main text. It was unavoidable that wayward missionaries should have committed some unlawful and immoral acts after the advent of Western religions in China, but the partial ought not to have been seen as the whole nor rumors stated as facts.

Both Lin Zexu (1785–1850) and Wei Yuan should of course be counted among the most rational and open-minded personages of this period. The fact that Lin organized personnel to compile the *Annals of Four Continents* and that Wei wrote and compiled his *Illustrated Treatises on the Maritime Kingdoms* on that basis goes to show their desire to understand the West and the world. Especially noteworthy were Wei's proposals about learning from the West and about instituting reforms. His proposal to "learn the best of foreign skills to overcome the foreigners" became a common trend among enterprising spirits in China at the time and for many years to come. The great majority of Chinese in those years had yet to wake up from their "Heavenly Kingdom" illusions and regarded Western technologies as exotic and specious skills not worth mentioning. Wei Yuan pointed out: "If we are to overcome the foreigners we must first know the state of affairs abroad, and if we are to know the state of affairs abroad we must set up translation houses to translate foreign books."⁹ Contrary to the disdain most people felt for "exotic and specious skills," he recommended that China set up its own factories to manufacture warships and guns. However, he did not proceed wholly from considerations of resisting foreign invaders. He stated: "All that is useful for civil purposes could

⁸ Zhang Xi: "Talking Points when Visiting the Foreigners", *Opium Wars* (5) p. 337 in *Collection of Writings on Modern Chinese History*, Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1957.

⁹ *Illustrated Treatises on the Maritime Kingdoms*, vol. 2, "Chapter on Maritime Defense," *Complete Works of Wei Yuan*, vol. 4, p. 27.

also be made here.”¹⁰ He also proposed: “All coastal merchants who would wish to establish similar factories for building ships and machinery, either for their own use or for sale, should be allowed to do so.”¹¹ One may well say that Wei Yuan was already aware of the need to develop a modern industry, which also means he had initially recognized the need for capitalist modernization. That, too, was quite remarkable. By 1852, when writing an epilogue for his hundred-volume *Illustrated Treatises on the Maritime Kingdoms*, he expressed esteem for the democratic constitutional government in the USA and stated: “The northern part of the American continent has replaced sovereign rulers with states, and their rules and regulations can be passed on in their entirety to later generations.”

Wei Yuan already realized that China had to institute needed internal reforms, otherwise “learning from the foreigners to overcome the foreigners” would be out of the question. His suggestions for reform zeroed in by and large on the most vital issues of the accumulated malpractices in China: First, doing away with the “torpidity in people’s minds” (i.e., fatuousness) and secondly, doing away with “ineffectual use of talent” (i.e., obsession with impractical abstractions).¹² It is regrettable that amid the lethargy and muddle-headedness which in those times permeated all quarters—high and low and governmental and nongovernmental alike—none of his valuable thoughts and suggestions were ever put into practice. Conversely, when his book was later taken to Japan it had an important driving effect on that country’s Meiji Reform.

An overview of the first two decades after the Opium Wars shows that a small minority of persons, including Lin Zexu and Wei Yuan, had begun to understand something about Western affairs and were aware that invigorating China required learning from foreign countries.

However, most Chinese disdained, distrusted, or were unwilling to face up to Westerners or Western affairs and Western learning, and there arose various fallacies and erroneous views that prevented the Chinese from adjusting their concepts in good time. This had something to do with the resentment engendered by the Western powers’ brutal invasions, but there is no denying that it was also caused by the self-exaggerated, self-embellished, insular, and pompous “Heavenly Kingdom” mentality formed during too many years of being cut off from the rest of world.

2.2 Learning the Best of Foreign Skills

The 20 years after the Opium Wars were times of intermittent war and peace between China and the West. For China, the wars ended in defeat, and peace was synonymous with humiliation and loss of rights. The second Opium War of 1856–

¹⁰ Same as above, p. 31.

¹¹ Same as above, p. 33.

¹² See *Original Preface to Illustrated Treatises on the Maritime Kingdoms*, same as above, p. 2.

1850 brought even greater shocks to China's governmental and nongovernmental quarters than the first one. This time around, the British and French Allied Forces invaded China's capital city, forced the Xianfeng emperor to flee to Rehe (Jehol), defiled his ancestral temples, devastated the populace, and seized historical relics and priceless treasures. After the British and French forces sacked the Yuan Ming Yuan—China's world-famous Imperial Garden, they torched it and reduced it to rubble. This unprecedented defeat and humiliation brought utter loss of "face" to the rulers and subjects of the Heavenly Kingdom. In his later recollections, Yixin (1833–1898), the chief peace negotiator, wrote: "In the twenty years after the Daoguang reign, every one of our dealings in foreign affairs turned out worse than the preceding one. In the tenth year of the Xianfeng reign we could no longer fight or defend ourselves and, in the absence of any other choices, were reduced to measures of last resort."¹³ These "measures of last resort" were, for one, having the emperor seek refuge in Rehe and, for another, signing a humiliating treaty with Britain and France and—because of having asked Russia to act as intermediary—suffering the pain and disgrace of concluding a new unequal treaty with Russia. The shocks dealt by these wars and treaties began to weaken the "Heavenly Kingdom" concept vaunted by Qing rulers and subjects. For the first time, the Qing authorities permitted foreign countries to station emissaries in the capital. They were also compelled to establish a yamen (government office) dedicated to handling foreign affairs and conducting negotiations with other countries and, in so doing, picked up a tiny inkling of the concept of modern diplomacy. Wiped from the minds of most people who gained any understanding of foreign affairs was the perception that foreign diplomats were no more than tribute-paying emissaries.

At the close of the second Opium War, the Qing government was in the process of fighting a bitter war against the Taiping forces (Boxers). In 1860, Chinese gentry and merchants in Shanghai, where relatively large numbers of foreigners had congregated, contributed funds and engaged foreign military officers to direct an army of foreign mercenaries in battles against the Taiping. That army generally won its battles, thanks to its superior arms and equipment and rigorous training. In 1862, the Qing court issued an order recognizing this force and conferring on it the title "Ever-Victorious Army." Making use of foreign forces to kill Chinese added another episode to the Qing rulers' record of shame. Yet great humiliations and great shame often have the effect of arousing the unawakened. At the time when the Qing government was permitting and using foreign soldiery to slaughter Chinese, a scholar-intellectual fled from Suzhou to Shanghai to escape the ravages of war and, with more opportunities for reflection in Shanghai's somewhat less turbulent surroundings, he started to write. More occasions to observe the workings of Western affairs also triggered in him various thoughts about reform. His name was Feng Guifen (1809–1874), and his *Protestations from the Xiaobin Studio* was

¹³ Yi Yin: "Memorial by Prince Gong et al on the Yi Chou day of the 9th Lunar Month of the 6th Year of the Tongzhi Reign on the Overall Management of Affairs Related to Other Countries", *Foreign Affairs in their Entirety (Tongzhi Reign)*, vol. 50, p. 25.

completed in Shanghai in November 1861. Once the book was completed, it was presented to Zeng Guofan (1811–1872) with a request that Zeng write a preface. Copies of the book were passed around and perused by not a few officials and intellectuals engaged in Western affairs. Thus, while the book was officially published and distributed only in 1876, the main ideas in it had already influenced some officials and intellectuals before that year.

Feng Guifen carried on and further developed Wei Yuan's thinking on "learning the best of foreign skills."

Feng was one of those who had been awakened by the shame suffered by the country and people. He said China had always been known as great country "unrivalled in the world as regards natural, geographical and material factors," but its "shameful submission to the Four Powers is not because it is inferior as regards natural, geographical and material factors, but because its people are indeed inferior." And in what way were the people inferior? "They are inferior not because of that which Heaven has or has not conferred upon them, but because they themselves are inferior. One may be shamed because of what Heaven has or has not conferred, but one can do nothing about that. One is especially shamed when the people themselves are inferior, and when one can do something about such shame. Better than feeling shame is to strive for self-strengthening."¹⁴

Knowing shame and striving for self-strengthening was a most important concept. In the first 20 years, the great majority of officials and scholars did not know shame and refused to admit they were inferior to others. Lin Zexu and Wei Yuan were willing to examine the world and evinced some desire to understand the Western countries, yet they experienced no feelings of shame. One strives for self-strengthening only if one knows shame. One might well say that Feng Guifen took this thinking a big step forward. He said if one knows one is "indeed inferior" to others, "there is no benefit in enviousness, no possibility of dissimulation, and no sense in trying to make do." Hence "The thing to do is find out where the inferiority lies; to understand why others are small yet strong, and why we are big yet weak. And then to find ways of measuring up to them." He summed up China's inferiority to the Western countries in four respects: "We are inferior to the foreigners in respect of making good use of people's talents, in respect of taking full advantage of the resources of the land, in respect of the absence of estrangement between rulers and the people, and in respect of the name living up to the reality."¹⁵ This statement might figure as a fairly accurate summing up of China's shortcomings and the foreigners' strengths in those days. China's system and institutions did not favor the training of talent or the use of talented people. China's economy was based on agriculture on which it relied for sources of tax money and on which its people depended for their livelihood, but China had never developed a lucid concept of exploiting the resources on or under its lands. China's top rulers and decision

¹⁴ *Protestations from Xiaobin Studio: On Manufacturing Foreign Things*, vol. 2, p. 40, engraved in the 10th year of the Guangxu reign.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 40–41.

makers seated up on high utilized a massive bureaucratic system to rule the people while the people were distantly separated from the imperial court and the emperor by tier upon tier of mendacious officials rife with malpractices. And inconsistencies between claims and realities were the outcome of thousands of years of a degenerate style of academics in China, in which scholars studied books merely to cope with the imperial examinations and much of what they learned served no useful purpose. Feng's understandings had indeed grasped some of the most important problems, and fundamental reforms in those four respects would have been the only way to bring about China's self-strengthening. Feng put forward a very important concept, i.e., "To use China's moral principles and ethical teachings as the basis and supplement these with the methods that other countries employ for attaining strength and well-being."¹⁶ This was the earliest expression of the Zhong Ti Xi Yong (i.e., Chinese learning for fundamental principles and Western learning for practical applications) theorem which later became mainstream thinking. He also put forward numerous proposals for specific reforms, such as paying attention to manufacturing, setting up factories, opening up mines, making use of machinery, changing the civil examinations system, laying stress on practical learning, training translators and foreign affairs personnel, energetically translating Western books, renovating civil administration, and so forth. Feng's thinking and proposals to no small extent influenced such government officials as Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang (1823–1901) as well as other thinkers in those times who sought reform, such as Zheng Guanying (1842–1922/3) and Wang Tao (1828–1897). Feng himself was aware that "some of these proposals evidently cannot be implanted," and stated that "it is not the fault of the speaker if they cannot put into practice."¹⁷ After Zeng Guofan had read Feng's writings, he too said: "I see many difficulties in putting these into practice." Nonetheless, most persons who eventually researched this period in history maintained that Feng Guifeng's thinking furnished ideological guidance for the Westernization Movement, and many of his specific proposals were to varying extents put into practice by government officials of the Westernization school. And that was not all. Feng's *Protestations* also played an inspirational role in the Reform Movement of 1898. Weng Tonghe (1830–1904) submitted a portion of its contents to the Guangxu emperor for his perusal, and many persons of the Reformist school were influenced by the book. In the words of Xiang Xue Bao (the Hunan Studies Journal), the book *Protestations* was "the embryo of thirty years of political reform."¹⁸ We may put it this way: the thinking in the book *Protestations* represented the overall level of understanding of Western culture on the part of Chinese personages during the Westernization Movement.

¹⁶ *Protestations from Xiaobin Studio*, vol. 2, p. 39, engraved in the 10th year of the Guangxu reign.

¹⁷ *Protestations from Xiaobin Studio: My Own Preface*, p. 4.

¹⁸ Quoted from Dai Yangben: "Feng Guifen and the 'Protestations from Xiaobin Studio'," see *Protestations from Xiaobin Studio*, published in 1998 by the Zhongzhou Ancient Books Press, p. 58.

Feng Guifen did not approve much of Wei Yuan's theorem about "tackling foreigners with foreign things and negotiating peace with the foreigners through the use of foreign methods," as he believed Wei's theorem "stemmed solely from the idea of 'learning foreign things to overcome the foreigners'." And it was only after the 1860s that Wei's theorem was gradually put into practice, by which time people had begun to realize the urgency of learning about Western skills and products. On December 19, 1860 (the eighth day of the 11th lunar month in the 10th year of the Xianfeng reign), Zeng Guofan, in his "Memorial in Response to the Imperial Edicts on Making Use of Russian Troops to Help Quell Uprisings and Assist in Shipping Grain from the South", stated: "The current use of foreign forces to assist in the quelling of uprisings and help with transportation attenuates difficulties for the time being. [However,] permanent benefits may be anticipated in the future by acquiring foreign knowledge about manufacturing cannon and ships."¹⁹ Most academics regard this as the starting point of the Westernization trend of thinking. The next year, Zeng arranged for the Anqing Armaments Works under his jurisdiction to trial produce a small steamboat. At first the Works had no foreign equipment and its craftsmen, using Western drawings as reference, made the boat entirely by hand. In 1863, they completed a small mechanically driven boat "approximately two *zhang* and eight or nine *chi* in length (i.e., 30-some feet long)." On Zeng Guofan's orders, the next year they carried out "expanded" construction and completed a larger steamship approximately five *zhang* (55 ft) in length and 25 tonnes in weight. It was named the *Yellow Swan*, apparently an allusion to "the staying power of the yellow swan." However, it was technologically backward and of little practical use, whereupon Zeng Guofan dispatched Rong Hong (1828–1912)—the first Chinese to study in the USA and at that time an official under Zeng's authority—to the USA to purchase machinery. The machinery Rong Hong bought arrived in Shanghai in 1865. Zeng, in consultation with Li Hongzhang, combined the former Shanghai Ordnance Bureau, the Suzhou Ordnance Bureau, and an ironworks newly purchased from the Americans, and established the Jiangnan Machine Manufacturing Office (Jiangnan Manufacturing Office for short) in Shanghai. Once established, this office held an important position in Zeng's and Li's national self-strengthening undertakings. In addition to rifles, cannon, and munitions, the office now manufactured ships and did much to promote the modernization of Chinese military forces. Of even greater significance was the office's establishment in 1868 of a translation institution which sponsored the translation and publication of Western books. Verbal translations were performed by John Fryer (1839–1928), Alexander Wylie (1815–1887), and Daniel Jerome MacGowan (1814–1893), and then written out in book form by Xu Shou (1818–1884), Hua Hengfang (1833–1902), Xu Jianyin (1845–1901), and other Chinese. In addition to books on science and technology they also translated works on the social sciences, mainly history,

¹⁹ "Zeng Guofan's Memorial in Response to the Imperial Edicts on Making Use of Russian Troops to Help Quell Uprisings and Assist in Shipping Grain from the South", *Foreign Affairs in their Entirety* (Xianfeng Reign), vol. 71, p. 2669.

geography, and law. Over 40 years time, the institute translated and published 160 Western books,²⁰ making contributions to the introduction of Western learning to China. The institute also put together and published a “Compilation of Recent Affairs in Western Countries” and thereby served as a news medium.

In 1862, Huai Army Commander Li Hongzhang, who distinguished himself during the suppression of the Taiping (Boxer) forces, came to Beijing and personally examined the efficacy of the armaments of various countries. In a letter to Zeng Guofan, he wrote: “I am deeply shamed by the vast inferiority of China’s military equipment as compared to that of foreign countries, and every day I admonish my officers and men to be open-minded and swallow humiliation in order to learn a few of the Westerners’ secrets, which would bring us benefits and enable us to fight them. . . It would be very much to my regret if, after being stationed in Shanghai for a period of time, I would be incapable of learning some of the Westerners’ strong points.”²¹ From then on he made great efforts to purchase foreign-style firearms and guns with which to arm his troops and to enhance training for them. His forces later played a major role in quelling the Taipings and the Nian Army [i.e., the Torch Bearers, a peasant army that rose against the Qing Dynasty in the mid-nineteenth century]. Subsequent to Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang became the leader of the Westernization Movement as well as a person most heavily relied on by the Qing court.

Highly noteworthy is the fact that, after the second Opium War, discussions of “Westernization,” as represented by Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang, took place with great frequency,²² more so than in the preceding 20 years. *Yang wu*, i.e., “Westernization,” meant the same thing as *yi wu*, or “barbarian affairs” (*yi wu*), but *yang* (Western) was a more neutral term than the contemptuous *yi* and, while the term *yi wu* (barbarian affairs) was restricted to negotiations with foreign powers, *yang wu* included emulating or imitating foreign practices, such as setting up factories, manufacturing machinery, and running schools.

There has, over the decades, been a great deal of controversy over the Westernization Movement; some people have praised it, others decry it. Those who praise it see it as the starting point of China’s modernization. Those who decry it call it selling out the country. Those who praise it emphasize the objective historical effects of the movement. Those who decry it emphasize the subjective motives of the movement’s leaders. I believe that when commenting on a specific historical activity of a certain historical personage, one should take into account both the motive and the effect, and when commenting on a historical movement in which

²⁰ Accounts about the number of Western books published by the Jiangnan Manufacturing Office differ and vary from 160 to 199. There are no less than five different versions. Used here are the records of Xiong Yuezhi in *Summary of the Books Translated by the Jiangnan Manufacturing Office*, see Xiong Yuezhi (1994, p. 499, footnote (1)).

²¹ *Complete Writings of Li Wenzhong: Letters to Peng Liao* (2), p. 47, Jinling engraving, Yi Si year of the Guangxu reign.

²² After the first year of the Tongzhi reign, Li Hongzhang frequently mentioned “Westernization” in his memorials and correspondence.

many people participate and which produces major results one should take both into account and examine both the activity's contents and its objective effects. The subjective motive or motives of its personages is of no importance. Hegel once said that evil is capable of producing a major progressive effect on history. This opinion was fully endorsed by Marx and Engels. As regards the Westernization Movement, the actual considerations harbored by Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang and others at the time were highly important to them as individuals, but were unimportant to the historical movement that had already taken shape. We attach importance to what they actually did and to the actual historical effects that their activities produced then and at a later time.

As everyone is clearly aware of the endeavors initiated during the Westernization Movement, it is not necessary to detail them here. We wish, however, to dwell upon the effects produced by these endeavors, and especially the effects these endeavors caused and triggered in terms of culture.

We all know that the Westernization Movement started with the setting up of military supplies factories, such as the Jiangnan Manufacturing Office (1865), the Mawei Shipyard (1866), the Jinling Machinery Bureau (1865), the Tianjin Machinery Bureau (1867), the Shandong Machinery Bureau (1875), the Lanzhou Machinery Bureau (1872), and so forth. These bureaus/factories were set up first and foremost in the service of providing military equipment and supplies, but as enterprises they manufactured products that generated value, and they had to make goods on this value. Records show that some of the products turned out by these bureaus/factories were allocated and put to use by the government, others were sold to local military units. Still others were ordinary mechanical products that went to civilian enterprises through commercial channels. Thus there are grounds for claiming that these military supplies industries served as engines for the civilian industry as well. In fact, when Li Hongzhang, Zuo Zongtang, and others set up their military supplies industries, they were quite aware that these would have the effect of driving forward the civilian industry. As Li Hongzhang stated: "Machinery manufacturing serves us today as a means for resisting aggression and oppression and for strengthening the nation. ... However, I am also of the opinion that foreign machinery may also be used to manufacture implements for tilling, weaving, printing, making pottery and ceramics and so forth used in the everyday lives of the populace, and not merely for manufacturing munitions. ... I anticipate that in a few decades, China's wealthy peasants and big merchants will surely be manufacturing foreign machinery to create benefits for themselves, and official regulations will no longer be able to exercise such differentiations."²³ Zuo Zongtang also realized that setting up factories to make China's own steamships

²³ Li Hongzhang: "Memorial on Purchasing Foreign Ironworks Machinery," (First day of the 8th lunar month in the 4th year Tongzhi reign), *Complete Works of Li Wenzhong: Texts of Memorials*, vol. 9, p. 34.

and “learning their methods of making ship’s engines will be of long-term benefit for China and will bring benefits in other aspects as well.”²⁴ When the first proposals were made to set up manufacturing factories, Rong Hong, the Westernization activist who was the first Chinese to study abroad, had said to Zeng Guofan: “If China intends to set up machinery factories now, it must begin in the main by laying a general foundation, and not by setting up factories dedicated to a particular purpose. By a general foundation, I mean factories capable of building up diverse branch factories that will specialize in making particular machines. Simply stated, such factories should have machines for making machines, and serve as the foundation for all other manufactories (Rong Hong 1981, p. 75).” Rong was obviously envisaging the development of a national industry in China. Subsequent developments showed that the estimations and calculations voiced by Rong Hong, Li Hongzhang and Zuo Zhongtang were consistent with the logical and inevitable train of events. There is no denying that the Westernization Movement threw open the sluice gates for the modernization of China.

The rise of modern industry inevitably launched the emergence and development of modern education.

The higher pursuits of China’s previous educational setup, in terms of its actual effects, consisted of winning promotions, getting rich, bringing glory to one’s forefathers, and benefiting one’s posterity; its lesser pursuits consisted of little more than writing letters, doing secretarial work, and keeping accounts. Modern industry gave rise to a need for engineering and technical talent, the training of which was entirely beyond the competence of the existing educational system. A new type of education was needed, and its contents had to include science and technology. But science and technology had to be brought in from the West. This called for the training of translators and gave rise to the need for sending students abroad. And so the Tongwenguan, or “schools of combined learning,” were set up, and discussions began about dispatching students to other countries.

In 1862, Prince Gong Yixin, the minister in charge of Westernization, sent up a memorial requesting the establishment of a Tongwenguan in Beijing. It would teach the English, French, and Russian languages as well as provide instruction in the Han language. Its students would be recruited mainly from among scions of the Eight Banners. The next year, Li Hongzhang set up the Guangfang Tongwenguan in Shanghai. Student recruitment was not limited to the Eight Banners, and age limitations were also relaxed. In 1864, a Tongwenguan was started up in Guangzhou for teaching English, and later French and German as well.

Strictly speaking, Yixin had first set up the Tongwenguan merely for the needs of diplomatic negotiations, whereas Li Hongzhang established the Shanghai Tongwenguan for the sake of translating books on foreign learning so that the Chinese might gradually become acquainted with Western knowledge of mathematics, the natural sciences, and manufacturing skills. These, in his view, were crucial for China’s self-strengthening. The Shanghai Tongwenguan was later

²⁴ See *The Westernization Movement* (5), p. 45.

merged with the translation institute of the Jiangnan Manufacturing Office to become a center for translations. In 1866, Yixin sent up a petition requesting that an astronomical calculations academy be added to the Beijing Tongwenguan for considerations somewhat similar to Li Hongzhang's. Despite being vigorously opposed by conservative elements, this initiative was not shelved, but it failed to produce any substantial results.

The Tongwenguan in Beijing and other places achieved little, thanks to the degeneracy of the Qing Dynasty. However, they did train a number of persons conversant with foreign languages. Some of these persons later entered the diplomatic service and made contributions to the development of modern diplomacy in China. Others became translators and teachers of foreign languages. Still others went to work in business circles. Irrespective of their vocations and the departments in which they served, all, in essence, played a part in establishing links between the cultures of China and the West. The translation institute of the Shanghai Manufacturing Bureau played an especially important role in the early dissemination of Western science and technology and modern culture. Many persons who came to the fore during the Westernization Movement had gained some idea of Western learning from books translated by the Jiangnan Manufacturing Office.

Another innovation in education during the Westernization Movement was the sending of young children for studies in the USA. This matter was initiated by Rong Hong in 1872, actively promoted by Ding Richang (1823–1882), and carried out by Li Hongzhang and Zeng Guofan. Children would be instructed abroad for the same considerations as the Western-style factories and the Tongwenguan had been set up. On why they should study abroad, Zeng and Li stated in their memorials that while setting up factories and Tongwenguan was “for the sake of establishing a basis for invigorating the country,” sending children to study in that distant land was “for the sake of long-term and better results.” China could not purchase all of the West's books and equipment, and if the children were not sent abroad they would not be able to “gain a thorough understanding of Western learning at its source, and comprehend all of its intricacies.” This, they said, was precisely what the ancients had meant when they said “those who would learn the Qi parlance should be placed amidst the Zhuang and the Yue.” The imperial court consented to sending children abroad for studies, and in 1872, 30 bright and intelligent youngsters were chosen from each province and sent to the USA. Altogether 120 of them were dispatched over 4 years, until the practice was discontinued due to opposition against it within China. These 120 youngsters were divided up among different educational institutions, stayed with American families, were exposed to local customs and habits, and merged into the local cultural environment. Not a few of them scored substantial achievements after returning to China from such studies. Examples are Zhan Tianyou (1861–1919), the railway engineering expert of Chinese and even worldwide renown; Tang Shaoyi (1862–1938), the noted politician; Liang Dunyan (1857–1924), the famous diplomat, and so forth. It is worth noting that studying abroad at an early age and living directly in foreign households, all devoutly religious, very much benefited the youngsters by giving them a substantial understanding of Western culture. However, their roots in Chinese learning were

too shallow for them to synthesize the Chinese and Western cultures and master these in a more profound sense.

Running factories, setting up language academies, and sending out students showed that at least some Chinese officials and literati, both in and outside the government establishment, were convinced that Western learning was indispensable if China was to stand on its feet and strengthen itself. Perceptions had changed considerably from those of the 1840s and 1850s. From despising the “barbarians” and strictly warding off anything “barbarian,” to learning from foreigners and feeling ashamed for being inferior to them—a major change in perceptions had indeed taken place.

Also changing were the perceptions of the general populace and in particular among the mid-level strata in the cities. Translations of Western books had spread to a certain extent, and missionary schools run by foreigners also played a part in disseminating Western culture. More important, however, was the massive influx of foreign Western goods which did much to change the everyday lives of the people, especially of the inhabitants of coastal cities. This probably played a bigger role in changing their perceptions than anything else. By the 1860s, China’s coastal cities were already awash with Western products, such as machine-made piece goods, “foreign fire-makers” (safety matches), woolen textiles, foreign blankets, foreign needles and thread, foreign-style paper, foreign-type pens and ink, foreign-made umbrellas, iron nails, glass, clocks and watches, and so forth. There were also the spinning and weaving machines, sewing machines, steam engines, scales, alcohol lamps, gas lamps, microscopes, etc. Even bicycles, which had only just emerged in the West, made their appearance in Shanghai.²⁵ Ordinary Chinese at first saw all these things as curiosities, but soon realized they were convenient and practical and superior to their existing counterparts in China. These novel life experiences did much to shake people’s former disdain for the “barbarians.”

Not a few dignitaries, however, still held Westerners in contempt and resolutely resisted Western culture. Representative of these was Secretary of the Grand Council Woren (1804–1871), who was against the Tongwenguan’s recruitment of official personnel for studies of the natural sciences and mathematics, and who even argued with the emperor about this matter. However, Woren did not specifically oppose having Chinese learn the natural sciences and mathematics, for in his opinion these things did not qualify as fundamental fields of knowledge and were no more than clever artifices not worth learning by official personnel trained in the teachings of Confucius. In his view, official personnel should adhere strictly to the Confucian teachings and take the rituals and rules as the basis of governance. In a memorial disputing the views of Yixin et al he asserted: “The natural sciences and mathematics are of very little use, and teaching Western things to official personnel is extremely harmful.” That was because “to maintain a country, one relies on the Rituals and Rules rather than on devices and schemes; and the fundamental means for doing so rests in people’s minds and not in techniques and skills.” And, “never

²⁵ See Li Changli (1998a, pp. 257–260).

since ancient times has one heard of proficiency in techniques and numbers being used to resuscitate and revive the weak.” He believed that since the natural sciences and mathematics were unrelated to the fundamentals for building up strength, having persons who were “on the correct path” learn from the barbarians would make “useful persons cultivated by the state switch allegiance to the barbarians, in consequence of which healthy forces will decline and perverse trends will flare up and, in a few years time, all people in China will go over to the barbarians.”²⁶ Woren sent up three memorials in succession, all of them replete with arguments like these that made no sense. However, one can see in them the state of mind of the conservatives: (1) They still believed the Confucian rituals and rules to be fundamental principles, and saw science and technology as nonessentials. (2) Yet they had begun to lose confidence in the Confucian teachings and were therefore anxious lest official personnel would start learning from foreigners, forsake their former convictions, and be used by the foreigners. This was a reflection of the reality that the traditional classics and canons were of no help in those critical times, but that people did not know of anything dependable that might take the place of those traditional classics and canons. Woren’s weak rebuttals revealed the frustrations felt by the dynastic officials and literati. In fact, Woren’s opponents—Yixin et al.—too, had no idea of what constituted the fundamental means for strengthening China. They outdid Woren et al. only in their realization that China was no match for the Western countries and in their willingness to learn from the latter. Criticizing Woren, Yixin said: “I truly cannot believe statements to the effect that we can outmaneuver and subdue our enemies simply by using loyalty as armor and propriety as shields.”²⁷ This was an indication of his realism, his willingness to learn from other people’s strong points, and his sagacity. Yet he also said: “The way for China’s self-strengthening lies in acquiring practical expertise in and learning all the subtleties of the rules of mathematics and the natural sciences, the skills of devising machines and utensils, and the methods of designing and building waterways.”²⁸ This was clearly a theory with no basis in reality. There was reason in Woren’s assertion that “never since ancient times has one heard of proficiency in techniques and numbers being used to resuscitate and reinvigorate the weak.” However, Woren erred in his belief that self-strengthening could be brought about by relying solely on the rules and rituals of the ancients.

²⁶ “Memorials to the Throne from Secretary Woren of the Grand Council,” *Foreign Affairs in Their Entirety (Tongzhi Reign)*, vol. 47, pp. 24–25.

²⁷ “Memorial by the First Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Gong et al. on the Bing Chen Day in the Ding Mou Third Month of the Sixth Year of the Tongzhi Reign”, *Foreign Affairs in Their Entirety (Tongzhi Reign)*, vol. 48, p. 4.

²⁸ “Memorial by the First Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Gong et al on the Geng Shen Day,” *Foreign Affairs in Their Entirety (Tongzhi Reign)*, vol. 46, p. 4.

2.3 The Culture of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom

While the Qing government was taking a severe drubbing from those strange “foreign barbarians” and finding no way to defend itself, a force arose which began to deal blows at the Qing from within. In 1851, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom uprising led by Hong Xiuquan (1814–1864) erupted in Jintian village of Guangxi’s Guiping County and, in a decade of hard-fought battles, took over half of China, set up its capital in Nanjing, and became the greatest inner threat to the Qing court. Ultimately, however, the political regime of this peasant uprising collapsed under joint attacks by both the internal and external forces of reaction.

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom uprising was the most extensive peasant rebellion in China’s history and the last one prior to the birth of the Chinese Communist Party. In many respects, it differed substantially from previous peasant uprisings in Chinese history, and this was most prominently manifested in terms of its ideology and culture.

As against all previous peasant uprisings, which had attracted the masses merely by raising slogans about equality or touting the “Ways of Heaven,” the leaders of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom devised a God-fearing church modeled on Western Christianity. They proclaimed that all people were equal before the Lord in Heaven and that all should worship the Lord just as children in a family serve their father. The father would not be authoritarian nor partial (“Wherefore should the Lord show partiality?”²⁹), and all were brothers and sisters who should till the land together and share their food, clothing, and wealth. People were equal in all aspects, and all would be fed and clothed. Two things here were worth noting: (1) In the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, everyone should believe in the Lord as the one and only true God and should not worship any other deity. This differed radically from the Chinese peasants’ customary polytheist beliefs and benefited the Taiping Kingdom by enabling it to unify its decrees, unify its command structure, strengthen discipline, and enhance cohesion. (2) The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom’s claim that there was only one true God—the one God that people in China and all “foreign countries” should worship in common. This was an important feature, one in which the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom transcended all peasant uprisings in previous Chinese history and which hinted at the germination of a vague global, or cosmopolitan, awareness among the leaders of the rebels. This phenomenon could only have occurred after the Opium Wars. Both prior to the uprising and after the establishment of their Heavenly Capital in Nanjing, leaders of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom had had extensive contacts with Western personages including missionaries, journalists, and other travelers, for which reason their “cosmopolitan awareness” was somewhat more pronounced than that of the general run of Chinese officials and literati. This cosmopolitan awareness was forcefully expressed in

²⁹ Hong Xiuquan: “Hymn of the Original Way to Save the World”, see *Collected Papers on China’s Modern History: Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, vol. 1, p. 47, published by the Shenzhen Guoguang Society, 1952.

several documents written out by Hong Xiuquan. In his Hymn of the Original Way to Save the World, for example, he wrote: “Since the beginning of time there has been only one true God whom everyone high or low should piously revere; the Heavenly Father and Lord is the same for all people and has been passed down in the one family under Heaven since ancient times.”³⁰ In his Instructions on the Original Way to Awaken the World, he wrote: “The Lord God is the common father of all people under Heaven. Here in China the Lord God ordains the laws of creation, and this is also true in distant foreign lands. In distant foreign lands the Lord God creates and protects, and this is also true here in China. All men in all lands under Heaven are brothers, and all women in all lands under Heaven are sisters, so why should there be those unfair borders and boundaries? So why should there be thoughts of devouring our lands?” The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom’s ideal was that “All under Heaven are of one family and together share peace and tranquility.” In Hong Xiuquan’s view, people’s horizons and spirits should best be broad, not narrow, for “when spirits are broad, all are as though of one country.”³¹ It should be noted that the “lands under Heaven” referred to here were quite different from the “nine *zhou* of Yu’s domains” that the ancients called the “lands under Heaven.” The “lands under Heaven” here referred to the lands of all nations in the world, and what Hong called “broad spiritedness” actually meant “cosmopolitan awareness.”

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom’s God-worshipping church was created by Hong Xiuquan and others for the purpose of organizing and mobilizing the masses for an uprising.³² But since the peasant masses they addressed were basically uneducated, they could not replicate the Christianity of the West in its original form, nor could they themselves have accepted an unrevised Christianity. This was clearly acknowledged both by Westerners who came in contact with the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in those days and by Chinese scholars who later studied the Taiping. However, this matter in itself shows that in the wake of the Opium Wars, practically all of China’s intellectuals of any sensitivity realized that sole reliance on the resources of tradition would by no means suffice if a way out were to be sought for a moribund China, and that some Western things would have to be learned or referenced. As for which things should be learned and how to learn them—that would call for a lengthy process of trial and error. The same applied to the leaders of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and would apply to the subsequent Westernization factions.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid, p. 92.

³² Opinions differ on this matter. Based on Hong Rengan’s accounts, some people maintain that Hong Xiuquan et al. had no intention of staging an uprising when they first set up their God-worshipping church, and were later compelled to resist when the authorities arrested and killed members of the church. Luo Ergang does not agree with this version and is convinced that Hong Xiuquan et al. created the God-worshipping church to serve the needs of the uprising. I am inclined to agree with Luo Ergang.

While learning from the Christianity of the West, Hong Xiuquan and others displayed a number of anti-traditionalist tendencies which found concentrated expression in their attitude toward Confucius.

In earlier years, Hong had several times sat for the imperial civil service exams, and each time failed. This history of setbacks, plus his contacts with Christian religious tracts and the revolutionary thinking he gradually developed, gave rise to his anti-Confucian proclivities. In 1843, prior to the uprising, Hong Xiuquan had already performed acts of “casting out Confucian memorial tablets” and Hong Xiuquan and others launched a campaign to get rid of idols after setting up their God-worshipping church, all of the sake of emphasizing faith in the One True God. This campaign included the smashing of material idols made of clay and wood as well as the extirpation of idols in people’s ideology and minds, and one of the most important among the latter was Confucius. The book *Taiping Heavenly Days* (*taiping tian ri*) written by Hong Xiuquan before the 1848 uprising contains a story in the form of a legend which recounts how Confucius was put to great humiliation. The story goes that the Heavenly Brother Jesus Christ assembles all angels in Heaven before God the Heavenly Father. The Heavenly Father points at three books displayed on the table before him and admonishes Hong Xiuquan by saying that one of the books has been passed down by the Heavenly Father and that “this book is true and without errors.” The second book has been passed down by the Heavenly Brother Jesus Christ and “this book is also true and without errors.” The third book, however, has been passed down by Confucius and “contains a great many errors.” The story’s climax: God the Heavenly Father rebukes Confucius, asking: “Why is it that you befuddle people’s thoughts in this manner so that the common folk know not about me and your reputation surpasses mine?” Confucius attempts to remonstrate at first, but finally falls silent for lack of arguments. The Heavenly Brother Jesus Christ also reproves Confucius, saying: “By concocting such a book for teaching others, even my brethren have been misled!” All of the assembled angels, too, bring charges against him, and The Master also castigates him: “Did you write this book for teaching people? How could do such a thing?” Seeing that everyone in Heaven is castigating him, Confucius attempts to flee from Heaven together with a band of devils and demons. Then God the Heavenly Father dispatches The Master (meaning Hong Xiuquan—the Author) and some angels to apprehend Confucius. They truss up Confucius with ropes and bring him into the presence of the Heavenly Father. Sorely angered, the Heavenly Father orders the angels to whip Confucius, who falls on his knees before Brother Jesus Christ and begs again and again for mercy. There is much flogging, and much pleading by Confucius. Eventually, the Heavenly Father, considering that Confucius’ merits outweigh his errors, permits him to stay in Heaven to enjoy its ease and comforts, but forbids him from descending to the mortal world.³³ This story indeed vented some of Hong Xiuquan’s mortification as a scholar who had time and again failed

³³ “Taiping Heavenly Days,” see *Materials on Modern Chinese History Series: Taiping Heavenly Kingdom* vol. 2, pp. 635–636.

the civil service examinations. Yet it was entirely devoid of academic value as it failed to point out where Confucius' teachings were wrong. It showed, on the one hand, that Hong Xiuquan evinced more resentment than rationality and, on the other, that in his heart of hearts he had not freed himself from the influences of Confucius' teachings. There was also a third aspect, i.e., that all of the publicity materials he authored were written for the peasant masses, and as such could not, and did not need to, hold much in the way of academic theory. This circumstance determined that, whereas the thinking of Hong Xiuquan and his associates commanded authority in a highly militarized milieu, it hardly brought any influence to bear on the mainstream ideology of Chinese society.

Admixed among several documents compiled or written by Hong Xiuquan prior to the Boxer uprising were some elements of the ideology of Confucius, Mencius, and other Confucians. However, these were eliminated as far as possible when the documents were reprinted in the Taiping Manifesto after the founding of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, which enforced very strict laws on destroying the ancient classics of Confucius and Mencius and banned the perusal or concealment of such books. I believe that this does not necessarily mean that Hong Xiuquan and his cronies had developed a more profound critical understanding of the teachings of Confucius and Mencius. It is quite possible that Hong Xiuquan adopted this measure in order to get on closer terms with Christian countries in the West.

The leaders of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom did more than their forefathers to express their social ideal of pursuing equality. "Most men under Heaven are brothers, and most women under Heaven are sisters." Based on the social principle of equality, women enjoyed a fair degree of respect within the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, which clearly stipulated that men and women were to be apportioned equal amounts of farmland and that men and women were equal in terms of attending church services, listening to sermons, and worshipping God—in contrast to the Chinese tradition which forbade women from setting foot in places of worship. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom's rules on marriage were also quite enlightened, in that nuptials were not to be restricted to contracts based on "wealth" or "equal social standing" and therefore came quite close to advocating freedom of marriage. One very important matter was that girls no longer had to have their feet bound, which indubitably constituted a sort of emancipation for them. Objectively speaking, however, this matter was closely connected with the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom's wars and military needs. After the kingdom's capital city was established, Hong Xiuquan and other leaders, who conferred royal and ministerial titles on themselves, all acquired bebies of concubines—behavior that quite substantially discounted their professed respect for women.

The brightest spot in the Heavenly Kingdom's ideology was Hong Rengan's (1822–1864) *New Essays on Government and Politics*. This book was written during the days that Hong Rengan lived in Hong Kong, maintained extensive contacts with Westerners and Western books, acquired a general comprehension of the economic, political and cultural development of the advanced Western countries, and came to understand that the reason for their state of development was *fa shan* (the practice of good laws). When, in 1859, he finally arrived in the

capital city Nanjing and was given an important position by Hong Xiuquan, he presented his *New Essays* to Hong Xiuquan in the hope that the latter would adopt some of his ideas about learning Western law. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom had already fallen into decline at this time. After reading the book, Hong Xiuquan, except for annotating a few suggestions with the words “not feasible at this time” or “implementing this can wait until all demons are annihilated,” in most cases wrote such comments as “yes” or “I approve of this”—which, however, did not mean he accepted the *New Essays on Government and Politics* as a new program for the Heavenly Kingdom. Luo Ergang (1901–1997) maintained that Hong Xiuquan’s renewed promulgation of the *Arable Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom* in 1861 showed that Hong did not approve of replacing the *Arable Land System* with the *New Suggestions*. It is quite evident that the *Arable Land System of the Heavenly Kingdom*, which reflected the small-peasant mentality, and the *New Essays on Government and Politics*, which advocated the development of capitalism, could not be promoted concurrently without coming into conflict. Hence I believe that Luo Ergang’s view is correct.³⁴ The *New Essays* neither represented the ideology of the Heavenly Kingdom’s main leaders nor was it a product of the Heavenly Kingdom’s revolutionary practice. It was merely a list of suggestions brought into the Kingdom by Hong Rengan who maintained personal connections with Hong Xiuquan but had long been absent from the Heavenly Kingdom and had never taken part in the Heavenly Kingdom’s revolutionary activities. What these suggestions did indicate was that virtually all persons sensitive to the trend of the times were aware of the need to learn and draw lessons from the “good laws” in the West if a weak China was to be made strong.

The greatest contribution the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom to modern Chinese history, rather than bringing in any input of its own, was that it dealt a crippling blow to and fundamentally rattled the rule of the Qing imperial monarchy. The Qing Dynasty never succeeded in restoring its ruling powers after the Taiping revolution, and became permanently mired in internal and external crises and in an unraveling of its monarchical authority—a process which, once begun, became irreversible. It was during this process of unraveling monarchical authority that diverse elements of reform and revolution gradually accumulated and prepared the gravediggers of the Qing Dynasty.

2.4 The Initial Foundations of Modern Culture

The mid-1870s coincided with the Tongzhi and Guangxu reigns, and some historians talk of “China’s revitalization during the Tongzhi reign,” which in reality consisted of the Westernization Movement. In the decades from the early 1860s to the mid-1890s, a number of changes indeed took place in Chinese society. First, a

³⁴ See Luo Ergang (1991, pp. 859–865).

heretofore nonexistent modern industry had emerged. We have mentioned earlier that when Li Hongzhang and others began to set up a modern industry which primarily served military needs, they had already foreseen that the new manufacturing techniques were bound to spread to civil society. Actually, that would have happened whether or not they foresaw it since it was the inevitable logic of development. The year 1873 saw the emergence of the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company, the first modern enterprise of a civilian nature. It was followed by a series of civilian industries. Between 1874 and 1876, telegraph lines were strung up in Taiwan and Fujian. These were first destined for military use, but were soon converted "mainly for the benefit of commerce." In the words of Sheng Xuanhuai (1844–1916), the basic purpose of setting up the telegraph business was to "bring big benefits to merchants and the civilian population."³⁵ The earliest coal mines were started up in 1875, the first among them being the Cizhou Coal and Iron Mine in Hebei, the Guangji Xing Guo Colliery in Hubei, and the Keelung Coal Mine in Taiwan (1876). After these, coal mining industries were set up in Anhui, Guangxi, Shandong, and Fengtian successively. In 1881, other industries which exploited metallic mineral resources were set up, among them the Pingquan Copper Mine in Jehol, the Hefeng Copper Mine in Hubei, the Zhaoyuan Gold Mine in Shandong, the Qingxi Iron Mine in Guizhou, the Mohe Gold Mine in Heilongjiang, the Daye Iron Mine in Hubei, and so forth. The rise of modern industries, and especially the setting up of military factories, mining, and other heavy industries, inevitably promoted the development of the transportation industry. Foreigners had long ago raised numerous proposals about building railways, but these proposals were opposed by the great majority of Qing government officials who feared, firstly, that railways would provide conveniences for foreign aggression and expansion and, secondly, that railway construction would damage people's farmland, housing, and graveyards and squeeze their means of livelihood, and thus cause unrest among the populace and controversies with the foreigners. As time passed, however, some Westernization officials thought railways should be operated by the Chinese themselves. In 1876, the British arbitrarily built a Shanghai-to-Jiangwang rail line which, however, was subsequently bought over by the Chinese government and dismantled. In the same year, a light railway was built in Jilong (Keelung), Taiwan. In 1880, Tang Tingshu (1832–1892) constructed the Tangshan to Xugezhuang Railway which was urgently needed for shipping coal. In 1887, this railway was extended to Dagu (Taku) to Tianjin and onward to Tongzhou.

By 1894, before the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, construction on a railway to the Three Northeastern Provinces had already reached the Jiayuguan Pass.

In the 1880s, construction started on a modern textile industry which was more closely tied in with the people's livelihood. This included the Lanzhou Textile Bureau (1880), the Shanghai Mechanical Textile Bureau (first set up in 1878,

³⁵ "The Sheng Xuanhuai Archives", *Telegraphy Bureau Business Charter*, 7th year of the Guangxu reign; quoted from Xia Dongyuan: *History of the Westernization Movement*, p. 223, Huadong Normal University Press, 1992.

reestablished in 1880, again reestablished in 1887, and put in scale production in 1889), and the Huasheng Chief Textile Mill, the Yuyuan Silk Factory, the Huaxin, Dadun, and Yujin factories and the subsequent Hubei Textiles Bureau.³⁶

The development of modern industries inevitably created concentrations of urban inhabitants, which gave rise to large populations. These again inevitably generated a series of public undertakings in such fields as transportation, health, education, culture, and so forth which in fact served as seedbeds for the rise and development of modern culture.

China's modern industry grew and developed in contention with foreigners for China's economic rights, yet at the same time could not do entirely without the selfsame foreigners. Technology, equipment, and so forth had to be imported via foreigners and their services. China's relations with other countries extensively involved such fields as politics, military affairs, and trade and commerce, and China urgently needed to understand those countries. The Western powers had for many years requested that China, while receiving foreign emissaries, also send emissaries abroad. Despite repeated deliberations, however, this matter had never been resolved. It was only in 1875 that China for the first time decided to send emissaries to Europe, and even then this decision came up against opposition and even scorn. Nonetheless, from then on the number of emissaries going abroad grew apace, and China's foreign diplomacy took to a road that was more or less consistent with modern international relations, whereas only a short while earlier Chinese officials had regarded the stationing of emissaries abroad as something akin to providing hostages.³⁷ It was evident that people's understanding of the outside world was widening and their concepts had begun to change.

China was still a long way from gaining any sort of leverage in terms of diplomatic negotiations and, in most cases, remained as the underdog. Still, the fact that the central government had set up a department dedicated to foreign relations and was sending emissaries and stationing diplomatic envoys abroad denoted some sort of progress. Chinese emissaries and diplomatic envoys acquired wider perspectives and greater understanding of foreign countries by personally witnessing the state of affairs in the Western countries. Many of the timely ideas and suggestions for promoting progress in China in the final decades of the Qing Dynasty were generated by emissaries to other countries and by envoys stationed in those countries. This was a matter of major significance.

In earlier works, such as Wei Yuan's *Treatises on the Maritime Kingdoms*, Xu Jishe's (1795–1893) *A Short Account of the Maritime Circuit* (Ying huan zhi lue), and Liang Tingnan's (1796–1861) *Assembled Descriptions of Various Countries*

³⁶ Regarding the development of modern industries during the Westernization Movement, refer also to Xia Dongyuan: *History of the Westernization Movement*, chapters 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, and 16.

³⁷ It was averred in the "Memorial in the Jiazhen Year by Grand Coordinator Liu Kun" that "diplomats should not be dispatched to other countries upon the orders of those countries; emplacing important ministers in distant lands is tantamount to sending out hostages." *Foreign Affairs in Their Entirety*, (*Tongzhi Reign*), 18th and 20th day of 11th lunar month of the Guangxu reign.

(He xing guo shuo), one found little more than very sketchy descriptions of society and politics in the Western countries, and it was impossible to visualize the true features of their organizations, institutions, or operations. After the direct observations by Guo Songtao's (1818–1891), Xue Fucheng (1838–1894), and other diplomatic envoys abroad became available, people gained a somewhat more authentic view of the various advantages of Western society in terms of their social organizations and systems as well as the reasons thereof, and gradually conceived the desire to emulate their examples instead of merely applauding the Westerners for “carrying forward the legacies of the Three dynasties.”

These envoys' understandings of the Western world surpassed those of earlier officials mainly in the following aspects:

- (a) They recognized that the Western political and educational systems had taken shape and developed over an extended period of time and had not come about incidentally. In his diaries, Guo Songtao's extensively recorded sequences of events in Britain's political, economic and cultural development over the preceding millennium in order to demonstrate the reasons for the current maturity and stability of Britain's institutions, the prosperity of its people and its national strength. He convincingly showed that the West stood where it was now not because it had inherited anything from China's past but “due to intrinsic reasons of its own.”³⁸
- (b) Their specific observations of the organization of the Western parliamentary system, the division of work between the upper and lower houses, the mutual safeguards and constraints in parliaments and governments, the relationships between political parties, and parliamentary politics showed they had acquired some understanding of the separation-of-powers principle and the party politics of Western political systems and so forth.³⁹
- (c) The effects of emphasizing rule of law. China had always esteemed “the rule of virtue.” But there was no way of ensuring all rulers would be virtuous and that had resulted in abrupt reversals in political situations and unpredictable eras of alternate stability and unrest. The envoys found that in Western political systems rulers could not treat countries as their private domains but had to regard these as the public property of all of their subjects. Rulers and subjects were both constrained by the legal system. Hence rulers dared not defy the public will, nor could the people transgress the law. This gave rise to societies that were orderly and governed by law.⁴⁰

³⁸ See *Diaries of Guo Songtao's*, 18th and 20th days of the 11th lunar month in the 3rd year of the Guangxu reign.

³⁹ Same as above, 18th day of the 12th lunar month in the 3rd year of the Guangxu reign; and Zhang Deli: *Accompanying Emissaries on Missions to Britain and Russia*, 8th day of the 1st lunar month in the 3rd year of the Guangxu reign.

⁴⁰ See *Diaries of Guo Songtao's*, 18th day of the 12th lunar month in the 3rd year of the Guangxu reign.

The notes taken by these diplomatic envoys abroad found limited circulation and at times were even subjected to proscriptions. Yet they were like new seeds, and once sown and disseminated in China would find, sometime and somewhere, suitable soil to germinate and grow like the hardy pines and cypresses that rear aloft on steep cliffs and mountain peaks. Later, during the Reform Movement, not a few outstanding persons of insight gained intellectual inspiration from the records and narrations produced by these emissaries and envoys.

Training new-type personnel became an urgent task for the requirements of diplomatic negotiations and the need to develop modern industries. Personnel cultivated by China's old-type education were only good at reading the so-called Confucian classics. But such things as the Four Books and Five Classics, commentaries on ancient texts, poetry and prose, textual criticisms, and so forth were utterly impractical. It had become imperative to develop a new type of education and cultivate new talent.

The first new-type schools run by China itself were the Tongwenguan language academies. The direct consideration for setting up these schools at the time was the need to train foreign language talent used during negotiations. This was dictated entirely by necessity. In his memorial on this matter, Yixin stated: "We must become proficient in their spoken and written languages if we wish to know the circumstances of various countries and not be misled."⁴¹ Li Hongzhang put it more bluntly when he sent up his memorial on setting up language schools in Shanghai and Guangdong.

He wrote: "In twenty years of contacts between countries, many foreigners have learned to speak and write our language. The more proficient among them are able to read our classics and history books and have a good grasp of our governmental decrees, laws, official documents and civil circumstances, whereas very few of our officials and gentry have any fluency in foreign languages or writing." When engaging in negotiations, "everyone depends on renditions by foreign translators and interpreters, yet no one can guarantee that these are not biased, fabricated or otherwise flawed." The only persons in China who knew foreign languages were the "*tong shi*" [i.e., translators or interpreters], but many of these *tong shi* were of a highly complex nature, coming as they did from commercial circles or missionary schools. "These two types of persons are intellectually vapid and mentally despicable, and their interests extend to nothing more than material benefits and sensual pleasures. Furthermore, they understand only eighty to ninety percent of a spoken language and a mere ten to twenty percent of a written language. . . In the course of negotiations, they frequently miss the import or nuances of words, or know only how to take advantage of the foreigners' strengths to sow discord for their own interests." Negotiations were a matter of major importance, yet "translators meddle in them and collude with the foreigners in order to share ill-gotten gains and satisfy their insatiable greed. They are able to wantonly sow discord and promote

⁴¹ "Another Memorial by Prince Gong," *Foreign Affairs in Their Entirety (Tongzhi Reign)*, vol. 8, p. 30; Hunan People's Publishing House, 1982.

exorbitant expenses because they can treat us like deaf-mutes and exercise their skills to inflate trifling matters into major contentions. Relations with foreign countries are important means for a country's long-term exchanges and interactions, and placing such important matters in the hands of persons of this sort only leads to lack of mutual understanding, inability to tell the true from the false, and inappropriate choices when making important decisions. This is no small matter!"⁴² Thus, it was necessary to set up schools to train foreign language personnel. The Beijing Tongwenguan was established in 1862, after which the Shanghai Guangfang Language School and the Guangdong Language School were set up in 1863 and 1864, respectively. Li Hongzhang, in a memorial on running the Shanghai language school, pointed out that the training of foreign language personnel would not be limited to the needs of diplomatic talks; such persons could also do extensive translations of Western books, which "would conceivably be of benefit for China's self-improvement."⁴³ Later, the Shanghai Guangfang Language School was amalgamated with the Translation Institute of the Jiangnan Manufacturing Office to become a major translation center in China in those years. It played an important role in disseminating Western learning.

It should also be noted that a large number of privately run foreign language schools (probably in the nature of short-term training classes) emerged in Shanghai, the most important venue for diplomatic negotiations at the time. Statistics show that as many as 14 such foreign language schools advertised student recruitments in the newspaper *Shen Bao* between 1872 and 1875.⁴⁴

Assessments differ as to the role and influence of the Tongwenguan as China's first modern educational institutions. Claims by some that they possessed virtually no saving graces⁴⁵ are excessively biased. Objectively speaking, it was no easy matter for these newly initiated undertakings to struggle along under the stare of various critical, derisive and discriminatory eyes. Among the students they turned out were some of China's earliest diplomats and translators, such as Lu Zhengxiang (1871–1949), Yang Shu (1844–1917), Tang Zaifu (1878–1962), Yang Zhaojun (1854–?), Liu Jingren (1866–?), Liu Shixun (1868–?), and others who on many occasions served as envoys stationed abroad. Lu Zhengxiang also served as Chief Minister of Foreign Affairs during Nationalist times.

Another important measure adopted by the officially run new-type education was to send students for studies overseas. In 1872, the first group of 30 youngsters was sent to the USA. Four groups totaling 120 persons were sent out before opposition forced the termination of the initiative. There was also some highly useful talent among those who received such training. Many turned out remarkable performances in their own vocations. Records show that apart from three who fell ill and died in the USA, the rest who returned to China to serve in the political field

⁴² *Complete Writings of Li Wenzhong: Memorials*, vol. 3, pp. 11–12.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴⁴ See Li Changli (1998b, p. 301).

⁴⁵ See *Reminiscences of Qi Rushan*, pp. 27–44, Baowentang Bookstore, 1989.

gave rise to a prime minister of state affairs, two foreign ministers, 2 ambassadors, and 12 other diplomats of other ranks. These students also produced two navy admirals, three ministers of railways, six railway experts, nine mining and metallurgy specialists, and other such personnel. When these youngsters returned to China, the *New York Times*, in a special commentary, spoke highly of the learning abilities of these Chinese youngsters and maintained that the implementation of the overseas studies policy was “outstandingly successful.” It also remarked that while emulating American science and technology and industrial and material civilization, China would also be taking back “elements of political reform.”⁴⁶ All of the students sent out to Europe by the Fujian School of Naval Administration took courses in military technologies and produced quite a number of outstanding persons who contributed to the construction of China’s modern navy. Especially memorable is the emergence among them of the eminent thinker Yan Fu (1894–1921). He was the first to translate and introduce to China the most representative classical works of Europe and thereby bring to the Chinese a deeper level of understanding of Western thought and culture.

During the Westernization Movement, a number of professional schools of various types were set up in various localities, as for example the School of Telegraphy in Fuzhou (1877), the School of Telegraphy in Tianjin (1880), the Academy of Western Learning in Guangzhou (in early 1880; later renamed the Naval Academy), the Biao Zheng Academy of Classical Learning in Jilin (1883), the School of Western Learning in Taiwan (1887), the School of Self-Strengthening in Hubei (1893), and the School of Pilotage at the China Merchants’ Steam Navigation Company (1894). There were also a number of military academies, such as the Tianjin Beiyang Naval Officers’ School (1880), the Guangdong Provincial Army-Navy Academy (1887), the Nanjing Naval Officers’ School (1890), the Weihai Naval Academy (1889), and so forth. These schools were directly established for the needs of various specialized undertakings, and the personnel they trained would of course serve the undertakings. These were China’s first group of persons to serve society by means of their professional knowledge. They differed entirely from the book learners who, under the old system of education, had studied the writings of the sages merely for the sake of coping with the civil service examinations.

In this period, old-type schools of classical learning were reformed and a number of new-type academies were set up. These began to teach new forms of knowledge, such as history, geography, mathematics, and various natural science disciplines. The better-known among these were the Long Men Academy in Shanghai (1864), the Shanghai Polytechnic Institution (1876), the Zheng Meng School (1878), the Nan Jing School in Jiangsu Province (1883), the Guang Ya Academy in Guangzhou (1889), and the Hubei-Hunan Academy of Classical Learning in Wuchang (1891).

The Shanghai Polytechnic Institution deserves special mention, since it may be regarded as a model for the new-type education in this period. Its contents and

⁴⁶ See *Biographical Literature* (Zhuan ji wen xue), vol. 34, no 6.

methods of education stood in sharp contrast with those of China's traditional education.

The institution was founded by the Englishman Sir Walter Henry Medhurst (1823–1885), and by numerous Chinese gentry who joined in this initiative. Formally started up in 1876, the institution was a special educational institute that combined a museum with a science-technology school. The abundance of displays in the museum included small machines, instruments, and artifacts donated by diverse European countries. The institution was in general open to the public and could be visited at any time. In later days, it also organized lectures to which persons who specialized in Western learning were invited to discuss and demonstrate various kinds of scientific and technical knowhow. The lectures were very well attended and met with excellent response. During the course exams taken by the institution's students, various celebrities in China including important government officials were frequently invited to participate in devising questions, reviewing test papers and deciding on awards. This practice was somewhat akin to what is today called "open-door school operations." The method established good communication between educational institutions and society and, while it kept students from being tied down to textbooks and laid them open to social scrutiny, it also exposed society to the influences of the new education.

From the teaching methods and the examination contents at the Polytechnic Institution, one can see how various types of new knowledge were being disseminated in those years and gain an approximate idea of the changes wrought in the ideological concepts of people who came in contact with the new knowledge.

For example, among the exam questions devised by Li Hongzhang (1823–1901) was this one:

Q: Of the theories pertaining to the natural sciences mentioned in *Da Xue* (The Great Learning), at least several tens appeared after the time of Zheng Kangcheng. Do these theories coincide in any way with the more recent Western learning? The natural sciences in Western learning began with Greece's Aristotle. These evolved and became more refined in the time of the Englishman [Francis] Bacon, and reached greater perfection with the widespread publication of the works of Darwin and Spencer. Can you give a detailed account of their origins and development?

This question involved the history of Western science, and all the personalities mentioned had played key roles in this history. Here we see the attention paid by leading officials of the Westernization Movement to Western learning as well as the extent of their understanding of Western learning.

Other questions devised by Li Hongzhang were extremely broad-ranging and touched upon such matters as international relations, developments in other countries, international trade, physics, chemistry, mathematics, geography, and so forth. Some also had to do with ancient Chinese learning, such as that of Guan Zi of China's Spring and Autumn Period and Yang Xiong of the Western Han era.

Among the exam topics devised by other personages were, for instance, Xue Fucheng's (1838–1894) questions about naval construction, the silk and tea trade; Cheng Xuanhuai's (1844–1916) questions regarding ship-building and telegraphy; Gong Zhaoyuan's (1835–?) questions regarding the pros and cons of building

railways, about floods and droughts, and evaluations of translated science-technology books; and Wu Fuci's questions about currencies, financing, tax levies on transferred goods, and the citizenship of overseas Chinese. Notably, among Liu Kun's questions was one on paddy rice varieties and, among Zheng Guangying's questions, one on the feasibility of setting up a parliament in China.⁴⁷

From the examples given above, one sees some of the salient characteristics of the Polytechnic Institution's education: (1) Special attention to science and technology; (2) attention to current affairs in other countries; (3) concern for the people's livelihood and things useful for China; and (4) no attempt to avoid sensitive issues. One might say that education as practiced at the Polytechnic Institution was a model of the most leading-edge education in China. The great majority of the teachers and students and the personages who took part in the school's management, education, and assessments were persons who shared the most up-and-coming ideology and concepts in China in those days. Hence, one might say that this academy and others like or similar to it and the new-type schools were experimental gardens for sowing the seeds of China's modernization.

When discussing new-type education, one must not overlook the missionary schools. They not only surpassed other new-type education in terms of scale (records show that students in missionary schools throughout China numbered 16,800 in 1890), but they played a demonstration role for other types of new education and even for social undertakings because they had undergone a longer period of development. These missionary schools also turned out a substantial number of outstanding talents, such as Rong Hong, Ma Xiangbo (1840–1939), Wu Tingfang (1870–1929), Tang Tingshu (1832–1892), and others. Although the schools run by missionaries were oriented first and foremost toward the spreading of religion, their teachings were not limited to religious content and their effects went beyond the scope of religion. In the 1840s, a student at a school run by a British missionary wrote a composition on a theme assigned by his teacher and compared British and Chinese education. He stated: "I used to study at a Chinese school and, after wasting four years of time and money, learned nothing but a few names. I have now been studying for two and a half years at this British school, and what I have gained in this time is, I feel, no less than ten thousand times what I acquired in those four long years. . . . That is because she [sic] teaches much useful knowledge, such as astronomy, geometry, algebra and religious truths. . . . whereas China's schools never teach these things." This student also described the differences between Chinese and British schools and noted: "A major difference is that Chinese books are about ancient times, while English books are about the present

⁴⁷ Regarding the circumstances of the Polytechnic Institution, refer also to Xiong Yuezhi: *The Dissemination of Western Learning and Late Qing Dynasty Society*, Chapter IV; Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1994.

and the future and about discovering truths. For this reason alone, all Chinese books follow the same pattern, while English books constantly strive for perfection.”⁴⁸

We, for now, do not say whether this student’s comparisons of the two education systems were comprehensive or correct; we only say these were the personal feelings of a young student, i.e., that one system taught useful knowledge while the other did not; that one system focused on antiquity while the other focused on the present and the future; that one was stereotyped while the other sought the truth and constantly strove for perfection. It is immediately evident which kind of education turned out the more useful talent.

Persons of insight in China very soon recognized the superiority of Western-type schools, which was why—as we have mentioned earlier—the 1860s witnessed the emergence of such things as the reform of China’s old academies or the setting up of new ones and the introduction of new-type teaching materials.

And as mentioned earlier, the emergence and development of a modern economy stimulated a need for information, whereupon news media undertakings rose up in response to this need. Foreign churches were again the first to set up news undertakings within China. The earliest Chinese-language newspaper was the Chashisu Meiyue Tongji Zhuan (Chinese Monthly Magazine), which was published in Malacca, Malaysia entirely in the service of missionary work. It was started up in 1815 and stopped publication in 1821. Later, between 1823 and 1826, there was the Te Xuan Cuo Yao Mei Yue Ji Zhuan (A Monthly Record of Important Selections) and the Tian Xian Xin Wen (Universal Gazette) (1828–1829). The first Chinese language newspaper printed within China’s borders was probably the Dong Xi Yang Kao Mei Yue Tong Ji Zhuan (Eastern and Western Ocean’s Monthly Investigation), started up in Guangzhou in 1833 by the German missionary Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff (1803–1851). The chief characteristic of this magazine was its vigorous descriptions of Western culture aimed at showing the Chinese that people in the Western countries were not barbarians and had many things worth emulating by the Chinese. Another characteristic was that it contained a substantial amount of news and economic information, and that it had already taken on the features of a genuine news publication. This magazine went out of publication in 1838. That year, another missionary, Walter Henry Medhurst (1796–1857), started up a magazine entitled Ge Guo Xiao Xi (News from All Lands) but it soon ceased publication.

After the Opium Wars, the more important Chinese language newspapers operated by Westerners were the Xia Er Guan Zhen (Chinese Serial) (1853–1856, published in Hongkong), the Liu He Cong Tan (Shanghai Serial) (1857–1858,

⁴⁸ Original text from George H. Danton: *The Culture Contacts of the United States and China*, pp. 64 and 66; quoted from Zheng Shiqu: “Missionaries in China in the 1840s to 1860s and the Dissemination of Western Learning,” carried in *Cultural Problems in China in Modern Times*, Zhonghua Book Company, 1989, pp. 99–100.

Shanghai), the Hongkong Chinese and Foreign News (c. 1875),⁴⁹ the Zhong Guo Jiao Hui Xin Bao (Chinese Church News) (started up in 1868 by Young John Allen [1836–1907], renamed the Jiao Hui Xin Bao [Church News] in 1872, and again renamed the Wan Guo Gong Bao [A Review of The Times, or The Globe Magazine] in 1874), and the best-known Shanghai Shun Pao (Shen Bao) (1872). The first Chinese language publication initiated by a Chinese was the one run by Chen Ai-ting (?–1905) called Xiang Gang Hua Zi Ri Bao (The Hongkong Chinese Mail) (1872), and the second one was Xun Huan Ri Bao (Universal Circulating Herald) set up in Hongkong and run by Wang Tao (1828–1897). There was another one that specialized in reporting scientific information, Ge Zhi Hui Bian (The Chinese Scientific Magazine), started up in 1876. Of these, Wan Guo Gong Bao and Shen Bao were the most widely circulated and most influential within China. Although Shen Bao was set up by an American, its chief manager and writers were Chinese, and it eventually landed in the hands of its Chinese manager. These newspapers and publications provided society with commercial information, reported important news from China and other countries, transmitted information on the natural and social sciences, and provided other cultural content. Shen Bao, for instance, in addition to reporting large amounts of commercial information and Chinese, foreign and local news, also provided some information on Darwin's evolution theory, printed serialized translated novels, initiated women's studies, promoted the setting up of anti-foot-binding societies, and even published statements about setting up a parliament.⁵⁰ These were unquestionably contents of highly contemporary significance, the dissemination of which was bound to exert an influence on society.

A modern publishing business also emerged and developed. The earliest new-type publishers were also set up by foreigners. The British missionary Walter Henry Medhurst set up the Mo Hai Shu Guan (Sea-of-Ink Library) in Shanghai in December 1843. After that, the American missionary William Gamble (1830–1886) operated the Mei Hua Shu Guan (American Presbyterian Press) (1860), William Martin (1827–1916) and others set up the Yi Zhi Shu Hui (Educational Association of China) (1877), Alexander Williamson (1829–1890) set up the Guang Xue Hui, the predecessor of which was the Tong Wen Shu Hui (Christian Literature Society for China) (1887), and so forth. These institutions were at first engaged mainly in the translation and publication of religious books, but later gradually increased their translations and publications of books on the natural sciences, history, geography, and so forth. Chief among the translating and publishing institutions operated by China's official quarters was the translation institute

⁴⁹ Opinions differ about the date of establishment of the Hongkong Chinese and Foreign News. At first Ge Gongzhen said that took place in 1858. According to recent textual research by Zhuo Nansheng—the Singaporean scholar who specializes in research on the history of early Chinese-language publications—the date should be November 3, 1857. Others claim the newspaper was set up by Wu Tingfang. However, Zhuo Nansheng points out that this newspaper was converted from the Xiang Gang Chuan Tou Huo Jia Zhi (Hong Kong Ship Price Newspaper) attached to The Daily Press (an English language newspaper).

⁵⁰ See Shen Bao, 29th day of the 5th lunar month in the 14th year of the Guangxu reign.

of the Jiangnan Manufacturing Office. This was the most prolific and influential one. A few machine-building factories and bureaus and new-type schools in other places did some translating and publishing work, partly because they needed some specialized knowhow for their own development, and partly because there was a need for it in society.

Worth mentioning is an institution that engaged mainly in the translation and publication of medical books—the Guangzhou Pok Tsai Hospital (1859). This had been a conventional hospital, but in addition to treating patients and dispensing medicines it began to translate and compile medical books on its own. Since the Chinese used to believe solely in traditional Chinese medicine, the emergence of Western medicine and Western medical publications opened a new world of knowledge for the Chinese.

The translation and publication of Western books was a major event in late Qing society. Dissemination of culture takes place through multiple channels, one of which consists of everyday things in people's lives—i.e., things that change people's way of life, gradually affect their concepts, and then change the way in which they create and enjoy culture. Another is through direct contacts between people and through gaining knowledge of other people's language, behavior, thoughts, and concepts in different life environments. This is a process of subtle influencing, reciprocal absorption, and mutual change. Still another channel—one which would seem to be relatively indirect but that promotes changes in the spirit and content of culture at a deeper level—is the translation of foreign classics and writings. Prior to the eastern advance of Western culture, Buddhist culture exerted a major influence on China's culture and a most important role in the dissemination of Buddhist culture was played by the translation of the Buddhist scriptures. It is no coincidence that the stories about the Tang Dynasty monk who traveled to the Western Heavens to obtain the Buddhist sutras struck such a deep chord in people's hearts. The translation and publication of books on Western learning during the late Qing era similarly played a significant role in bringing about changes in China's culture.

Most of the earliest translations were rendered verbally by missionaries and taken down in writing by Chinese scholars. Large numbers of science-technology and social science books were translated in this way. Even literary works for a time underwent such a process. For instance, Lin Qinnan's (1852–1924) translations of Western novels were first translated verbally by persons conversant with foreign languages and then written down by Lin. Although this method hardly ensured accurate conveyance of ideas and concepts, it was the only feasible method in those times of acute shortages of translators. These works played a major role in that start-up period. We have previously mentioned a number of important translation institutions at that time. Statistics have been made of the books they translated and published. The Sea-of-Ink Library, for instance, turned out a total of 171 kinds of books between 1844 and 1860, the majority (138) of which were of the religious category, and a minority (33) of which fell in the science-technology and social

science category.⁵¹ However, a good many of the latter were highly influential. For example, *Xu Ji He Yuan Ben* (Supplementary Elements of Geometry, containing the last nine volumes of Euclid's Geometry), *Zhong Xue* (An Elementary Treatise on Mechanics), *Tan Tian* (Outline of Astronomy), *Di Li Quan Zhi* (Universal Geography), the reprint of *Quan Ti Xin Lun* (A New Theory of the Body), and others served Chinese scholars as important lines of access to Western learning. As stated earlier, the largest translating and publishing institution at the time was the Jiangnan Manufacturing Office's translation institute. Some statistics show that the academy had translated 126 kinds of books by 1899, a good many of which were widely distributed and highly influential. Most of these were science-technology books on mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy, and medicine. Several books in the social-science category were much welcomed by scholars, as for example *Zuo Zhi Chu Yan* (Homely Words to Aid Governance), *Lie Guo Si Ji Zheng Yao* (The Statesman's Year Book), and so forth, both of which exerted a very strong influence on progressive personages in the last years of the Qing Dynasty. Liang Qichao frequently cited these books, the dissemination of which provided forward-thinking intellectuals with general information on Western political and ideological theories and political operations and played an important role in the forming of their thinking on reform. *Kang You Wei Zi Bian Nian Pu* (Chronicle of Kang Youwei's Life) records how, in 1879, he "obtained The Statesman's Yearbook... perused several kinds of Western books... gradually accumulated books on Western learning which served him as the basis for the teaching of Western learning." In 1882, he wrote: "Passing through Shanghai... purchased a large amount of Western books to be used for teaching and research purposes after coming back... From then on I concentrated on Western studies and began to discard all of my old views." In 1883, he wrote: "I purchased the *Wan Guo Gong Bao* and spent much time studying books on Western learning, which involved such things as sonics, optics, chemistry, electric power, mechanics, the histories of various countries and the travel memoirs of various personages." Kang Youwei felt he had benefitted greatly from these Western books and, through a mutual friend, opined to Zhang Zhidong (1837–1909): "There are too few Western books in China, and greater part of the translations by Fryer [the Englishman John Fryer, 1839–1928] are on military and medical subjects and of little practical value, whereas his books on politics are most vital. Western learning contains many new things that are not known in China. Setting up institutions to translate these is a matter of the greatest importance."⁵² Kang's reactions indicate, on the one hand, that Western books were exerting an enormous influence on Chinese intellectuals and, on the other, that progressive persons were dissatisfied with the then state of Western book translation and publication and eagerly looked forward to seeing books on political studies. Kang's view that "Western learning contains many new things that are not known

⁵¹ See Xiong Yuezhi (1994, p. 188).

⁵² *Chronicle of Kang Youwei's Life*, see *Reform Movement of 1898* (4), pp. 115, 116 and 119; Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1957.

in China” was already a far cry from his contention in the 1840s and 1850s that with the exception of technical skills, the Westerners were greatly inferior to China in terms of politics, education, and ethical matters. One might well say that the translation, publication, and dissemination of Western books had to a considerable extent already changed the ideology and concepts of China’s intelligentsia.

When discussing the translation and publication of Western books in the late years of the Qing Dynasty, Liang Qichao stated: “As maritime embargoes were lifted and foreign encroachments intensified by the day, orders were issued to the Jiangnan Manufacturing Office to regard the translation of Western books as its first duty. A hundred books have been completed over the last few years. The foreign language academies and the churches set up by Westerners in China have also engaged in translation work. In twenty or more years, approximately three hundred kinds of books have become available for studies.” That was about the achievements. Liang also declared: “What the Westerners know in the fields of phonics, optics, chemistry, electricity, agriculture, mining, industry, and commerce is, in terms of the simplicity or complexity of their knowledge, a far cry from our Chinese textual research, literature and *tie kuo jia yan* (literary sundries)!” That was his conclusion about the difference between China’s traditional learning and the Western learning; a conclusion which was of course quite shallow. However, Liang did come to the conclusion that, “If our country hopes to improve itself, the solution lies in translating more Western books, and if our men of learning wish to gain in stature, they should strive to read more Western books (Liang Qichao 1989, pp. 122–123).” And, “if China wishes to regard self-strengthening as its first strategy, then it should regard translating books as its first duty.”⁵³ He also stated: “Book translation is truly a matter of urgency today,” and “the Reform will be no more than empty talk if the translation of books is not speeded up now.”⁵⁴ Liang Qichao had already been highly dissatisfied with the state of Western book translations and publications when the Reform Movement started up. He had complained: “Of the hundreds of books translated from Western languages into Chinese, those on statecraft can be counted on one’s fingers.” And he said reproachfully: “All are convinced that China is weaker than the Westerners because it has not paid attention to its weapons and equipment, has not improved its ships, and has not refined its manufacturing. They have turned a blind eye to the real substance of the methods used by Westerners to build up their countries.”⁵⁵ This, after the 1870s and 1880s, was the unanimous opinion of forward-looking persons, and it reflected the general state of mind of China’s intellectuals on the eve of the political reforms.

⁵³ Liang Qichao: “On Reading ‘A Bibliography of Japanese Works,’” *Collected Works of Yinbingshi: Second Collection*, p. 52.

⁵⁴ Liang Qichao: “Preface and Notes to the Works Published by the Datong Translation Bureau,” *Collected Works of Yinbingshi: Second Collection*, p. 57.

⁵⁵ Liang Qichao: “Preface to ‘The Collectanea of Western Government,’” *Collected Works of Yinbingshi: Second Collection*, p. 63.

2.5 The Conceptual Framework of “Zhong Ti Xi Yong”

Previously, all historians have used China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895 to define the ultimate failure of the 30-odd years of the Westernization Movement from the early 1860s to the mid-1890s. This may not be wrong from the political point of view. However, from the perspective of the hundred or more years of China's ideological and cultural transformation, one cannot use the term “failure” to simplistically sum up those 30 years of history.

In those 30-odd years, apart from experiencing that major event—the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom movement, the Chinese people accomplished in the main three things:

1. The creation of a modern industry. Although limited in scope, it had after all been started up from scratch. As the saying goes, “everything is hard in the beginning.” China had never had anything else but agriculture and handicrafts and had never known what “modern industry” meant. Now it was doing such things as building ships, manufacturing machinery, weaving textiles, digging mines, and running railways. These things represented new forces of production and new modes of production and, once in existence, would place Chinese society irreversibly on a new track.
2. The creation of a new type of education. Although this education started out as a sort of contingency education in foreign languages and sending students abroad for studies, it nonetheless had an exemplary effect as a new type of education. It stimulated the rise of vocational education, new-type schools and new-type academies.
3. The start-up of modern diplomacy. The beginning of the Westernization Movement was directly related to changes in the way and form in which the Qing government negotiated with the Western powers. During the second Opium War, the Tianjin Treaty which Britain forced the Qing government to sign in 1858 stipulated that foreign envoys could move into Beijing (actually, this provision took effect only after the complete cessation of the second Opium War). In 1861, the Qing government set up a yamen dedicated to the overall administration of affairs with other countries and to conducting diplomatic negotiations. The foreign powers then demanded that China send emissaries abroad. By the mid-1870s, the Qing government finally decided to station envoys in other countries. Now that China had a yamen specializing in foreign diplomacy and a system for stationing envoys abroad, China's diplomatic relations were gradually put on the right track. This was quite important for a country that was in the process of opening up to the world. Meanwhile, the direct observations and information concerning the Western powers obtained by China's first group of resident envoys abroad had a substantial effect on increasing China's understanding of the world and changing the concepts of the Chinese.

A direct result of the rise of modern industry was the genesis of new social strata, i.e., capitalists and industrial workers. These were forces new to Chinese society, and the succession of changes that took place thereafter in China all had to do with these forces. Urban industrial development, while attracting rural wealth and funds, also drew large segments of the rural population to the cities. Growing urban populations gave rise to various urban needs. Service and entertainment trades sprang up. The rapidly expanding urban populations promoted the development of urban public undertakings. Cities and towns in the coastal areas and along rivers and railways gradually became places where people arriving from diverse directions lived together, and the conglomeration of populations promoted the need for unified spoken languages. The subsequent emergence of the Chinese common language (Mandarin) and the devising of Mandarin-language alphabets were new phenomena with important significance for China's culture.

The development of urban industry and commerce expedited the birth of modern cultural and educational undertakings. The development of the newspaper and publications industry created unprecedented means for the transmission of various types of social information, which also accelerated the emergence of groups of new-type intellectuals, including journalists, reporters, news writers, and other heretofore nonexistent free-lance professionals. These, in turn, further advanced the development of the news and publishing industries and promoted the dissemination of new knowledge and thinking. Such disseminations had the effect of imperceptibly changing society, of bridging the chasm that had for more than a thousand years separated the elite from the ordinary masses. The gathering trend toward the plebification of culture gradually exerted a broad and profound effect on social change.

Another change, not to be overlooked, was the gradual advent of Western utensils and articles into the lives of the Chinese—all kinds of foreign-labeled goods of daily use which were of good quality, cheap, practical, and attractive. No matter how rabidly people had previously despised and detested foreigners, they could not resist the temptations these things presented. Slightly better-off and slightly more open-minded people in large and small cities and towns, and even in villages with large concentrations of inhabitants on the eastern seaboard and along rivers and railroads, gradually joined the ranks of those who used foreign goods. This, on the one hand, modified the concepts that had caused these people to scorn and reject Westerners and Western affairs and, on the other, slowly transformed their way of life and improved their quality of life. And this inevitably brought changes to their cultural concepts.

As regards students turned out by missionary schools and new-type schools, their knowledge structure had already undergone distinct changes and consisted of an ever larger share of knowledge about nature and society and for everyday use. Such knowledge was directly or indirectly related to Western culture. Hence, it goes without saying that any aversion in their mentality against Western culture was bound to abate considerably and even be replaced to varying extents by respect and admiration.

Given the various tendencies mentioned above, the Chinese gradually began, in increasing numbers, to a rising degree, and more and more actively, to approach and accept Western culture, including various specific aspects of its knowledge, its ideology, its ways of dealing with affairs, and so forth.

As the Chinese came in greater contact with Western knowledge, some could no longer deny the strong points of Western culture. Back in the early 1860s, Feng Guifen had already concluded that China was inferior to the foreigners in respect of making full use of people's talents, of taking full advantage of the resources of the land, of the absence of estrangement between rulers and people, and of nomenclature tallying with realities. The Westernization Movement produced more of such forward-looking persons capable of understanding and appreciating the strengths of Western culture.

Forward-looking personages already recognized that behind the excellence of Western material goods and skills lay ideologies and systems that deserved conscientious exploration by the Chinese. Xue Fucheng, for instance, saw how education flourished in the Western countries where there were certain formulae as regards elementary, secondary and higher education for all males and females and from youth to old age: "For civil servants there are civil service academies, for the military there are army academies, for farmers there are schools of agriculture, for workers there are technical schools, and for merchants there are trade schools. Not only do officials and scholars attend schools; everyone, whether soldier, worker, farmer or merchant, goes to school. . . When gauging the rises or declines of countries as a whole, one must examine the root causes that brought these about. Today's proliferation of schools is the root cause for the vigorous growth of the Western countries!"⁵⁶ There may be differing opinions about education being the root cause for a country's prosperity and strength, but Xue had evidently seen something more profound behind the excellent products and ingenious techniques. Again for example, Zheng Guanying (1842–1921) believed: "Prosperity and strength is not due wholly to strong ships and powerful cannon. It is also due to setting up parliaments; to achieving unity of purpose and providing proper education; to setting up schools and academies, emphasizing skills, diversifying the subjects for examinations, and enabling people to give full play to their abilities; to paying attention to agricultural science, building water channels, converting infertile soil into good farmland, and deriving the most benefits from the land; to building railways, putting up power lines, reducing taxes, protecting commerce, and enabling free flow of goods."⁵⁷ Ma Jianzhong (1845–1900), after personally visiting and surveying some Western countries, saw the superficiality of the contention that "the prosperity and strength of the European countries lies in the skill of their manufacturing and the discipline of their armies." And, "examinations

⁵⁶ *Complete Works of Yong'an: Diary of a Mission to the Four Countries of England, France, Italy and Belgium*, vol. 6, p. 3, engraved in the Ji Chou year of the Guangxu reign.

⁵⁷ *Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity: Author's Preface*, p. 5, lithographic printing by the Shanghai Book Company in the Bing Shen year of the Guangxu reign.

of their laws and regulations and perusals of their documentation show that those who seek to be prosperous must protect their commercial institutions, and those who wish to be strong must win the hearts of their people.” Therein lay the roots of their prosperity and strength. “Their manufacturing skills, their armies, and their navies are, by and large, of secondary importance.”⁵⁸

In sum, tens of years after the Westernization Movement was launched, China’s forward-looking persons had transcended not only the mindless assumption that Westerners were mere barbarians but also the view that the West was strong only in its material aspects. They had begun to comprehend Western culture in its entirety, and to understand matters from the perspective of “diverse new formulations.” They believed that the most basic of these “formulations” was the relationship between the state and the people and between the ruler and the subjects; and that these relationships were best embodied in the parliamentary system. This had become a common understanding among no small number of forward-looking persons between the late 1870s and the early 1890s.

Still, the extent of the understandings reached by forward-looking persons was one matter, while inherent cultural traditions and their dominance over the broad masses—a dominance supported by inherent institutions—was another matter. At the time, the majority of gentry and the populace still regarded Westerners as barbarians and even found it hard to countenance material objects from the West. Zeng Jize (1839–1890)—Zeng Guofan’s son and a well-known diplomat in those days—came under sharp public criticism because he took a small steamboat to return to his hometown for a funeral. Guo Songtao’s, sent on a mission to Europe, made notes of what he saw and heard on the way and wrote down some of his impressions, and then submitted these back to his superiors, whereupon someone published these notes under the title “Notes on a Trip by an Emissary to the West” purely for informational purposes. Guo was censured, and the imperial court ordered the proofs destroyed. A well-known scholar, Li Ciming (1830–1894), who had always despised Guo for taking pleasure in discussing Western affairs, wrote in his diary: “When [Guo] Songtao’s was called back to Fujian the year before last, he sent up a memorial viciously criticizing Shuying, the governor-general of Yunnan Province, for which action he was greatly disparaged by public opinion. After he returned to the capital, growing public invective became so demeaning as to be virtually insupportable. Last year, when the barbarians came to Changsha with the intention of building a Catholic church, the locals believed that Songtao had a hand in this matter and a mob threatened to burn down his house. The local civil service examinations in Hunan at this time were virtually boycotted. When those memoirs (“Notes on a Trip by an Emissary to the West”—the Author) came out and the Yamen of Commerce published them, all righteous persons gnashed their teeth in anger.”⁵⁹ It is evident any discussion of, or any expression of admiration for,

⁵⁸ “Letter to Li Hongzhang on Raising the Standards of Studies Abroad,” *Essays from the Shike Studio* (vol. 1), in *Ten Discussions from the Studio of Self-Strengthening Studies*, lithographic printing by Wenruilou in the Ding You year of the Guangxu reign.

⁵⁹ *Diary of Zhao Mantang*, 18th day of the 6th lunar month in the 3rd year of the Guangxu reign.

Western affairs were very likely to be met with hostility. Hence, at the outset of the Westernization Movement scholars as a whole abstained from such things. When Guo Songtao's was recalled to China a year after being censured, friends advised him to keep silent about matters in other countries for his own safety's sake. Admirably, Guo refused to do so; all he had in mind was the good of his country.⁶⁰ Zheng Guangying, in his *Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity*, stated: "In this book I speak frankly about various matters and frequently touch upon tabooed subjects. Although driven by righteous indignation, my comments inevitably sound like audacious ravings which are quite likely to offend the powers that be. Hence I hesitated before putting them in print."⁶¹ Wang Fengzao (1851–1918), who once served as an envoy to Japan, wrote: "The only way to discuss matters as they are in foreign countries today is by writing books. It is most difficult to discuss these during conversations in daily life."⁶² In his "Preface to Homely Words to Aid Governance," Xue Fucheng very circumspectly stated: "These are but personal opinions of a personal nature on important subjects which should be thoroughly explored but have been barely touched upon, and rash pronouncements on which would be swiftly condemned."⁶³ The term "would be swiftly condemned" implied that open publication of such views would invite trouble. All people were aware of the controversy generated by the planned addition of an academy of astronomy and mathematics to the Tongwenguan. Even Li Hongzhang, a highly placed and powerful man who led the Westernization Movement, was not impervious to attacks by conservative elements. One of the latter openly accused Li Hongzhang and Ding Richang of "never relenting on their desire to use barbarian things to convert China," and scolded them, saying: "Learning from and serving the foreigners is shameful in the extreme, is it not? It leads first and foremost to the downright disgrace of abruptly losing all sense of propriety, righteousness, honesty and shame, and is utterly impermissible."⁶⁴ This was tantamount to accusing Li Hongzhang and all other officials of the Westernization Movement of being scoundrels who had lost their sense of propriety, righteousness, honesty, and shame. It was in these circumstances that Zheng Guangying angrily lamented: "Those who claim to be upright persons today pride themselves on not speaking about Western affairs, and when they see persons seeking Western learning they accuse these persons of being malefactors before the Confucian ethical code and

⁶⁰ See Zhong Xuhe (1985, p. 196).

⁶¹ See *Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity* p. 54; lithographic edition by the Shanghai Bookstore in the Bing Shen year of the Guangxu reign.

⁶² See Luo Sen et al. (1983, p. 257).

⁶³ See *Preliminary Proposals Concerning Western Affairs*, p. 1, in the *Ten Discussions from the Studio of Self-Strengthening Studies*, Wenruilou lithographic edition in the Ding You year of the Guangxu reign.

⁶⁴ See "Memorial to the Throne by Minister of Office of Transmission Yu Lingchen," *The Westernization Movement* (1), p. 121.

scum of the literati.”⁶⁵ Still, it should be remarked that the Qing court on the whole leaned toward the Westernization faction in those days, as its rulers had forebodings of serious crises to come. They had been deeply shaken in particular by the heavy blows they had sustained at the hands of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and by the efficaciousness of foreign-made rifles and cannon in quashing the Taiping. To save their tottering dynastic rule, they felt compelled to listen to the opinions of the Westernization faction and do some reforming. However, that did not mean the Qing court and the ministers of the Westernization faction were entirely at one in their understandings.

Since the Qing court leaned toward the Westernization faction, why were the conservatives so bold and brazen in their attacks against the Westernization faction? That is worth contemplating. In the entire course of the Westernization movement, the conservative faction never gained the upper hand in terms of the arguments they presented on how to treat Westerners and Western learning. The most acute conflict took place over the question of whether to send official personnel to study at the astronomy and mathematics academy appended to the Tongwenguan. Since Woren, the ringleader of the then conservative faction, was unable to put forward any convincing reasons against doing so, he went so far as to play down astronomy and mathematics and even insisted there were persons already proficient at such studies in China. Egged on by the Westernization faction, the Tongzhi Emperor then issued an edict ordering Woren to recommend such proficient persons and set up a separate academy. Incapable of responding, Woren found himself in a very embarrassing position. This was a typical example of the conservative faction finding itself at a complete disadvantage in theoretical terms. And so why was it that Woren’s memorials were able nonetheless to exert so strong an influence that the astronomy and mathematics academy found it difficult to enroll an adequate complement of students? And again, why was it that some forward-looking people were so apprehensive about discussing Westernization whereas the conservatives dared attack it so relentlessly? I feel the chief reason was the inherent monarchical institution.

This matter may be addressed from two aspects.

The system of imperial power. Since ancient times it had been acknowledged that “the ruler governs the subject.” Although a tiny minority of people had talked, during the Westernization Movement, about the Western system of “the ruler and people governing together,” or in other words the democratic system, and even expressed admiration for this system, they had not been able to stand up against the “sanctity of monarchical rule”—a concept ingrained in people’s minds for more than 2,000 years. And the great majority of people dared not offend the emperor. If, at times, they inadvertently offended him, and even if the emperor happened to be in an indulgent mood, they would be punished. Before Guo Songtao’s went out as ambassador, he had reached an agreement with his superiors that he would write a

⁶⁵ See *Words of Warnings in Times of Prosperity: Western Learning*, p. 7, lithographic edition by the Shanghai Bookstore in the Bing Shen year of the Guangxu reign.

monthly report on his observations abroad and submit it to the administration for reference purposes. And so both he and the administration's officials were surprised when his first "Notes on a Trip by an Emissary to the West" were censured and the proofs destroyed. This matter did not mean any change in the imperial court's Westernization policy, but it did show that the court wished to maintain a balance in the struggle between the newly emergent and conservative factions and to uphold its authority.

The objective effect of this episode was to compel caution in all matters on the part of ordinary officials and intellectuals; they dared not say or do anything that even slightly overstepped the line.

The second was the imperial civil service examinations system. For a thousand years, literati had depended on this system for their careers and livelihoods. Although in every dynasty and era there had been a few persons who refused to be bound by this institution, it still constituted an inviolable "cage" as far as the great majority was concerned. Literati fostered by this institution were accorded respect; the rest were barely tolerated by mainstream officials and literati. Proof of this is seen in a statement made by Zhang Deyi (1847–1918) who accompanied Guo Songtao as an envoy to Europe. He said: "The country deems those who have studied books and learned to write in the classical manner as pertaining to the 'proper path' (*zheng tu*). . . I myself am not learned, did not take the proper path and, to my regret, do not figure among those of the proper path."⁶⁶ Zhang's words show that tradition laid great emphasis on being turned out by the imperial examinations system, and that a sharp divide and deep rifts existed between those of, and those not of, the proper path. That was why Woren adamantly opposed adding to the Tongwenguan an academy of astronomy and mathematics which would recruit proper-path personnel for the studies it would offer. In his view, "having the Tongwenguan invite barbarians to teach proper-path students will be bad for China's prestige and unwelcome with the populace." Proper-path personnel were "persons whom the country fosters and reserves for its own uses." Furthermore, "a country is governed by means of rituals and etiquette and not by means of tactics and stratagems; and the fundamental Way lies in people's hearts and not in mechanical skills and artifices" The country relied on proper-path personnel to "expound the principles of righteousness and keep people's minds on the right track."⁶⁷ By having such personnel taught by foreign teachers, one ran the risk of placing China's literati at the service of foreigners.

By means of the imperial examinations, candidates obtained merit and honor, became officials through conventional channels, and strove for promotions to high positions. Those with lofty ideals aspired to "serve famous rulers like [the legendary] Yao and Shun"; those with more commonplace ideals sought glory for their clans and wealth and fame for their families. Such were the goals pursued by literati for thousands of years. As long as the imperial exams existed, there was no way the

⁶⁶ See "Collected Writings of the Senior Official Jianwei General Zhang: Last Words," vol. 4, p. 1.

⁶⁷ See *Foreign Affairs in Their Entirety (Tongzhi reign)* vol. 47, pp. 24, 25.

overwhelming majority of scholars would deviate from this path, because once they did so they would forfeit all of those fine prospects. Hence even though Woren could not produce any convincing arguments, the fact that such important matters as careers and livelihoods were at stake sufficed to make the great majority of scholars hesitate, and deterred them from enrolling in the astronomy and mathematics academy.

Yet another matter demonstrated the “cage” effect of that institutional system of imperial examinations: to wit, the fact that numerous intellectuals produced by Western-type schools also attempted to pass the imperial examinations in their pursuit of scholarly honor and official rank. Records show that by 1896, more than ten persons turned out by the Tongwenguan had obtained official positions as *ju ren* and *jinshi* by taking the imperial examinations. Even on the eve of the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, many students returning from studies abroad still hoped to take part in special examinations held by the central government in order to secure the rank of a natural sciences *jinshi*. It is evident that the old imperial examinations system to a large extent continued to prevent intellectuals from being freed from old concepts and institutions, from turning to new ways, and from engaging in more useful studies. The effect was to hamper and hold back the pace of social and cultural change.

Because of these severe institutional hindrances, forward-looking persons who hoped to place their ideologies and propositions on a relatively stable foundation were forced to seek rationalizations for the Western learning they brought in and to avoid coming too obviously in conflict with traditional views and concepts.

Being a tiny minority, forward-looking persons could not afford to disregard the state of mind of the great majority of gentry and officials. Had they done so, they would even be denied any opportunity to give expression to their thoughts. The fate of Guo Songtao’s “Notes on a Trip by an Emissary to the West” inevitably filled them with trepidation. Confronted with such a social reality, and whether out of a sense of self-preservation or because of the difficulty of escaping from under the crushing weight of the traditional culture, forward-looking persons were compelled to devise an ideological framework for handling questions of Chinese and Western culture that would more likely be accepted by other people.

There was a well-known formulation articulated as “Western learning has its roots in China” and widely subscribed to among forward-looking persons. For example, Xue Fucheng stated: “The definition of the four seasons in the *Book of Yao*, the mathematics passed down by *Zhou Bi*, and the Westerners’ astronomical algorithms probably all derive from the same roots. It is quite possible that other things beneficial to the country and the people originated in China as well.” Hence, “since the Westerners have imitated and improved upon the creations by the Sages, why can China not do the same?”⁶⁸ Zheng Guanying wrote: “Starting with the *gezhi* (physical sciences) writings in *Great Learning* and the *Winter Offices* volume in

⁶⁸ *Diary of a Mission to the Four Countries of Britain, France, Italy and Belgium*, p. 133, Qiu Li Bookstore, 1985.

Zhou Li, much of the learning of the ancients on physics and mathematics has spread to the Occident.” He further asserted that all branches of learning in the West had actually originated in Chinese learning, and it was only because of the decadence of China’s political culture that “scholars have pursued the abstract rather than the concrete, spent their time on ornate but vacuous Eight-part Essays and calligraphic works, curbed their creativity, misspent their time and led everyone in useless directions, so that Chinese learning has become increasingly barren while Western learning has not been able fathom its profundities. Today, things which were once ours have been taken up by the Westerners, studied assiduously and perseveringly, and rendered meticulous and immeasurably profound.” Actually, however, Western learning “is learning that originally existed in China.” The Western learning which was being studied in China was like “rituals that have been lost and then rediscovered among the populace,” and in fact like “returning to China learning that was originally Chinese.”⁶⁹ Huang Zunxian (1848–1905), in his *Annals of Japan*, expressed the same sentiments. He said: “All learning in the West originated with Mo Zi. The Westerners’ claims that all persons have the right to determine their own lives are the same as Mo Zi’s. Their exhortation to love thy neighbor like thyself is Mo Zi’s advocacy of universal love. They talk about sole reverence for God and saving one’s soul while Mo Zi talked about respecting Heaven and understanding the soul and the spirit (*ming gui*). As for the making of intricate machines and the skills in attack and defense, Mo Zi was adept at military strategies, and making flying devices was but one of his inventions. And the natural sciences all find their beginnings in Mo Zi’s first and second classics.” He also asserted, the Western countries “use laws similar to those of Shen and Han, the official positions they institute are similar to those in the *Zhou Rituals*, and their statecraft is approximately the same as that envisioned by Guan Zi. As for the natural sciences, most of these are to be found among the Sages of the Zhou and Qin dynasties.” His conclusion was that “the Westerners’ learning does not go beyond the scope of our writings.”⁷⁰ Again for example, Wang Tao, in his dissertation entitled *Yuan xue* (The Genesis of Learning), describes Western learning as having all of its beginnings in Chinese learning, and draws the conclusion: “China pre-saged the culture and education of the Western lands.”⁷¹ Tang Shouqian (1856–1907), another forward-looking personage who also wrote a book entitled *Words of Warning* and was well-known among the gentry in Zhejiang, also strongly supported the theory that “Western learning has its roots in China.” He maintained that “none of the Western methods exceed our undertakings.” He declared: “Records of studies on Nature, materials, conversions, air, light, electricity, mechanics, mining, warfare, law, hydraulics, phonics, medicine, letters,

⁶⁹ *Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity*, vol. 1, pp. 2 and 9; Bing Shen year of the Guangxu reign; lithographic copy by the Shanghai Bookstore.

⁷⁰ “Annals of Japan: Annals of Academics (1)” *Annals of Japan*, vol. 32, pp. 1, 11; printed by the Shanghai Jicheng Bookstore, in the 24th year of the Guangxu reign.

⁷¹ “Additional Essays of Wang Tao,” vol. 1.; *Genesis of Learning*, p. 3, Shanghai Bookstore, 2002.

manufacturing and so forth are all to be found in Chinese books (Tang Shouqian 1993, p. 225).” Still another man named Chen Qiu (1851–1904) wrote a treatise entitled “Extensive Discussions of Statecraft” and declared that Westerners “all employ their intelligence and skill to vie with us for renown and material magnificence, yet an examination of their endeavors shows that all of these fall within scope of the Six Classics and the various Sages.”⁷²

The above theorem that “Western learning has its roots in China” was seriously flawed, both factually and in theory, and statements of this type certainly fail to convince anyone today. Recent studies on the history of mankind’s culture and new archeological discoveries increasingly show that human culture has had multi-elemental origins. There is no theoretical support for the claim that all Western cultures originated in the undertakings of the Chinese. However, we should not thereupon declare that the scholars cited above deliberately fabricated deceptive and self-deceptive theories. All were men of excellent scholarship and morals, and they came to their conclusions under different circumstances and at different times and on the basis of their personal studies and experiences. As it is said, “great minds think alike.” There must be some explanation for that. They were well versed in the Chinese classics and, since some of the contents therein could be related to Western learning, they assumed that Western learning had originated in China. Their conclusions were wrong. However, such mental associations are actually rooted in the identity of mankind’s cultures. It is true that the environments in which people exist are not quite the same, but there are more similarities than differences. Hence there have also been more similarities than differences in the way the challenges presented by the environment have been handled. In “seeking sustenance from the land,” people lived on what they grew on the land, including animals and plants; and for “journeying across the land,” people built roads through mountains and bridges over rivers, and made vehicles for traveling on land and boats for moving over water. In other matters, too, things were done as the need arose. In terms of the physical sciences, such phenomena as sound, light, physical changes, electricity etc. that are present in all environments sooner or later came to people’s attention, triggered reflections, gave rise to studies and generated learning, the only difference being in their profundity and acuity. That is what Xue Fucheng meant when he asserted “China and other countries are the same in that all exercise the spirit of creation for the benefit of people’s lives.” The identicalness of human cultures is an obvious fact. Thus, even though the cultures of each country and people in the world each possess their own characteristics, in the end they are capable of mutual communication and mutual correlation. And it is through such mutual communication and mutual correlation that people attempt to comprehend the cultures of other nations. That is why when people strive to understand something new, they invariably start with aspects of their own knowledge that correspond with the new thing, and from there proceed step by step with further

⁷² “Extensive Discussion of Statecraft,” p. 1, in the *Ten Discussions from the Studio of Self-Strengthening Studies*, Wenruilou lithographic edition in the Ding You year of the Guangxu reign.

inquiries. If no correlation is possible between the new thing and their existing knowledge or experience, they cannot understand the new thing. It is evident that China's forward-looking persons would compare China's existing records and writings with Western learning and thereby determine that Western learning could be learned and used. Doing so was an inevitable process in the history of knowledge. Hence the theorem that "Western learning has its roots in China" was a reflection of the identicalness of mankind's cultures as well as an inevitable phase in the Chinese people's contacts with, and understanding of, Western learning.

We all know there was a proposition during the Westernization Movement period that became all the rage and that scholars of the history of Chinese culture have discussed at great length, i.e., Zhong Ti Xi Yong (or, *Zhong xue wei ti, xi xue wei yong*: "Chinese learning for fundamental principles and Western learning for practical applications.")

Twenty or 30 years ago, discussions on Zhong Ti Xi Yong frequently consisted of criticisms by people who regarded Zhong Ti Xi Yong as the antithesis of the progressive Reform Movement. Actually, Zhong Ti Xi Yong had been around for a long time already. One may at least assert that the Zhong Ti Xi Yong theorem was already extant when the Westernization Movement came into being. For example, Feng Guifen had already explicitly stated in his *Protestations from Xiaobin Studio* that "China's teachings on the traditional relationships should serve as the basis and should be supplemented by the techniques used in other countries for achieving prosperity and strength."⁷³ Thereafter, and up to the early 1890s, some people never stopped touting this theorem. Wang Tao, for example, stated: "The *qi* (the means, the tools) may be obtained from the Western countries, but we ourselves shall furnish the *dao* (the Way, the principles)."⁷⁴ He also said: "In non-material matters, China's Way prevails; in material matters, the Westerners' means prevail."⁷⁵ "China's Way and Western means" was obviously another formulation for Zhong Ti Xi Yong. Again for example, Xue Fucheng stated in his *Preliminary Proposals Concerning Western Affairs*: "If we avail ourselves of the Westerners' learning in terms of manufacturing goods and conducting calculations, it is to protect the Way of our Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, Zhougong and Confucius."⁷⁶ Shao Zuozhou's (1851–1898) *Shao's Words of Caution* also advocated "relying on

⁷³ *Protestations from Xiaobin Studio: Discussions on Adopting Western Learning*, vol. 2, p. 39; engraved in the 19th year of the Guangxu reign.

⁷⁴ "Postscript to Qi Yousheng's 'Dissertation on Change'," *Additional Essays of Wang Tao*, p. 266; Shanghai Bookstore, 2002.

⁷⁵ *Tao yuan chi du*, (Correspondence of Taoyuan), p. 30; Zhonghua Book Company, 1959.

⁷⁶ *Preliminary Proposals Concerning Western Affairs*, p. 17, in the *Ten Discussions from the Studio of Self-Strengthening Studies*, Wenruilou lithographic edition in the Ding You year of the Guangxu reign.

China’s Way and making use of Western means.”⁷⁷ Tang Shouqian, on the other hand, states: “Seek material means to protect the abstract ways.”⁷⁸ All of these were diverse formulations for Zhong Ti Xi Yong. Zhang Guanying was a reformist ideologue of the highest order during the Westernization period but he, too, took the position that “Chinese learning is the roots and trunk (*ben*) and Western learning is the branches and the foliage (*mo*); Chinese learning is to serve as the principal and be supplemented with Western learning.”⁷⁹

The advocacy “Chinese learning for fundamental principles and Western learning for practical applications” was explicitly put forward in the 1890s. In 1895, the newspaper *Wan Guo Gong Bao* carried an article entitled “Strategy for Rescuing the Times” by Shen Shoukang (1807–1907), in which he wrote: “Since there are advantages and disadvantages to both Chinese and Western learning, the best course for the Chinese is to use Chinese learning for fundamental principles and Western learning for practical applications.”⁸⁰ This formulation gained wide popularity.

We shall attempt to discuss why the Zhong Ti Xi Yong concept was put forward, what it signified, and what effects it exerted objectively.

First of all, we may affirm that “Chinese learning for fundamental principles and Western learning for practical applications” was put forward as a slogan for promoting Western learning and opening the way for Westernization. As mentioned earlier, the quality and attractiveness of Western material goods and implements was manifestly evident to the great majority of people, but because of institutional hindrances, most persons still had misgivings about openly advocating the emulation or importation of Western things. “Chinese learning for fundamental principles and Western learning for practical applications” was put forward precisely for the sake of allaying the misgivings of persons who desired to learn from the West. The implication was that China’s Cardinal Guides and Constant Virtues would be retained in their entirety, and that bringing in Western learning would be beneficial and cause no harm. The core slogans voiced by the conservatives opposed the use of foreign things to change Chinese things, and opposed any weakening of the traditional learning that served as the basis of governance. Placing emphasis on “Chinese learning for fundamental principles” would help to ease the force and effects of the conservatives’ onslaughts. Hence, for a fairly long period of time the advocates of change were only too glad to talk about “Chinese learning for fundamental principles and Western learning for practical applications,” whereas the conservatives in general did not dispute it.

⁷⁷ “Shao’s Words of Caution: Guides for Discipline and Rules of Conduct,” *Reform Movement of 1898* (1), p. 182; Shanghai People’s Publishing House, 1957.

⁷⁸ See Tang’s “Words of Caution,” vol. 1, *Sixth Article on Discussions of Chinese Scholastics; Selected Xiao Shan Historical Accounts: Special Collection of Tang Shouqian’s Historical Materials*, p. 226.

⁷⁹ *Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity: Western Learning*, p. 10, Bing Shen year of the Guangxu reign; lithographic copy by the Shanghai Bookstore.

⁸⁰ See *Wan Guo Gong Bao*, vol. 75, 3rd lunar month of 21st year in the Guangxu reign.

Zhong Ti Xi Yong was admittedly a compromise slogan but, in the conditions of those times, it was beneficial for promoting Western learning. China's traditional culture was a massive institution with deep roots and thick foliage. For centuries it had been self-sustaining and self-sufficient, and it had never encountered any serious challenges. Western learning, attended as it was by brutal invasions and a pernicious opium trade, met with instinctive opposition from the Chinese. Against this background—one that involved national sentiment, it was most difficult at the time to dissociate the West's advanced culture from the Western powers' aggressive malfeasances. Calls to learn from and import things from the West would trigger even greater resistance. Thus it was necessary to devise an acceptable conceptual framework which would turn Western learning into something that could be admitted into Chinese culture. The theorem "China is the source of Western learning" was a very practicable conceptual framework. However, Western learning had after all been generated by Westerners, and it was still questionable whether bringing in such learning posed the risk of eroding or shaking China's intrinsic institutions. The Zhong Ti Xi Yong theorem was put forward precisely with this in mind. Beyond a few die-hards, the general run of Chinese was ready to accept that formulation in those days. As Xue Fucheng averred, using Western learning to defend China's ways "might very well serve to resurrect Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, Zhougong and Confucius."⁸¹

The connotations of Zhong Ti Xi Yong are not very clear or certain. For one thing, "ti" [translated here as "fundamental principle"] and "yong" [translated here as "practical application"] are categories unique to Chinese ideological history and were quite vague or fuzzy in the first place. There has always been controversy over what constitutes "ti" and what constitutes "yong," and how the two are related. Moreover, there were, in those times, different means of conveying the Zhong Ti Xi Yong concept, such as by using the relative concepts "ti" and "yong"; or "dao" (Way) and "qi" (means, tools); or "ben" (root) and "mo" (foliage); or "zhu" (principal) and "fu" (complementary), etc. Take "dao" and "qi" for example—these would seem to correlate as "xu" (abstract) and "shi" (concrete), or as "jingshen" (spiritual) and "wuzhi" (material). Meanwhile, both "zhu" and "fu" possess the connotations of "xu" and "shi" or "ti" and "yong." The same goes for "ben" and "mo." "Ben" means "roots and trunk" and "mo" means "branches and leaves," and both possess the qualities of "xu" and "shi" or "ti" and "yong." Hence, it was very hard, or even impossible, to produce an accurate definition for Zhong Ti Xi Yong. And so, this slogan or this conceptual framework often took on different meanings in different periods, in different environments and with different people, yet was so ambiguous that it might equally serve people both a 150 years earlier and a 150 years later.

⁸¹ *Preliminary Proposals Concerning Western Affairs: Reform*, p. 17; from *Ten Discussions from the Studio of Self-Strengthening Studies*, Wenruilou lithographic edition in the Ding You year of the Guangxu reign.

A general overview of the formulations people used at the time to express Zhong Ti Xi Yong indicates by and large that the Zhong Ti they referred to might have meant the following: According to Wang Tao's formulation, “the *qi* (means, appliances) may be obtained from the Western countries, but we ourselves shall provide the *dao* (the Way, the principles).” The *dao* he referred to was China's *dao* (Way), or in other words, “the Dao of Confucius, the Confucian Dao, which is also the Dao of mankind.”⁸² This Dao was immutable. In that case, what was meant by the Dao of Confucius? As we know, the most nuclear content of the Confucian teachings was the Dao of name and status, i.e., “let the ruler be ruler, the subject be subject, the father be father, and the son be son.” The cardinal guide for rulers and subjects was the system of monarchical power, and the cardinal guide for fathers and sons was the ethics system based on the family clan. In fact, the Dao of Confucius consisted of what the literati spoke of as the Three Cardinal Guides and the Five Constant Virtues, or in other words, the systems of monarchical and patriarchal rule. And it is evident that the Zhong Ti referred to by Wang Dao was none other than the Three Cardinal Guides and the Five Constant Virtues, the systems of monarchical and patriarchal rule. These were the “thing-in-themselves” that he saw as being permanent and immutable. The first expounder of Westernization thinking Feng Guifen, in his statement “China's teachings on the traditional relationships should serve as the basis and should be supplemented by the techniques used in other countries for achieving prosperity and strength,” had already made it clear that Zhong Ti consisted of the *lun chang ming jiao*—the teachings on the constant and unchangeable order of importance or seniority in human relationships. Again for example, the Zhong Ti referred to by Xue Fucheng was essentially the Way of Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, Zhougong, and Confucius, although stated less specifically. There were substantial differences between Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, Zhougong, and Confucius per se, but we may safely infer that Xue intended to home in on China's Cardinal Guides and Constant Virtues as expounded by Confucius. Shao Zuozhou had advocated “relying on China's Way and making use of Western means” in which—according to his own explanation—“Way” meant “*gang ji fa du* (guides for discipline and rules of conduct).” He stated: “Our guides for discipline and rules of conduct are superior to ordinary rules and regulations and undergo few or no changes, and for that reason may be used for governance.” And, “today's guides for discipline and rules of conduct embrace the wisdom of four or five thousand years—wisdom that lags behind that of the Western countries only as regards certain material goods, calculations and technical skills.”⁸³ He maintained that Zhong Ti consisted of China's guides for discipline and its rules of conduct, that the guides for discipline were the Confucian Way, and

⁸² “Postscript to Qi Yousheng's ‘Dissertation on Change’,” *Additional Essays of Wang Tao*, p. 266; Shanghai Bookstore, 2002.

⁸³ “Shao's Words of Caution: Guides for discipline and Rules of Conduct,” *Reform Movement of 1898* (1), p. 181; Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1957.

that the rules of conduct were none other than the basic norms of conduct for rulers, subjects, fathers and sons, which too pertained to the Confucian Way.

One might well say that the Zhong Ti touted by the Westernization ideologues simply meant China's Cardinal Guides and Constant Virtues and the system of monarchical power and patriarchal discipline.

Of interest is the fact that among those in the Westernization faction who strongly advocated learning from the West, there were some who said nothing about Zhong Ti Xi Yong, but instead went on field investigations in an effort to acquire a deeper understanding of the true reasons for Western prosperity and strength and to use these as reference. In the second year of the Guangxu reign, Guo Songtao's already recognized that "the Western countries have worked out a complete, concise and systematic political creed in their two thousand years of existence."⁸⁴ He had taken a step further than other forward-looking persons who did no more than recommend Western goods and technology. Upon arriving in Britain, and after conducting numerous consultations and visits, making careful observations, and studying books and publications, Guo gradually gained some deeper understandings, to wit: "An examination of the entire process of its (Britain's—the Author) establishment as nation shows that the reason for its permanence and growing strength lies in the sustaining powers of the Parliament, and in the establishment of mayors for governing the populace and complying with the public sentiment. The two aspects are independent of each other, but the rulers and people maintain close contact, and despite the country's frequent ups and downs in the thousand and more years since its establishment, it has not fallen. Talented persons and learning have risen in tandem, and both have been put to effective use. Such is the basis of its rise as a nation."⁸⁵ He also pointed out: "The opposite is true in China ever since the Qin and Han dynasties," and he implied that the reason for this was to be found in China's system per se. Guo maintained that under the parliamentary system "a country's politics are completely open to the subjects and the populace," that with governance by political parties, rights and wrongs are brought to light through argumentation—a practice formed over the years—and "all practices are open and aboveboard." Such was the reason for their clean and honest political culture and commendable practices. This understanding effectively impugned the consistently boastful vaunting by, and superstitious belief among, China's literati and officialdom in the superiority of China's political culture over that of the West, and was therefore inadmissible under the conceptual framework of Zhong Ti Xi Yong.

Of course, Guo Songtao's was quite exceptional in those times and few could compare with him. But one indeed sees other forward-looking persons who already felt ill at ease with the Zhong Ti Xi Yong framework. To them, Zhong Ti was no longer sacred and inviolable, and Xi Yong should no longer be limited to such things as tools and technology and superior goods. They were beginning to

⁸⁴ *Diaries of Guo Songtao*. vol. 3, p. 124; Hunan People's Publishing House, 1982.

⁸⁵ *Diaries of Guo Songtao*. vol. 3, p. 373; Hunan People's Publishing House, 1982.

understand that the rise of the Western countries was due both to fundamental and incidental causes and to principles and practical applications, and one would be squandering one's time by limiting oneself to emulating or imitating merely the incidental causes and the applications. For instance, Zheng Guanying had clearly stated that "the main reason" for the Western countries' "prosperity and strength rests in their parliaments and not merely in their powerful warships and cannon."⁸⁶ Wang Tao also said: "The Western countries are prospering by the day, dispose of ample wealth, and possess powerful military forces because their rulers and people are one at heart. Political matters big and small are appropriately deliberated in parliaments before being put into practice." But "such is not the case in China."⁸⁷ Ma Jianzhong, too, had seen that "when parliaments are established, the circumstances at the lower levels are fully understood" and that this was a most crucial aspect of Western political life. Chen Chi (1855–1900) extolled the Western countries' "parliamentary method... (which) combines rulers and people into a whole, and links together the hearts of the high and the low." This, in his opinion, was "the fundamental reason why Britain and the United States are so strong and prosperous and able to rule the four seas."⁸⁸ Noteworthy was the fact that Zhang Shusheng, a high-placed minister at the imperial court and then governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi, could clearly see that because the Westernization Movement "ignores the Ti (fundamentals) and strives only for the Yong (applications), we shall never catch up no matter how hard we try. Even if we were to build entire fleets of iron ships and railways reaching out in all directions, it is doubtful whether we could count upon such things!"⁸⁹

The above data show that China's forward-looking elements involved in the activities of the Westernization Movement were gradually losing confidence in and dissociating themselves from the Zhong Ti Xi Yong conceptual framework. Their thinking was coming into conflict with the Zhong Ti concept, manifested a desire to bring in Western political systems, and presaged the coming of a period of cultural transformation focused on political reform.

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⁸⁶ *Words of Warning in Times of Prosperity: Author's Preface*, p. 5, Bing Shen year of the Guangxu reign, lithographic copy by the Shanghai Bookstore.

⁸⁷ *Additional Essays of Wang Tao: Comprehending the Public Sentiment*, vol. 3, p. 54, Shanghai Bookstore, 2002.

⁸⁸ "Parliaments," *Collected Writings of Chen Chi*, p. 107, Zhonghua Book Company, 1997.

⁸⁹ *Zhang Jingda gong zou yi*, vol. 8, p. 33.

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