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The Unesco Courier

中国

The changing face of China

A time to live...

Photo © Dominique Darbois, Paris.

❽ Guinea

Dialogue and debate

In rural black Africa, the palaver is the time-honoured institution whereby communities or ethnic groups confer and exchange views. While palavers are conducted according to strict rules (age confers precedence, interrupting a speaker is forbidden) it is taken for granted that the participants will express themselves freely and frankly. Characteristic of a civilization in which the spoken word is all-powerful, this method of using the power of words to settle disputes or take the heat out of quarrels also gives force to the conscience of the community expressed in a fully democratic spirit. Above, meeting of villagers at Dalaba (Revolutionary People's Republic of Guinea).

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A window open on the world

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Editorial

IN preparing this issue of the Unesco Courier, *entirely devoted to Chinese culture, the editors could not pretend to encompass within the limited number of pages at their disposal, still less to analyse, one of the world's oldest civilizations and one of humanity's richest cultures. There was no question of tracing the path traversed by a society whose origins may perhaps be said to go back to Beijing Man half a million years ago, nor of following the development of the arts and sciences, which count among their earliest inventions the compass and the seismograph, paper manufacturing and printing, the solar quadrant and gunpowder, and among their discoveries that of the relationship between the circumference and the diameter of a circle, as well as many other brilliant achievements. As far as the ancient history of China is concerned, we evoke in our pages only China's cultural contacts and relations with the West which always began along the trade-routes, in this case the Silk Road and the current which bore westward the arts of Chinese ceramicists. On our central colour pages we also present some of the great landmarks of Chinese art from prehistoric times until the fifteenth century, as well as scenes from everyday life in China today.*

It was decided to focus the articles on contemporary China, born of the great transformations which came about in the middle of this century after several eventful decades of struggle. These economic, political and social changes have affected every aspect of Chinese society: the traditional family structure; the interpretation of history and what was considered to be the country's philosophy; the conception of artistic creation and scientific progress. If New China still counts a rural population which constitutes 80 per cent of the total, it is on this immense source of human vitality, and on the manual and intellectual workers of the towns and cities, that the country is basing its efforts to construct an original economy which will enable it to go forward successfully with bold scientific and technological programmes for education and development, many of which constitute an example for other regions of the Third World.

The historical conditions which determined these fundamental and definitive changes in the organization of society and in the culture which derives from it, appear in our pages through the testimony of three of modern China's most famous writers: Lu Xun, Ba Jin and Ding Ling, who were eyewitnesses of and to a degree protagonists in, a period of history whose course they helped to change.

This radical transformation of society was possible because the Chinese people, scorned and oppressed during centuries of feudalism, were for the first time in history taken into consideration. Some of the oldest and most deeply rooted traditions of the Chinese people, such as the martial arts and acupuncture, have thus been respected and encouraged and are today not only practised in China but have won adherents in other Asian countries as well as in Europe and the Americas. Other time-honoured forms of expression discussed in this issue include ceramics and calligraphy, an art which holds a special place in China and for whose uniquely close relationship to poetry and painting it is difficult to find a parallel elsewhere.

Finally we should like to point out to our readers that wherever possible we have followed the Chinese Pinyin transcription of proper names.

Cover photo Andanson © Sygma, Paris
Calligraphy, by Hsiung Ping-Ming, reads *Zhong Guo* (Middle Country), the name by which the Chinese know their country.

Fifty years of literary life

A leading Chinese writer looks back on tumultuous times

by Ba Jin

Photo © Chinese edition of the Unesco Courier, Beijing

Ba Jin at his Shanghai home in 1982, aged 77.

I have been writing for fifty years, and yet I don't consider myself a man of letters. People come to literature by different ways. I was fond of reading novels when I was still a boy, and would sometimes even forget to eat or sleep. I did not read for the sake of study but out of enjoyment. I never dreamt that I would be a novelist myself. I began to write novels simply in order to make sense of things.

I was born into a large bureaucrat-landlord family in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, and passed my childhood among twenty or thirty "upper class" people and the same number of "lower-class" people. In this well-off family, I learned about the wretched lives of servants and sedan bearers. I heard the complaints of the young generation, tyrannized by the hypocritical, selfish older members of the family. I felt that something was wrong with our society, but I could not work out what was wrong, nor did I know how the sickness could be cured.

When I left home at the age of nineteen, I felt as if I had escaped from a dreadful nightmare. At twenty-three I left Shanghai for a strange land—Paris, hoping to find a way to save humanity, to save the world and myself.

In the spring of 1927 I took a small room reeking with the smell of gas and onions on the fourth floor of a small apartment building in the Rue Tournefort, in the Latin Quarter. I was lonely and miserable. In that small room, which was rarely visited by the sun, I missed my homeland, my relatives and friends. A struggle between revolution and counter-revolution was going on in my country, and the people were suffering.

In Paris there was a campaign to save two Italian workers, Sacco and Vanzetti, who had been charged with murder and held in prison in Boston, Massachusetts, for six years. Posters of protest and notices of meetings were everywhere in the streets. I read the

Photo René Burri © Magnum, Paris

autobiography of Vanzetti and came upon such lines as, "I hope every family has its house, every mouth has bread, everybody gets an education and everyone is given the chance to develop his gifts." I was greatly moved. How well he had expressed it! Like a key, his words opened the lock of my heart.

I lived near the Pantheon and passed it every day. As dusk was falling one rainy afternoon I stopped in front of the bronze statue of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and confided my frustration and misery to this "citizen of Geneva" who had dreamed of putting an end to tyranny and inequality. Back in my cold, lonely room I sat down to write a letter in which I asked advice from the prisoner in the condemned cell. In the reply which eventually reached me Vanzetti wrote, "Youth is the hope of the world." Several months later he was executed in the electric chair. Fifty years later Sacco and Vanzetti were pardoned.

It was in such circumstances and in such a mood that I wrote the outlines of episodes for a novel, while the bells of Notre-Dame tolled out the passing hours. I would turn my misery, loneliness and enthusiasm into lines of characters on paper. My past loves and hates, my joys, sorrows, sympathy and suffering all rushed to my pen. I wrote quickly. The flame burning in my heart began to die down and I could close my eyes in peace. The problem preying on my mind was solved. I was saved.

After that, whenever I had time I would pick up my pen and pour out my feelings on paper so that my young, lonely heart could find consolation. The following year I completed my first novel and posted it from the little French town of Château-Thierry to a friend of mine who worked at the Kaiming publishing house in Shanghai. I wanted his opinion of my work which I wanted to have printed. When I returned to Shanghai at the end of that year, I learned from my friend that my novel

BA JIN, *born 1904, is a celebrated modern Chinese novelist. He is currently Vice-chairman of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, Chairman of the Chinese Writers' Association, and Director of the China PEN Centre. His major works include:* Trilogy of Love (The Mist, The Rain, The Lightning), Trilogy of the Torrent (The Family, Spring, Autumn), A New Life, Garden of Repose *and* Reminiscences of My Writing Life.

would be serialized in the magazine *Fiction Monthly.* He also told me that Ye Shengtao, the magazine's acting editor-in-chief, had read it and decided to publish it.

At that time *Fiction Monthly* had great prestige. It opened the door to me and let me, a young man ignorant of literature, enter the arena of literature in triumph.

I learned to write fiction in France. I shan't forget my teachers: Rousseau, Hugo, Zola and Romain Rolland. I learned to integrate writing and life, the author and his characters. I believe that the highest achievement of a writer lies in this fusion through which he devotes himself to his readers. My novels are the result of my exploration of life. Each work is my harvest. It is for my readers to judge them. I myself adhere to one unchanging principle: always tell the truth.

Apart from French writers I also learned from Russian authors such as Herzen, Turgenev's novels *Fathers and Sons* and *Virgin Soil,* and Gorky's early short stories. I am currently translating Herzen's memoirs. Among those who have taught me is Charles Dickens and the Japanese writers Natsume-Soseki and Arishima Takeo. Lu Xun is my Chinese master. My works have been influenced to a greater or lesser degree by these writers. However, my principal teacher has been life, life in Chinese society. My feelings and experiences enabled me to be a writer.

Readers may detect the influence of different writers in my work, but I did not deliberately set out to learn from any particular writer. "I must fight against the old society," I once said, "and I need weapons. I would take up any weapon to fight against the old order."

In 1928 I returned from France and settled down in Shanghai. I began by writing a short story and translated some short pieces which I sent to newspapers and magazines. Later the editors asked for more. I stayed in the same building as my friend who worked at the Kaiming publishing house; he lived upstairs while I lived downstairs. I was shy of meeting people and speaking in public, and I didn't want to have anything to do with outsiders. So those who wanted my writings always dealt with my friend, and I could write in peace. Sometimes I would work through the night to write a short story, leaving the manuscript on the desk for my friend to pick up the next morning. This was how I wrote *The Dog,* a short story which was published in *Fiction Monthly.* The more works I published, the more people came to me for my writings. Gradually I got to know more and more people in the literary world. In 1933 I noted that "I live on friendship, that's why I'm still alive." ▶

In July 1982, the People's Republic of China carried out the most massive census operation in history. The full results will not be known in detail until 1984, but overall totals were issued in October 1982. They show that China's population at the time of the survey stood at 1,008,175,288. The urban population numbered 206,588,000, while over 800 million persons (about 80 per cent of the total) live in rural farming areas. Left, his silhouette gleaming in the water beneath him, a rice-farmer ploughs with a water-buffalo. Above, family meal in a commune near Shanghai.

Photo © Marc Riboud, Paris

Photo René Burri © Magnum, Paris

Hewn into the face of steep cliffs overlooking the Qi river near Luoyang in Hunan province, the Buddhist cave-temples of Long-men are one of the artistic wonders of the world. In the monumental Fang-hsien temple, which dates from the 7th century AD, the massive figures of Lokapala and Dvarapala (above) flank an 11-metre high seated Buddha.

During the first few years of this new life I usually devoted eight or nine months annually to writing and travelled to see my friends during the rest of the year. I lived on my royalties alone. Because of my writing I did not marry until I was forty. Until then my friends' homes were my home; I travelled widely to see my friends. I kept "travel notes". Sometimes I shut myself up in my study for a year at a time in order to write. I once described myself in these words: "Day and night an inner fire consumed me. My hands trembled as I contemplated the suffering of many people, including my own. I wrote constantly, always in the same humdrum surroundings: a bare room with the sunlight slanting in through the window; piles of books and newspapers and writing paper on the square table in front of me; a worn-out armchair and two small stools." The war reached Shanghai in 1932 and I had to move. However, I didn't change my way of life nor did I stop writing.

In 1934 I visited Japan where I stayed for a few months in Yokohama and then spent several months in Tokyo. In August of the following year some of my friends in Shanghai founded the Cultural Life Publishing House and invited me to do some editing work. I accepted their offer and edited several series of books. In the next twenty years, I spent part of my time editing literary works and translating, and naturally there was less time for writing. But the enthusiasm of my youth did not wane, and my pen did not allow me to rest.

In 1937, when the war of resistance against Japan broke out, I left Shanghai for the south. I returned and then travelled to the southwest. My way of life was changing, but I did not stop writing. It was in these circumstances that I finished writing the trilogy entitled *The Torrent.* I had scarcely made a simple home for myself in a city before I was forced to leave, empty-handed except for some paper. In those wandering days I had to change my writing habits. In some places it was even difficult to buy a bottle of ink! When I was writing *The Garden of Repose,* I always had an ink-stick, a Chinese brush and a stack of letter paper with me. When I stopped at a place I would borrow a small plate, pour a little water on to it, grind the ink-stick and then sit down to write.

When the Chinese people were liberated and the People's Republic of China was founded, I wanted to use my pen, which had been used to writing about darkness and misery, to write about new people and new deeds, to celebrate the people's victory and joy. But I had not had the time to familiarize ▶

Photo Inge Morath © Magnum, Paris

Above, children in Shanghai's Tsao Yang Middle School take a short break to exercise their eyes. China is making massive efforts to modernize and extend the benefits of its educational system. By 1980, 93 per cent of children of elementary school age were in school, as against 49 per cent in 1952. Below, Shanghai shoppers take care not to put all their eggs in one basket. Shanghai is China's biggest city (with a population of 11,859,000, according to the 1982 census) as well as its greatest port and commercial and industrial centre.

Photo René Burri © Magnum, Paris

▸myself with these subjects. I also took part in non-literary activities and therefore at this period I wrote little.

In 1952 I went to Korea to see the Chinese volunteers and stayed among them for some time. This was the first time that I had met ordinary soldiers and lived with them. I was somewhat anxious: a man who had shut himself up in his study for so long and who had landed up in a great family of revolutionary soldiers would surely be a target of criticism. Not a bit of it! The soldiers did not treat me as an outsider and welcomed me as if I were one of them. I had come from the homeland, and they were extremely kind to me. Feelings like love and hatred are more manifest in places where war is raging.

I became attached to these people and their surroundings and became their friend. I no longer thought about my writing.

I often travelled abroad. I published a number of articles and essays in praise of friendship between peoples. I made new friends and envisioned the shining future of cultural exchanges between different nations. I wrote widely in praise of our new society and our new life. These writings were used as evidence of my "crime" and were condemned as "poisonous weeds" during the ten years of the "Great Cultural Revolution". I myself was illegally detained and suffered from all kinds of mental torture and humiliation. During these ten years I was deprived of all my civic rights and denied the freedom to publish. I began translating Herzen's memoirs, a project I had had in mind for some forty years.

Each day I translated several hundred words. As I worked, I felt as if I were walking through the darkness with Herzen. As he cursed the dictatorship of Tsar Nicholas I, I cursed the fascist rule exercised by the "gang of four". I firmly believed that their days were numbered. I survived to witness their fall. I was liberated a second time, and once again I picked up my pen.

Excited and elated, I felt that a vast new horizon stretched before me. I wanted to write. There was so much I wanted to say. But I don't have many years left, I can't afford to waste a second. I've set myself a five-year plan. I intend to write two novels, a book entitled *Reminiscences of Literary Creation,* five volumes of "Random Thoughts", and to complete my translation of Herzen's memoirs. Of these thirteen books, four have already been published, including the first volume of Herzen's memoirs. The second, entitled *True Words,* is being printed. I shall do all I can to complete the other eight works. I must steer clear of anything that may sidetrack me, and save every minute for my writing. Some people regard me as a "personality" and arrange all kinds of social activities for me. Others want to interview me and note down whatever I say, hoping to get some historic testimony before it is too late. But all I want to do is to write until I die. I want to write novels, not necessarily true stories. But I must sum up what I experienced during the ten years of the "Cultural Revolution". Those ten unforgettable years constitute an important episode in the history of humanity. Few writers in the world experienced such dreadful, ridiculous, strange, painful events. We were all involved, we all played a part, and today when we look back at what we did during those years we find our behaviour ridiculous—but it didn't seem like that at the time. I often say to myself that if I don't sum up those ten hard years and analyse myself sincerely, I may one day again regard cruelty, savagery, and stupidity as part of the normal order of things. The mental debt can never be paid. I have decided to write these two novels first to pay off this debt and secondly to end my fifty years of literary life.

I have never thought about writing technique or ways of expression when writing my stories. What I care about is how to help people lead a better life, a worthy life, and how to help my readers contribute to society and to the people. All my writings have this aim.

In 1935, two years after the publication of my novel *The Family,* I said: "I have never ceased to attack my enemies ever since I picked up my pen to write. But who are my enemies? All the old feudal codes, all the irrational systems that hamper social progress and human fulfilment, all the forces that destroy

Photo © *China*, Beijing

China's great rivers, supplemented by a canal network begun as early as the 5th century BC, are vast arteries of communication and transport, provide precious irrigation water and, harnessed to produce electric power, are an increasingly important renewable energy source. But in many parts of the country they also pose the threat of serious flooding. The dramatic photo at right shows a rescue team helping stricken villagers to safety through the foaming waters of the Changjiang (Yangtse) during a flood which in 1981, devastated parts of Sichuan province. The

love. I've never budged from this position and never compromised."

When I met a group of Sinologists in Paris in September 1981 someone asked how I had survived the "cultural revolution". Their sincere desire to understand something which seemed quite ordinary to us set my mind working. Those ten dreadful years had taught me something. At last I came to realize what I have learned from those long years of disaster.

Gradually things became clearer in my mind. It must be love, fire, hope, something positive. Many people had survived because they had these qualities. But many had been destroyed and left to us their love, fire and hope to be transmitted to posterity. No, I shall never lay down my pen.

■ Ba Jin

Photo Ariane Bailey, Unesco

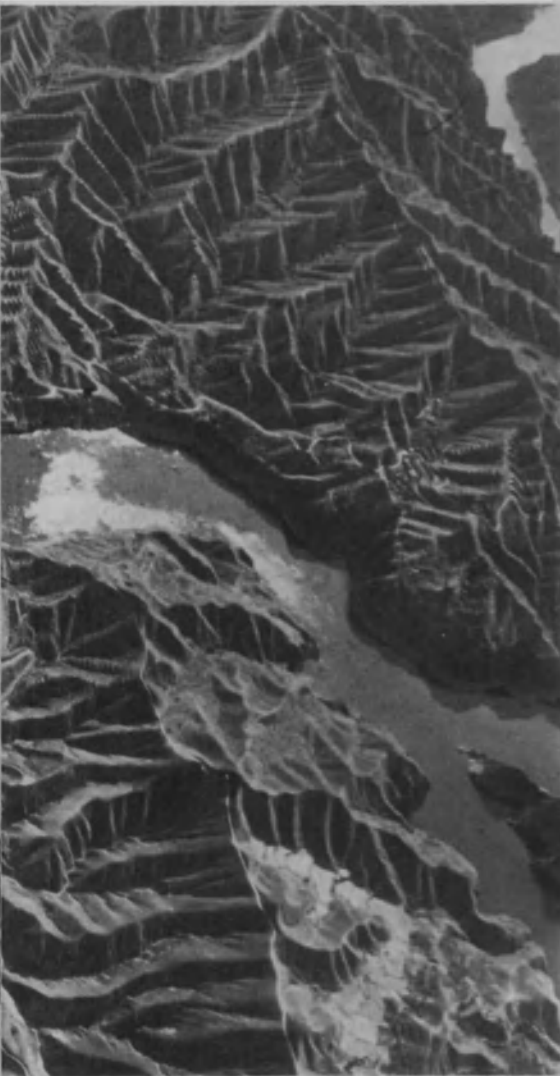

Photo © China, Beijing

catastrophe rendered over a million homeless and claimed 1,350 lives. Air photo above shows the great hydroelectric power station at Liujiaxia. It has been estimated that by 1977 hydroelectric power stations provided nearly 38 per cent of China's total power generating capacity. Above right, detail of an ancient wooden temple in honour of a water divinity at Taiyuan. The projecting eaves are supported by the ingenious system of bracket sets found in some of the earliest surviving Chinese buildings and which became a characteristic feature of Chinese architecture.

Controversial Confucius

In China today, the ancient philosopher's works are a source of lively debate

by Pang Pu

The Master said, "When there is a preponderance of native substance over acquired refinement, the result will be churlishness. When there is a preponderance of acquired refinement over native substance, the result will be pedantry. Only a well-balanced admixture of these two will result in gentlemanliness."
The Master said : "That a man lives is because he is straight. That a man who dupes others survives is because he has been fortunate enough to be spared."
Book 6

The Master said, "I never enlighten anyone who has not been driven to distraction by trying to understand a difficulty or who has not got into a frenzy trying to put his ideas into words. When I have pointed out one corner of a square to anyone and he does not come back with the other three, I will not point it out to him a second time."
Book 7

There is little to choose between overshooting the mark and falling short.
Book 11

The Master said, "To fail to speak to a man who is capable of benefiting is to let a man go to waste. To speak to a man who is incapable of benefiting is to let one's words go to waste."
Book 15

Extracts from *Lun Yu* (The Analects) by Confucius. Translated by D.C. Lau. Penguin Books, 1979. © D.C. Lau

Confucius (c. 551-c. 479 BC) is considered to be the father of Chinese philosophy. He liked to say that he was a direct descendant of the Song rulers of China, which in his time was enmeshed in social and political strife. The empire was divided into a large number of States governed by nobles whose pastime was war and who oppressed and exploited their subjects. Like Plato in later times, Confucius believed that he could preach to tyrants a certain form of virtue, and travelled from court to court in an attempt to instil in local rulers his precepts of political morality. His efforts met with little success, but after his death his more lowly-born disciples, the most important of whom was Mencius (Meng zi), set down his doctrines in the *Four Books* and the *Five Classics*, and some of them obtained prominent government positions. Gradually, a body of high officials, the mandarinate, came into being, notably during the Han dynasty and the Tang period. These functionaries were recruited by competition in the schools where the teaching was based on Confucian texts, and found in the philosopher's work their perfect ideological expression: the concept of the State which they served allowed the political élite which they formed to perpetuate itself. Although the privileges of the mandarins were based on learning, not hereditary right, the Confucianism of the mandarinate bore the imprint of traditionalism and conservatism. Its scholastic nature was an obstacle to any reinvigoration of Chinese life, especially during the nineteenth century. Consequently, Confucius and his teachings were at first totally rejected in socialist China. In recent years, however, deeper historical analysis has set Confucius more firmly in his time and introduced different shades of emphasis into judgments about him and his work. The article by Pang Pu on this page outlines the main points at issue.

THE influence of Confucius during his lifetime and the value of his teachings have been the centre of vigorous controversy in China for several decades.

The philosopher lived towards the end of the so-called Spring and Autumn period (722-480 BC) which was marked by violent social upheavals. Some historians maintain that this was the time when Chinese society based on slave-ownership was transformed into a feudal society. If this was so, then Confucius may have represented the interests of the emerged landowner class in opposition to the entrenched slaveholding class. His political role would in this case have been positive and progressive.

However, many historians consider that this radical change in Chinese society occurred somewhat later, during the Warring States period (480-221 BC). In their opinion, Confucius represented the interests of the declining slaveholding class and consequently his political position was reactionary. As he travelled from State to State, his principal objective was to restore the old order based on slavery.

According to yet another school of thought, these profound social changes had taken place during the Western Zhou dynasty, which ruled from the eleventh century to 722 BC. For those who hold this view, Confucius championed the interests of the lower and middle strata of the aristocracy and of the budding caste of high officials. What Confucius wished to restore was not an order based on slavery but the unity of an empire which, at the beginning of the Zhou dynasty had broken up into powerful vassal States. The unification advocated by Confucius would have speeded up social development, so the argument runs.

Lastly, some Chinese historians believe that the feudal era began at a much later date, during the period of the Wei kingdom and the Jin dynasty (from 220 to 420 AD). Their thesis is that until the time when the Wei, one of the States of the Three Kingdoms, replaced the Han dynasty, productive

PANG PU *is a journalist with the Chinese magazine* Historical Studies.

Photo © Lauros Giraudon, Paris. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

Scene from the life of Confucius and his disciples as depicted in an early 19th-century Chinese painting.

work throughout China was largely carried out by slaves. The age of Confucius was simply a transitional period; the old slaveholding system still existed, but productive work was beginning to be done by people reduced to slavery by debt. Seen in this light, Confucius should not be accused of seeking to restore the institution of slavery for the simple reason that slavery still existed. In spite of the conservative caste of his thinking, Confucius was thus not an out-and-out reactionary.

Confucius' political thinking was built on the two concepts of *ren* and *li*. Although opinions differ on the subject, *ren* (which literally means "benevolence" or "humanity") is generally taken to denote the principles by virtue of which people can live in society or love each other mutually.

Some scholars argue that *ren* was meant to impose rules of conduct on slave-owners threatened by frequent revolts by their slaves. In this way Confucius was seeking to attenuate the contradictions between the dominators and the dominated, as well as those which arose within the ruling class itself, thereby serving incidentally the interests of the oppressed. And since, according to the same scholars, no previous theory had taken account of humanity in its entirety, the teachings of Confucius should be considered as revolutionary and the man himself as the greatest thinker of his age.

Other historians reject this thesis, maintaining that Confucius did not intend that slaves and other labourers should be treated with "benevolence" and that Confucius was in no way progressive.

Most specialists seem to adopt a position somewhere between these two extremes. If they stress that Confucius' theory was fallacious and that it strengthened the hand of the exploiting class, they also admit that it took account, in an unprecedented way, of the common people.

For Confucius, *li* (which may be translated literally as "ritual", "ceremony" or "rules of propriety and politeness") was the keystone of the established order but also designated standards of individual conduct. Some believe that some of Confucius' teachings on the subject of *li* were useful not only for his own time but also for later generations, and that *li* was thus in a sense positive. Others consider, however, that since they were intended to shore up the moribund slaveholding system, the tenets of conduct laid down by Confucius were fundamentally bad.

It is more generally believed, however, that although Confucius felt nostalgia for a bygone age, and especially for the heyday of the Western Zhou, he succeeded in tailoring his philosophy to the new relationships between human beings which had become established in the society of his time.

Confucius preached "the mandate of heaven", was opposed to reform of any kind, and respected spirits and divinities. His thought is sometimes seen as no more than a corpus of idealistic metaphysics. On the other hand, it is pointed out that in Confucianism "heaven" is identified with nature, that the philosopher himself was extremely sceptical about the existence of spirits and the soul and that such thinking was extremely audacious in comparison with that of his contemporaries. He attached great importance to moral principles and to individual initiative; he formulated rational ideas which enriched the theory of knowledge; he was convinced that history is a continuous, ongoing process. To qualify his thinking as "metaphysical" is to compress its meaning to an exaggerated degree.

Most scholars recognize Confucius' importance as an educator. While some historians claim that private schools for the lower orders existed before his time, the majority accord him the distinction of being the first teacher to dispense learning outside the official schools attached to the court. In so doing, he took culture and education outside the aristocratic circle of which they had hitherto been the monopoly.

Where pedagogical theory was concerned, Confucius was ahead of his time. He advocated an education accessible to all, irrespective of social origins. His approach took account of the different aptitudes of each pupil and foreshadowed the Socratic method of bringing out ideas latent in the mind. ■

Photo E. Erwitt © Magnum, Paris

Three in one

The single complete art of calligraphy, poetry and painting

by Huang Miaozhi

IN China, poetry, painting and calligraphy are not confined within the boundaries which usually separate these arts. Whatever the specific characteristics of each may be, all three are inspired and determined by the nature of ideographic expression; all three aspire to grasp with the same instrument, the brush, the profound nature of existence, the "breath of inspiration" that quickens every form and gives it its special rhythm; all three are the arts of the brush-stroke. In the words of Han Yu, a great writer who lived during the Tang dynasty. "It matters little whether a speech be short or long... if the 'breath' be powerful".

This notion of the "primordial breath" (the *qi*) is central. The aim of Chinese aesthetics is to achieve the living essence of the quickening breath, of rhythm, of life: art and the art of living are one and the same. The brush-stroke, whether in a painting or a poem, whether it transcribes the branch of a tree or a character, must always be a living form. It is this common effort to evoke the essential which is characteristic of calligraphy, poetry and painting.

But painting alone englobes the other modes of expression. The unity between painting and poetry appears early in Chinese history. In a scroll painting attributed to Gu Kaizhi (late fourth century AD), *Admonitions of the Instructress to the Court Ladies,* the elegantly calligraphed text of a moralist may already be read.

During the Tang dynasty (7th to 10th century), the period which marks the real beginning of scroll painting, painters were inspired by the works of the great poets Du Fu and Li Bai (8th century), and poets were closely interested in pictorial creation. In a judgment which underscores the concern of the Chinese poet and painter to render life in all its profundity, Du Fu explains why the renowned horse-painter Han Gan is inferior to his master Cao Ba:

To paint his horses Han Gan has depicted the flesh but not the skeleton
That is why his chargers have no stamina.

Already we find those who were both painters and poets. Wang Wei (701-761), for example, was the inventor of the ▶

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Calligraphy Ung No Lee © Ed. Ides et Calendes, Neuchâtel

Writing at one with the universe

Opposite page, morning gymnastics in Shanghai. Above, the Chinese character *ren,* "man". The two images strikingly illustrate a distinctive feature of the Chinese ideogram: its link with the real world. In early Chinese writing, many characters even consisted of small drawings, or pictograms. By preserving a form of continuity between signs and the visible world, the Chinese express the desire which has always been theirs, that man should not be cut off and isolated from the universe. The affinity between ideograms and the signs drawn in ink by the poet and painter Henri Michaux (left) reflects his fascination with Chinese writing and his desire to create a poetic language halfway between words and forms in which the stirrings of life can be felt in the sign itself.

Photo © Private collection, Paris

Photo © Private collection, Paris

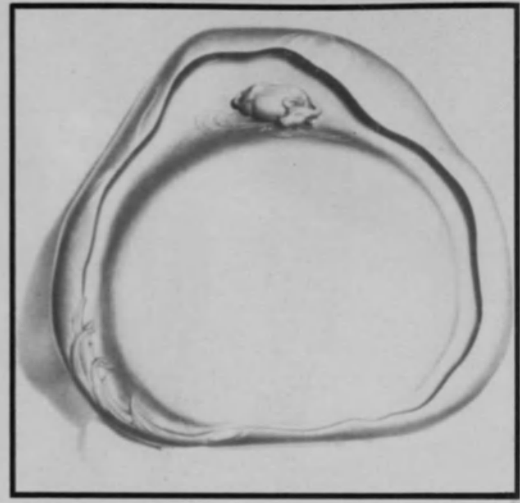
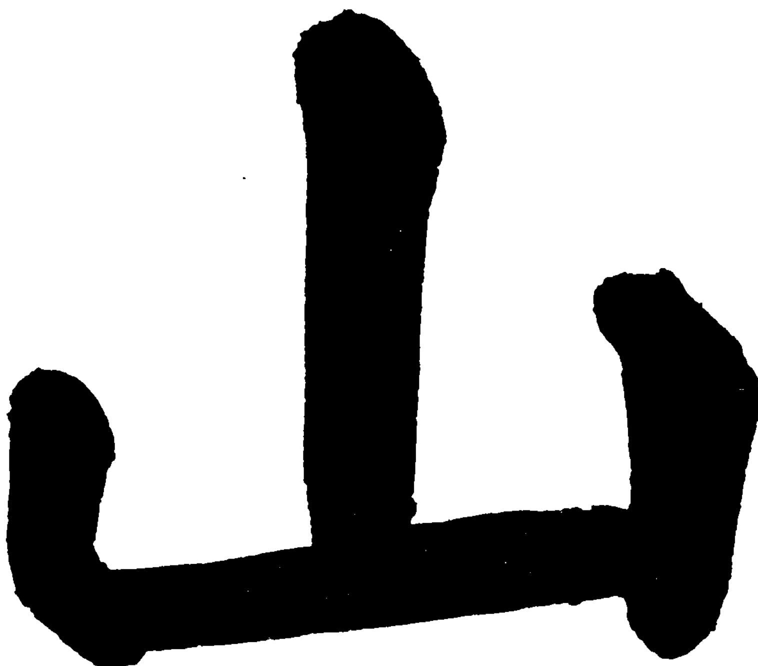


Photo © *China*, Beijing

Mountains and water

In Chinese, landscape painting is called "Mountain and Water" painting. For the Chinese, mountains and water are the two poles of nature and also, by a typically Chinese assimilation, of human sensibility. In the words of Confucius: "The mountain enchants the man of heart; water rejoices the man of spirit." Painting landscapes is thus a way of painting man, not his physical attributes, but his inner being, his torments, his dreams. Traditional Chinese painting employed water colours and inks, and the water-holder, above, which contained the water used to moisten the artist's ink-sticks, is itself in the form of a drop of water. The "painting", left, is in fact a highly polished piece of marble whose natural veining forms a mountain landscape, to which a calligraph has been added. The calligraph, below left, of the Chinese ideogram for the word *shan,* or mountain, is echoed in the bronze ritual object (4th century BC), bottom right. The theme of the mountain is still omnipresent in Chinese art, as witness the painting, above right, by the artist Fu Baoshi (1904-1965) and the photo-landscape with added calligraph, above far right, by the world-famous Hong Kong photographer Cheng Fuli.



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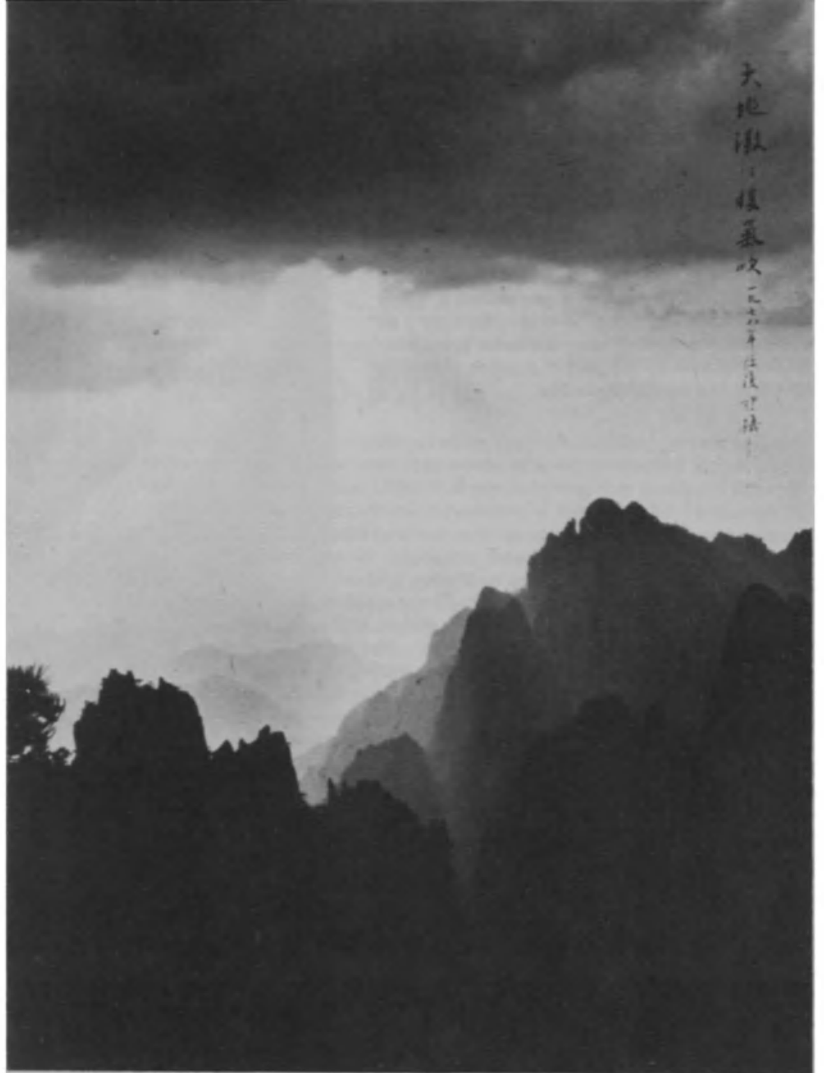


Photo Cheng Fuli © *China*, Beijing

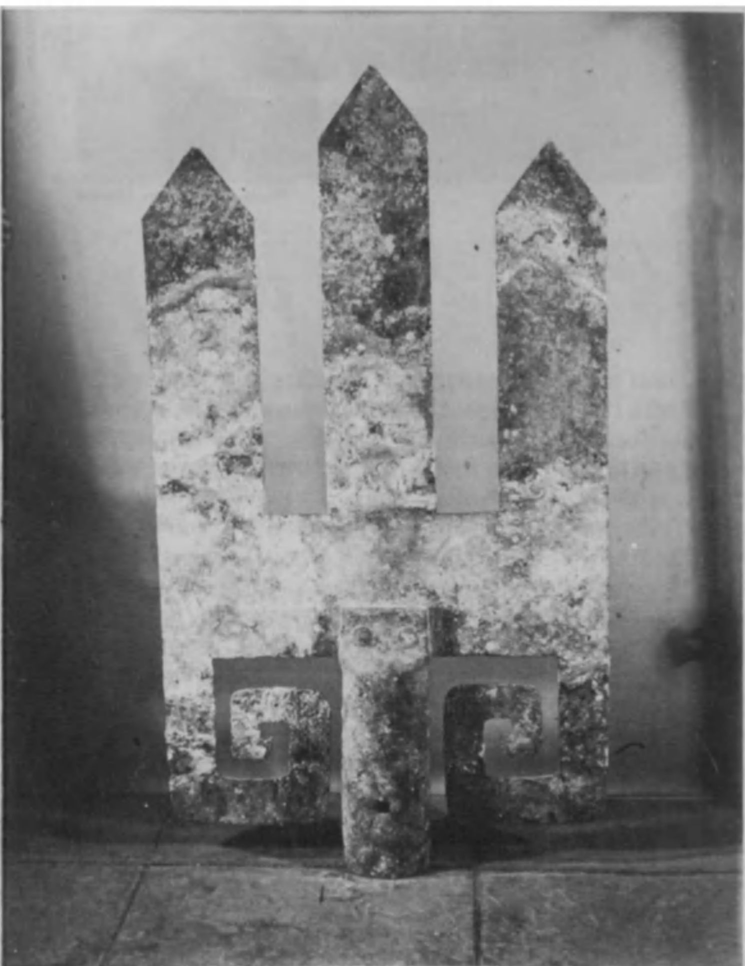


Photo © *China*, Beijing

▸ technique of monochrome painting, an adept of *chan* (*zen* in Japanese) spirituality, and a musician as well. The great writer and calligrapher Su Shi would write of him:

You would say his landscapes are poems
And his poems landscapes.

Another painter-poet was Du Fu's friend Zheng Qian, who presented the emperor with one of his paintings on which he had calligraphed poems. In an extraordinary token of esteem, the emperor himself noted on the painting: "Zheng Qian, the genius with three talents."

This threefold mastery combined in a single person is that of the "literary-man-painter". Literary men's painting, which developed under the Tang dynasty but blossomed above all under the Song and the Yuan, the Ming and the Qing, is what is usually meant when people discuss Chinese painting. It owes its great freedom, directly or indirectly, to Taoist and Buddhist influences.

One of the most subtle masters of this marriage of poetry, calligraphy and painting was Su Shi (Su Dongpo, 1035-1101), with whom the unity of the three arts was established, to become the mainstream of Chinese painting. One day, while intoxicated at the home of a friend, he painted a bamboo tree on the wall and added this comentary:

The alcohol vapours have expanded in my empty belly,
Rocks and bamboo grow there willy nilly,
My body cannot cope with them,
That's why I project them on your white wall.

And he went on, not without humour :

But you, you do not scold me, you seem content.
There are not many connoisseurs in the world like you, ▸
my friend.

Drawing, below, of a young cowherd playing the flute comes from a famous treatise on Chinese painting, *The Mustard-Seed Garden* (1679-1701) which contains over 400 illustrations. The caption to this drawing reads: "The sound of a flute is heard among the flowers. A young cowherd passes." Carved in stone, the flautist, right, is one of 10,000 Buddhist sculptures created over a period of a mere 70 years during the Song dynasty at Baodingshan, near Dazu, Sichuan province. The flute-player forms part of a series of reliefs depicting the herdsman's life.

花間吹笛牧童過

Drawing © Bollingen Foundation, New York

Photo Ariane Bailey, Unesco

One of his contemporaries, Mi Fu, was a famous painter and also a gifted calligrapher. The following story is told about him, in accordance with a Chinese custom whereby the distinctive styles of great painters are described in the form of anecdotes:

"One day when he was at Wu-Wei, Mi Fu saw a giant rock of extraordinary ugliness. Delighted, he donned his ceremonial costume and prostrated himself before the rock, which he addressed as 'dear elder brother'."

Under the Yuan dynasty (13th-14th century) this three-point relationship became even stronger and deeper. Ni Zan (or Yunlin, 1301-1374) was outstanding among the great masters of the period. He was a peerless landscape painter whose work was elegant, austere and imbued with poignant nostalgia.

If painting in China is the complete art form in which poem and calligraphy are an integral part of the painting, restoring the harmony and mystery of the universe in all its dimensions, poetry is considered to be the quintessence of art. It transforms the written signs, enjoying an almost sacred status, into song, and its supreme function is to link human genius with the primary vital forces of the universe. Imbued with Confucian and Taoist thought, Chinese poetry unites reason and detachment. It aspires to penetrate reality and to render, with the savour of life, "the impalpable rustling of sound", helped by the innate musicality of the Chinese language with its several tones.

In the painting, the poem is by no means an adjunct; it introduces a new dimension and opens the bounds of the picture to life in time. Shi Dao, a celebrated painter of the early Qing dynasty (18th-19th century), was also the author of a famous *Treatise on Painting*. His life was an unceasing investigation both into technical problems and into the nature of artistic creation and human destiny. In one of his landscapes he wrote these lines:

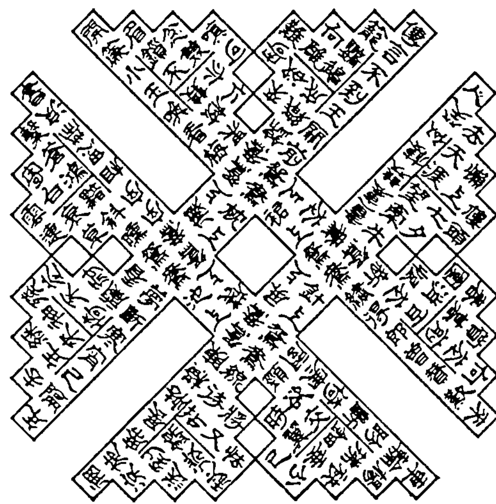
This well-nigh deserted spot fills me with joy
The view of this mountain which hides clouds makes me joyful.

Then he adds this piece of self-criticism, a reflection which is Taoist in inspiration:

木 末 芙 蓉 花

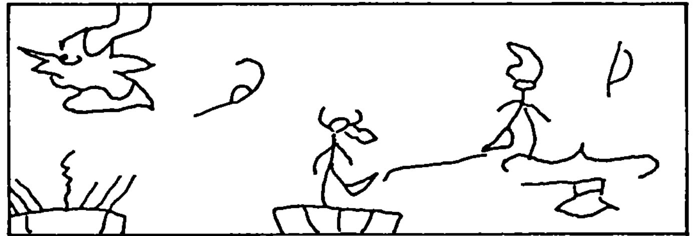
branch	tip	hibiscus	blossom

Chinese poets have always made subtle use of the evocative power of calligraphy. In a quatrain the first line of which is reproduced above, the poet Wang Wei (701-761), describing an hibiscus about to blossom, succeeds in conveying the idea of what it would be like to live from within the tree the experience of coming into bud and flowering. This is how François Cheng, in his book *L'Ecriture Poétique Chinoise* (Chinese poetic writing), comments on the first line of Wang Wei's quatrain.
"The line can be translated as: 'At the branch tips, hibiscus blossoms'. Even a reader who knows nothing of Chinese can appreciate the concordance between the visual appearance of the characters and the meaning of the words. Reading the characters from left to right one has the impression of watching the process of a tree coming into flower (First character: a bare tree; second character: something is visible at the end of the branches; third character: a bud appears; fourth character: the bud opens; fifth character: in full flower). But a reader who knows Chinese will see even more. Subtly hidden in the ideograms is the notion of man (人) entering into the tree in spirit and participating in its metamorphosis.



Chinese poets have used a variety of methods to introduce the idea of the Void into their works. Poem above is a veritable labyrinth of signs in which, starting from any given point, the reader can choose to take many different routes, full of surprises.

Ideograms taken from *L'Ecriture Poétique Chinoise* © Editions du Seuil, Paris



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Naxi hieroglyphs

In addition to the characters used by the Han Chinese, certain of China's minority nationalities have at one time or another created their own written language. The Naxi (230,000 persons who live mainly in the region of Lijiang, Yunan province) developed a hieroglyphic language consisting of basic pictorial symbols and ideograms. The language was used for the composition of canonical books of their religion (known as Dongbaism), for recording events of everyday life, keeping accounts, and the exchange of messages between mountain villages. It yields important evidence on the origins of writing as well as throwing light on the Naxi culture. In China today research is being carried out into the links between Naxi hieroglyphs and the Chinese language. Table below shows, Naxi hieroglyphs (left-hand column), Han hieroglyphs (right hand column) and modern Chinese ideograms (central column). Above, Naxi hieroglyphs from the Dongba scripture, "The Origin of the Human Being".

纳西文	楷書	古汉文
[illegible]	子	[illegible]
[illegible]	火	[illegible]
[illegible]	门	[illegible]
[illegible]	鱼	[illegible]
[illegible]	射	[illegible]
[illegible]	牧	[illegible]
[illegible]	耕	[illegible]

Photo © *China*, Beijing

My words are strange, my drawing is clumsy,
All is but illusion, even this work.

To look from the poem to the landscape, with its pines, clouds and mountains, is to be filled with deeper emotion. Shi Dao has heightened our perception of the uplifting of the mountain and the Vacuity represented by the clouds. This notion of Vacuity, no less essential to Chinese philosophy than the famous Yin-Yang principle, plays a central role in music and poetry but is most fully and visibly expressed in painting. Vacuity in a painting does not only mark the "unoccupied" area in contrast to an "occupied" area; far from being an inert presence, Vacuity is a dynamic element. Linked to the idea of the "breath of life", it is pre-eminently the location of those transformations which lie at the heart of the conception of man and the world in Chinese thought.

The favourite texts of Chinese calligraphers are doubtless poetic texts (verses, poems, poetic prose). Calligraphy in China exalts the visual beauty of ideograms. In practising this major art, every Chinese rediscovers the profound rhythm of his being and enters into communion with the elements. Not confining himself to the simple act of the copyist, the calligrapher reawakens the expressive movement and the imaginary power of signs. Calligraphy must be the total projection of the condition of a soul.

The writer Han Yu praised the famous Tang calligrapher Zhang Xu in these words: "By the freedom of his script, in the cursive style which he invariably practised, he expresses his joy and his anger, his pain and his happiness, his jealousies and hatreds, his affections and admirations, his intoxication, his boredom, injustice, everything that thrills his heart." The calligrapher should also exploit the pictorial possibilities, the evocative power of characters, as Han Yu adds in his comments on Zhang Xu: "...he holds everything in his vision: landscapes, animals, plants, stars, storms, fires, wars, feasts, all the events of the universe, and expresses them through his art."

Thus in China poetry, calligraphy and painting constitute one complete art, a threefold pursuit in which all the spiritual dimensions of its devoted practitioners are brought into play: linear song and space, incantatory gestures and visualized words.

■Huang Miaozhi

Works and days in Zhejiang Province

Photos © *China*, Beijing

Wisdom of the ages

Laozi (Lao-Tzu)

The ten thousand things rise and fall
while the Self watches their return.
They grow and flourish and then return
to the source.
Returning to the source is stillness,
which is the way of nature.
The way of nature is unchanging.
Knowing constancy is insight.
Not knowing constancy leads to
disaster.
Knowing constancy, the mind is open.
With an open mind, you will be
openhearted.
XVI

He who does not trust enough will not
be trusted.
XVII

Yield and overcome;
Bend and be straight;
Empty and be full;
Wear out and be new;
Have little and gain;
Have much and be confused.
XXII

Good weapons are instruments of fear;
all creatures hate them.
XXXI

Keep your mouth closed.
Guard your senses.
Temper your sharpness.
Simplify your problems.
Mask your brightness.
Be at one with the dust of the earth.
This is primal union.
LVI

A journey of a thousand miles starts
under one's feet.
LXIV

Truthful words are not beautiful.
Beautiful words are not truthful.
LXXXI

From *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tzu
translated by Gia-fu feng and Jane English
© Vintage Books, New York

Zhuangzi (Chuang Tzu)

Great wisdom observes both far and near, and for that reason recognizes small without considering it paltry, recognizes large without considering it unwieldy, for it knows that there is no end to the weighing of things.

Autumn Floods

From *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*
translated by Burton Watson
© Columbia University Press, 1968

Pen of protest

The seminal work of Lu Xun

by Li Helin

Photo © *China*, Beijing

Lu Xun at the age of fifty.

BORN in 1881, at Shaoxing in the Zhejiang province of China, Zhou Shu-ren, better known by his pen name, Lu Xun, was a major figure of twentieth-century Chinese literature. From his pen flowed a stream of short stories, prose-poems, essays, translations and historical studies. Twenty-five of his short stories on contemporary subjects were published in two widely translated collections, *Call to Arms* and *Hesitation*. Among them, the most famous is *The True Story of Ah Q* in which, with a telling combination of pathos and humour, he highlighted the shortcomings of the old social order. In another collection of short stories, *Old Tales Retold,* this time with an historical setting, he succeeded in satirizing contemporary life while scrupulously respecting historical fact.

Lu Xun's inventive spirit revealed itself in *Wild Grass,* an anthology of twenty-four beautifully concise and subtly allusive prose-poems, the only anthology of this genre in modern Chinese literature. *Morning Flowers Plucked at Dawn* recalled his life as a youth, but at the same time was a critical exposure of the negative aspects of the society of the past.

A master essayist, Lu Xun also penned some eight hundred essays, most of which were political in character. In them he assailed feudalism, the compradors, bureaucrats, the bourgeoisie, opportunists of left and right and traitors.

Lu Xun's historical studies included a *Brief History of Han Literature* and an *Outline History of Chinese Fiction*. Based originally on the lecture notes he used when teaching at Beijing University in 1920, his *Outline History of Chinese Fiction* took ten years to revise and complete in its definitive form. No one before him had systematically studied the origins of Chinese fiction and written, for a wide public, about how it evolved from ancient myths and from the legends recounted by the public storytellers of the Song (10th to 13th century) and Yuan (13th to 14th century) dynasties, reaching a peak with the vernacular novels under the Ming and the Manchu dynasties (14th to 20th century).

But Lu Xun was not only an accomplished writer, he was also a great thinker and revolutionary. In 1903, in *A Brief Study of Chinese Geology,* he voiced his indignation against the plunder of the rich mineral resources of China by the imperialist powers. In an article published in 1907, he criticized those theoreticians who wanted "to save China through industrialization" and "laid stress on material things at the expense of things spiritual." For Lu Xun, only through the education of the people could their conscience be aroused. He took a dialectical view of the relationship between material and spiritual things and called for a China in which man would take pride of place.

In May 1918, six months after the October Revolution, Lu Xun published a short story entitled *A Madman's Diary* in the magazine *New Youth.* It is interesting to compare the difference of approach to the problems of oppressed peoples as expressed in Lu Xun's *A Madman's Diary* and in the nineteenth century Russian writer Gogol's story of the same name. Gogol's hero is a poor devil who has the audacity to fall in love with a government minister's daughter and ends up in a lunatic asylum. Although Gogol's story brings out the darker aspects of Tsarist society, he stops short of demanding its overthrow. Lu Xun's story, however, shows that throughout its centuries-long history Chinese society had been a "man-eating" society which, despite its claim to be based on "virtue and morality", ruthlessly exploited the weak and had to be overthrown. Lu Xun's anti-feudal ideas were entirely different from those of the bourgeois revolutionaries. He aimed not only to sweep away all traces of feudal culture, but to destroy completely the "man-eating" society which fostered this culture.

In 1923, Lu Xun gave a lecture at the Beijing Women's College entitled *What happened after Nora left home?* This was shortly after the period of the reformist protest May Fourth Movement, which emerged following the riots which broke out on 4 May 1919 and which called for equality between the sexes and for a free choice of marriage partners. This was also the time at which the Norwegian writer Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* was translated and published in Chinese, achieving a wide popular success. Loth to remain her husband's puppet, Nora, Ibsen's heroine, leaves home, an action of which most Chinese readers approved. In his lecture, however, Lu Xun examined a deeper and more practical question: "What happened after Nora left home?" He pointed out that in the society of the time only two possibilities were open to her—to sink to the depths or to return to her husband. So long as women were not economically independent and could not work for their living, they had either to beg or to remain dependent on men. In a cut-throat society there was no other means of survival.

Lu Xun pointed out that: "The most important problem in today's society seems to be the achievement of economic rights. First there must be a fair sharing out between men and women in the family; secondly, men and women must have equal rights in society. Unfortunately, I have no idea how we are to obtain these rights; all I know is that we have to fight for them, and we may even have to fight harder for them than for political rights. If you speak about the equal distribution of wealth you will probably find yourselves faced with enemies who will fight you bitterly. For in present-day society it is not just women who are the puppets of men; men control other men and women control women; and sometimes men are even the puppets of women. This problem will not be solved by the acquisition by a handful of women of their economic rights. But people with ▶

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empty stomachs cannot sit back and wait for the arrival of an ideal world; so we need this relatively attainable goal until we can devise other measures. Of course, if the economic system changes then all this is empty talk".

Lu Xun returned to the theme expounded in *What happened after Nora left home?* in his story *Regret for the Past,* written two years later. In this story, in defiance of feudal ethical codes, the hero and heroine come together in a marriage of love. However, since Zijun, the heroine, is not economically independent, she becomes merely a housewife, busy cooking, feeding the chickens and looking after the dog.

When Juansheng, the hero, loses his job, he realizes that, blinded by love, he has neglected all the other important things in life. "A man must make a living before there can be any place for love..." He begins to see his wife as a burden. "She never opens a book any more and has forgotten that the most important thing in life is to make a living. To do this a couple must go forward hand in hand, or else struggle on alone." Finally, he tells her ruthlessly that he no longer loves her. They part and Zijun returns to her parents, who had opposed the idea of her choosing freely her own marriage partner. In the cold and hostile atmosphere of her parents' home she falls into a decline and finally departs a loveless world.

Lu Xun's activity as a writer and a social thinker cannot be divorced from the practical role he played in the revolutionary struggle. In 1904, when he was living in Japan, he joined the Liberation Society, a revolutionary group opposed to the Manchu dynasty then in power in China. From 1911 to 1925, while he was teaching in his home town of Shaoxing, and at the Women's College in Beijing he carried on the patriotic struggle drawing his own students into it. His political stance earned for him the hostility of a number of politicians and bourgeois intellectuals. In 1926, threatened with arrest, he took refuge in a hospital.

In 1928, he joined the Revolutionary Mutual Aid Society, to whose funds he was a regular contributor. In 1930, in Shanghai, he participated in the founding of the China League of Left-wing Writers, but a warrant for his arrest was issued and once again he was forced to go into hiding. In 1933, together with Song Qinling, the widow of Sun Yat-sen, Cai Yuanpei and Yang Quan, he helped to organize the China League for the Protection of Civil Rights in protest against the illegal imprisonment and assassination of revolutionaries and to provide a basis for the fight for democracy and liberty. In May of that year, accompanied by Song Qinling and Cai Yuanpei, he went to the German consulate in Shanghai to hand in a protest against the persecution of writers and the burning of books on the orders of Hitler. On June 18, Yang Quan, the deputy leader of the China League for the Protection of Civil Rights, was assassinated. On June 20, against the advice of his friends, and braving the risk of being himself assassinated, Lu Xun attended Yang Quan's funeral.

It would not be possible here to list all Lu Xun's activities aimed at achieving the radical social transformation he so much wanted for his country. One thing is certain, his works have stood the test of time, and both in his writings and in his actions he was always to be found on the side of the common people and the oppressed.

■ **Li Helin**

Illustration below shows an incident from one of Lu Xun's most famous works, *The True Story of Ah Q,* which evokes the humiliations of China's rural poor early in this century. It was drawn by a noted caricaturist, Ding Cong.

Photo © *China*, Beijing

Night thoughts, November 1926

by Lu Xun

THIS evening (1), all around me, everything is perfectly calm. Behind my dwelling, at the foot of the mountain, a grass fire burns with little, flickering flames. Now and then, the sound of drums and gongs reaches me from the South Putuo Temple (2), where a marionette performance is taking place. When the distant noise ceases, the silence returns with even greater insistence. My lamp shines brightly, but a twinge of unhappiness creeps up on me from goodness knows where, and I have the impression that I am sorry to have had my essays printed. This sense of regret surprises me: it is out of keeping with my characters. But before I can pin it down, it evaporates. Of course, I must press ahead, and have the essays published; but if only to exorcize this melancholy, I feel that I must add one or two words more.

As I have said before, these essays are no more than a few traces left by my life, if my past can be called a life. I have worked hard enough, but my thought is not a gushing spring, my literary talent is without great brilliance and, since I have no doctrine to advance, I have no intention of launching a movement of any kind. But experience has taught me that disappointment, whether great or small, has a bitter taste. This is why, whenever in recent years I have been asked to take up my pen, I have never refused. Provided that their opinions were not diametrically opposed to my own, and that I have had the energy to do so, I have always tried to give a little satisfaction to others.

Readers who claim me for their favourite writer often say that I express the truth. This is excessive praise induced, no doubt, by their very partiality. It is true that I do not seek to deceive, but neither do I try to recount all that is within me. What I express is merely a few odds and ends, just enough to hand in to the printer. It is true that I often try to dissect other people, but I apply the scalpel even more frequently to myself, and with far less pity. When I lift only a corner of the veil, sensitive spirits quail. What if I were to reveal myself entirely, exactly as I am?

It occurs to me from time to time to use this method to drive people away, so that those who even then did not abandon me, "snakes and odious monsters" (3) though they might be, would show themselves to be my friends, true friends after all. And if even they left me in the lurch, then too bad, I'd walk alone. But for the time being I refrain from putting this idea into practice, partly because I lack the courage to do so, and partly because I want to go on living in this society. But there is another little reason, too, which I have mentioned several times: it gives me a certain satisfaction to create for as long as I can a feeling of unease among our "respectable and right-thinking" fellow-citizens. This is why I shall continue to gird

myself with a few pieces of armour and stand before them, disturbing their orderly world with my presence, until I become tired of the whole business and take off this armour.

To serve as a guide to others is all the more difficult for me, since I myself do not know which path to follow. There is certainly no lack of "masters" and "guides" in China, but I am not among them and they do not inspire my confidence. There is only one outcome of which I myself am certain, and that is the tomb. But this is something everybody knows, without having to consult a guide. The problem is that more than one way leads to that ultimate destination, and up to now I have been unable to determine which of them to take. I am still trying to find out, and I am very much afraid that my still-green fruit should poison those who appreciate me, while those who detest me—the "respectable and right-thinking", for example—all live to a ripe old age. It is thus inevitable for me to clothe my words in ambiguity, since it often occurs to me that the best gift I can offer to readers who are fond of me might well be "inconsistency."

The first edition of my translations and original works was printed in a thousand copies; five hundred more were printed later. My most recent works have appeared in editions of two thousand and four thousand copies. Of course each increase is welcome, if only because it means that I shall earn more money, but I cannot help feeling unhappy that my writings might be morally harmful to my readers. This is why I now write with a great deal more circumspection and hesitation.

Some people imagine that I write spontaneously, that the words pour out in total freedom. Nothing could be further from the truth: I am inhibited by a host of scruples and uncertainties, I have known for a long time that I am not of the stuff that warriors and pioneers are made of. Three or four years ago, I remember, a student arrived to buy one of my books. The money which he took out of his pocket and pressed into my hand was warm with the heat of his body. And that warmth penetrated me, so much so that ever since then, whenever I take up my pen, I am afraid of poisoning people like that student; I hesitate for a long time before putting a single word on paper. I fear that the time will never come again when I can speak without such reserve, and although I sometimes think that in order to respond to the expectations of the younger generation one should sweep every scruple aside, I have not, as yet, managed to bring myself to do so.

That is all I intended to say today, and it may be taken as relatively sincere. But I do wish to add a few final remarks.

I remember that when the idea first emerged of creating a literature based on our spoken language, it was violently attacked from every side. Later, when it had gained ground to the extent that a reversal of the tendency was impossible, many of its former critics turned their coats and claimed credit for the change, which they glorified as the "new culture" (4) movement. Others proposed that the spoken language be used as the popular language; while still others recommended a return to the study of the classics as a means of acquiring perfect mastery of the spoken language. It was not long before the turncoats made yet another pirouette, and began to vilify the "new culture". As for the other two groups, they have reluctantly accepted the new language, while conserving the hope that the old one will nevertheless be kept alive as long as possible; there are plenty of such people still about, and I have denounced them in my essays.

A few days ago, I came across a journal from Shanghai (5), in which it is also maintained that a study of the classics is obligatory if one wishes to write well in the spoken language; the names of a number of writers are cited as examples in this connexion, including my own. This makes me shudder. I cannot speak for the others, but in my own case, it is true that I have read many classic works, and that I continue to do so for my own enlightenment. As a result, my eyes and ears are full of them, and this influences the vocabulary, construction and style of my *bai hua* (6), which sometimes contains archaisms. But it is also true that it is very painful and suffocating for me to carry these old monsters around on my back, and not be able to rid myself of them.

As far as the poverty of the present popular language is concerned, the question of ways and means of enriching it constitutes another important problem. Perhaps this might be achieved by the injection of suitable material drawn from ancient literature, but this is a matter which lies outside the scope of my present remarks, and I shall refrain from dealing with it here.

I do believe, however, that with an effort, I might be able to correct my own texts by introducing words and expressions from the spoken language. If I have failed to do so up to now, this is simply because I am lazy, and have not had the time.

Unfortunately, all this coincides with the publication of this collection of essays, which are written partly in classical and partly in spoken Chinese. They may, therefore, still be a poison to certain readers. But I am unable, for the moment, to bring myself to destroy them; I might even go further, and say that I shall make use of them myself, for the glimpse that they give of myself as I was when they were written. All that I ask is that the readers who appreciate me consider this collection as no more than a simple memorial—a grave-mound covering a body from which life has fled. With the passage of time, the body will turn to dust, and not even the memorial will remain. And by then, I, too, will have laid down my arms.

This morning, as I was indeed reading a classic work, a few lines from Lu Ji's (7) *Lamentation on the Death of Cao Cao* came into my head. Let them serve as my own conclusion here.

Refusing the ritual burden of the ancients,
You wanted a funeral with less circumstance and pomp.
Where are your fur coats, then, your finery, your seals?
All that remains is the grumbling of the princes in the procession.
Alas! Even a wise man like you was unable to resist
Excessive attachment to worldly goods.
Reading the document that betrays your weakness,
I dedicate these lines to you, with regrets.

Lu Xun
On the night of 11 November 1926

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1. The postface to The Tomb, *from which this text is extracted, was written in November 1926, about a year after completion of the last of the essays of which the work consists. Lu Xun had recently left Beijing, where his freedom had been threatened and had taken a teaching post at the university of Xiamen (Amoy).*

2. The temple is situated near the university of Xiamen.

3. In the original: "Xiao, *snakes, and revenants".* Xiao *was an unpleasant mythical bird whose repellent attributes included devouring its own mother.*

4. The movement for literary reform in favour of "spoken" language and literature which formed part of the "Fourth of May" cultural demonstrations in 1919. Lu Xun's irony is particularly directed against Hu Shi, who joined in the movement at the beginning, quickly changed sides to become one of its most bitter adversaries, but later claimed to have been its originator and main architect. The term "new culture" was used by Hu Shi in a number of articles on the history of the "Fourth of May".

5. Vol. I, No. 3 of the monthly magazine Yiban *(Just So) published by Kaiming and dated 11 November 1926 contains an article by Ming Shi (alias Zhu Guangshuan), entitled* Yutiande shu *(The rainy days book) in which it is stated that in order to write good* bai hua, *i.e. "spoken language" it is necessary to read* wen yan *i.e. the classics. The article goes on to say that this is the case of Hu Shi, Wu Zhihui, Zhou Zuoren and Lu Xun, "although they may not admit this themselves".*

6. Writing in the "spoken language."

7. Lu Ji (261-303) was a famous writer. Cao Cao (155-220) was a general renowned for his military prowess, and a politician. In his testament, which Lu Ji read just before writing this poem, Cao Cao called for a simplification of the funeral ceremonies governed by ancient tradition, but at the same time refused any sharing out of his "clothes of fur" and of the "ribbons decorating the seals"; his last wishes also included instructions to the female singers at his funeral.

English based on the French translation of the The Tomb, *by Lu Xun, translated from Chinese under the direction of Michelle Loi and the Lu Xun Research Centre of the People's Republic of China.* La Tombe *was published by Editions Acropole in 1981, and is included in the Unesco Collection of Representative Works.*
French translation © Unesco

China through the ages

The origins of the Chinese people go back at least a million years to a hominid who appeared in China at the end of the second glacial period. With Beijing Man, who lived about 400,000 years ago appeared the first signs of a communal culture, and with the Xia kingdom the Chinese people emerged from the mists of prehistory to embark on the adventure of modern times. On the following eight colour pages we offer a brief glimpse of eternal China through the ages.

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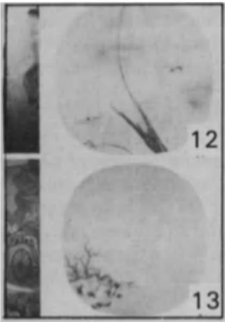

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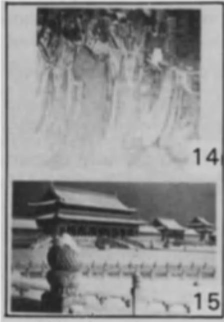

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(1) One of the oldest prehistoric representations of a human being to come down to us intact, this painted terra-cotta head in the form of a mask was found in north-west China and is probably a representation of a Shaman, an ancient priest and medicine-man. The snake slithering up the back of the head of the mask (not visible in photo) may well be a primitive precursor of the Chinese dragon. **(2)** Marble bear from the Shang dynasty. **(3)** Sophisticated carved jade pendant depicting a tiger trampling a man dates from the Zhou dynasty.

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(4) Green jade amulet depicting a dignified elder dates from the Han dynasty. **(5)** For some two thousand years these clay foot-soldiers, around 45 centimetres in height, stood guard undisturbed over the tomb of the Emperor Gaozu, the founder of the Han dynasty. They formed one of the seven phalanxes unearthed by Chinese archaeologists during the 1970s near the city of Xi'an, in the province of Shenxi. **(6)** Discovered in the ruins of a palace built during the Qin dynasty, in the ancient city of Xi'an, this mural depicting a chariot drawn by four horses is the first found from the Qin dynasty and the oldest known fresco in China.

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(7) Jade and gold funerary vestments of prince Liu Sheng, son of the fourth Han emperor Jingdi, was one of the treasures found in two royal tombs discovered in 1968 at Man-cheng in the province of Hebei. These jade mailcoats were believed to prevent the decomposition of the body. **(8)** Fresco representing the Prince Siddhartha (Buddha) dating from the Liang dynasty. Buddhism came to China from India during the first centuries AD. In Dunhuang, an oasis town in Gansu province on the pilgrim road to India, are the Mogao "caves of a thousand Buddhas", grotto-temples hewn out between 366 AD and the 10th century. With their 2,415 sculptures and 45,000 square metres of frescoes, the Mogao caves constitute one of the largest treasuries of Buddhist art. **(9)** Detail from one of the painted ceilings in the Mogao caves depicting an *apsara*. In Indian mythology *apsaras* were feminine attendants who sang and danced for the delight of gods and men. The fresco dates from the Western Wei dynasty.

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(10) Detail from a Tang dynasty mural at Dunhuang shows the great Chinese traveller Zhang Qian dismounted and kneeling in front of the emperor Wudi (not seen in photo) before his departure on a mission to the Western Lands. **(11)** Detail from a frieze in the Mogao caves, dating from the Sui dynasty, recounts a *Jataka* or tale of the Buddha's previous lives. Here he is seen in his incarnation as Sudhana the young son of a rich merchant noted for his generosity.

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(12) *Birds and weeping-willow branch*. Ink painting on silk by the famous Song dynasty artist Liang Kai. The circular format favoured by Song dynasty artists, which derives from the shape of the fan, symbolizes the world without beginning and without end. **(13)** *Lakeside in moonlight*. Ink painting on silk by an unknown Song dynasty artist. The theme, a traditional one, is the external world reduced to its simplest expression; the observer is drawn into an endless, dreamlike contemplation of the unseen.

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(14) Detail from one of the huge frescoes in the main hall of the Yuan dynasty Taoist temple of Yongle depicts heavenly and terrestrial divinities attending an audience given by the three supreme Taoist divinities. Formerly sited on the bank of the Yellow River, the temple was moved to the district of Ruicheng, Shenxi province, to make way for the hydroelectric complex of Sanmexia. The transfer, which began in 1959, took seven years to complete. **(15)** The huge Gate of Supreme Harmony, covering an area of 1,800 square metres, is the principal entrance to the complex of buildings that constitute the Imperial City, Beijing. It was here that the emperor received his ministers in audience. Building of the Imperial City was begun under the Yuan dynasty, but was not completed until 200 years later during the 15th century.

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(16) Detail of one of the many statues that line the avenue leading to the tomb of Yongle, third emperor of the Ming dynasty. **(17)** Scene from a production at the Beijing Opera of the *Legend of the White Snake*. The Beijing Opera offers a popular form of theatre; plays draw their material chiefly from traditional tales. The music is provided mainly by percussion instruments and two-string fiddles. A vigorous acrobatic style of presentation was introduced during the 19th century and has remained a feature of the Beijing Opera ever since.

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(18) Street scene in Beijing.
(19) Students at the university of Wuhan, the fifth largest city in China. **(20)** Assembly worker in a tractor factory.

(1) Photo © Museum of Antiquities of the Far East, Stockholm
(2) and (3) Photos © Bradley Smith, La Jolla. Seattle Art Museum
(4) Photo © Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. Avery Brundage Collection
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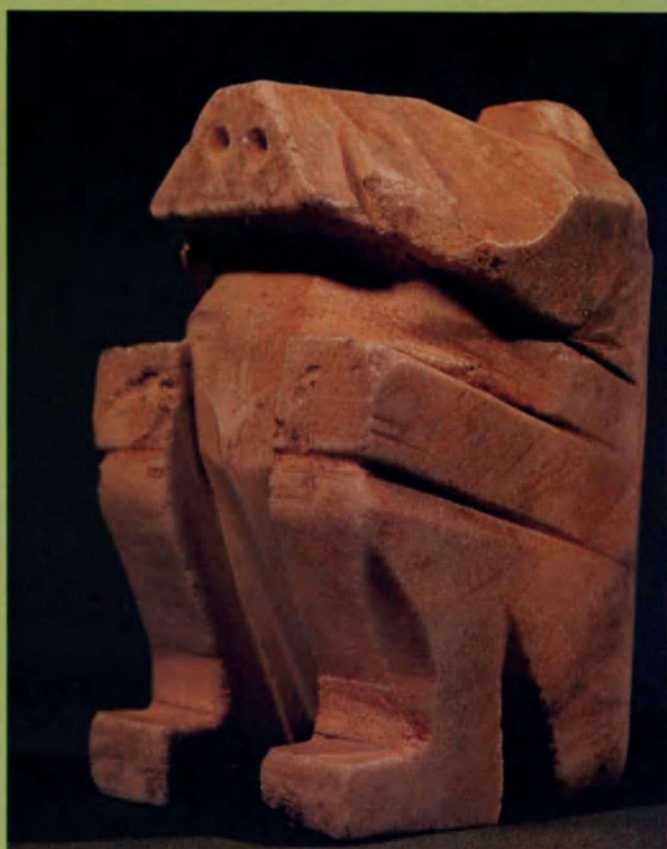
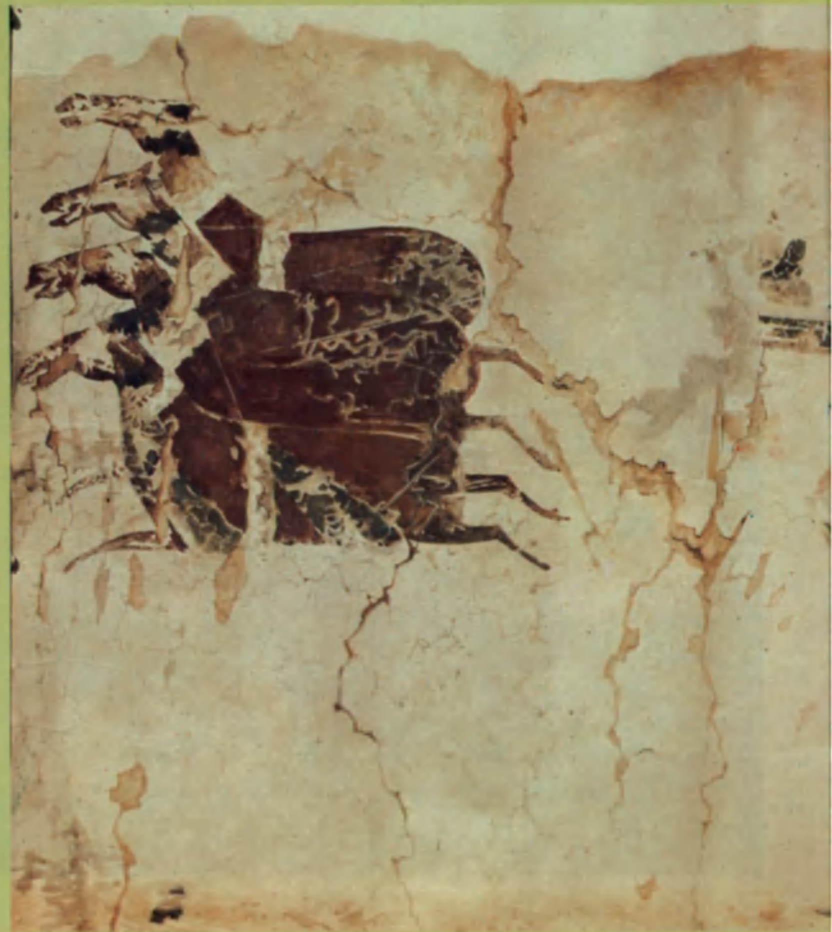
(16), (17), (18) and (19) Photos Claude Sauvageot, Paris
(20) Photo Eve Arnold © Magnum, Paris

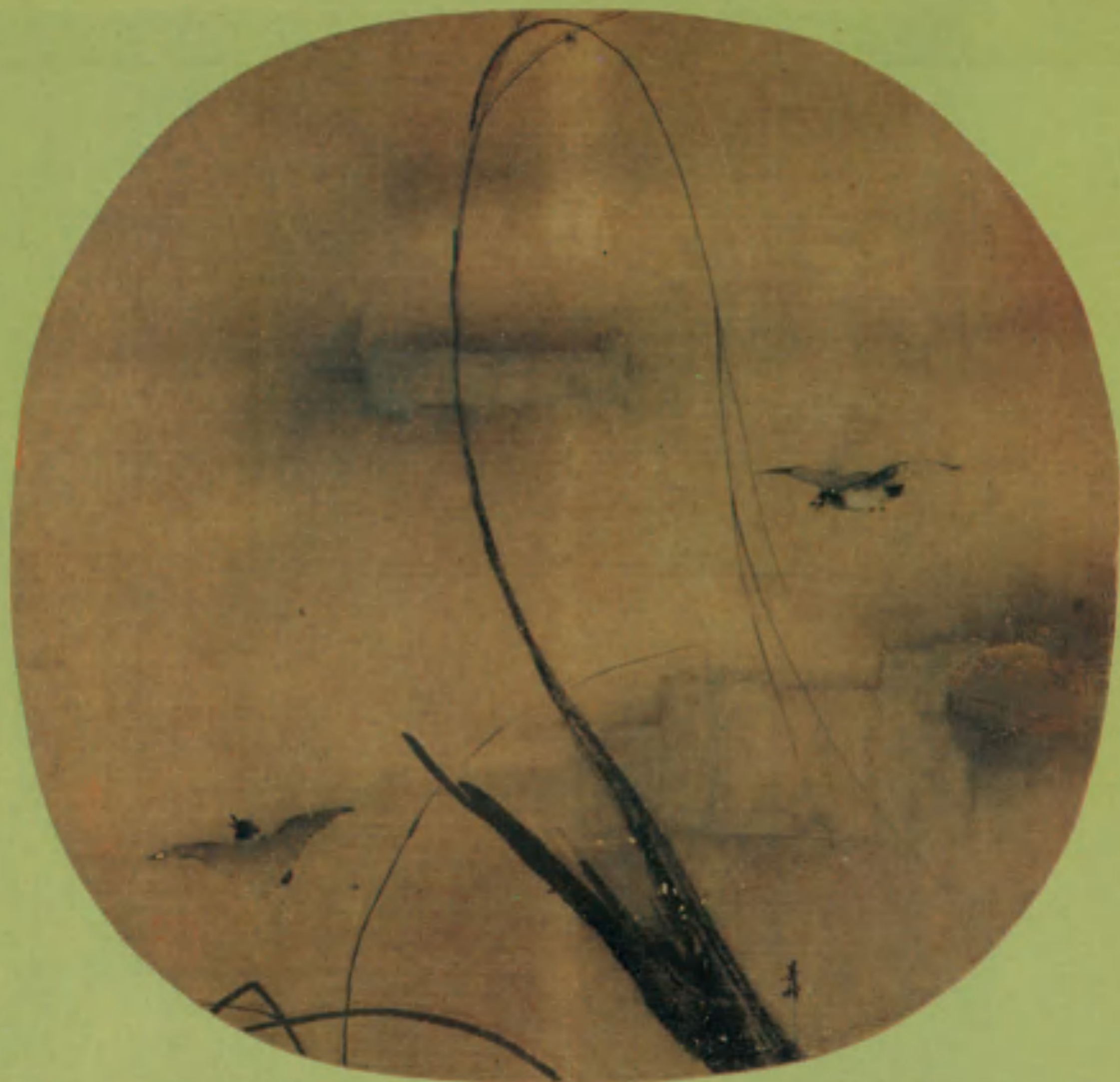
Table of Chinese dynasties

Dynasty	Dates
Xia kingdom	c. 2000-c. 1520 BC
Shang kingdom	c. 1520-c. 1030 BC
Zhou dynasty	
Early Zhou period	c. 1030-722 BC
Chunqiu period	722-480 BC
Warring States period	480-221 BC
Qin dynasty	221-207 BC
Han dynasty	
Western Han	202 BC - 9 AD
Xin interregnum	9-23 AD
Eastern Han	25-220 AD
Three Kingdoms Period	221-265 AD
Shu	221-264 AD
Wei	220-265 AD
Wu	222-280 AD
Jin dynasty	
Western	265-317 AD
Eastern	317-420 AD
(Liu) Song dynasty	420-479 AD
Northern and Southern dynasties	
Qi	479-502 AD
Liang	502-557 AD
Chen	557-589 AD
Northern Wei	386-535 AD
Western Wei	535-556 AD
Eastern Wei	534-550 AD
Northern Qi	550-577 AD
Northern Zhou	557-581 AD
Sui dynasty	581-618 AD
Tang dynasty	618-906 AD
Five dynasties period	907-960 AD
(Later Liang, Later Tang, Later Jin, Later Han, Later Zhou)	
Liao dynasty	907-1124 AD
West Liao dynasty	1124-1211 AD
Xi Xia State	986-1227 AD
Northern Song dynasty	960-1126 AD
Southern Song dynasty	1127-1279 AD
Jin (Tartar) dynasty	1115-1234 AD
Yuan (Mongol) dynasty	1260-1368 AD
Ming dynasty	1368-1644 AD
Qing (Mandchu) dynasty	1644-1911 AD
Republic	1912 AD

Based on chronological table from *Science in Traditional China*, by Joseph Needham







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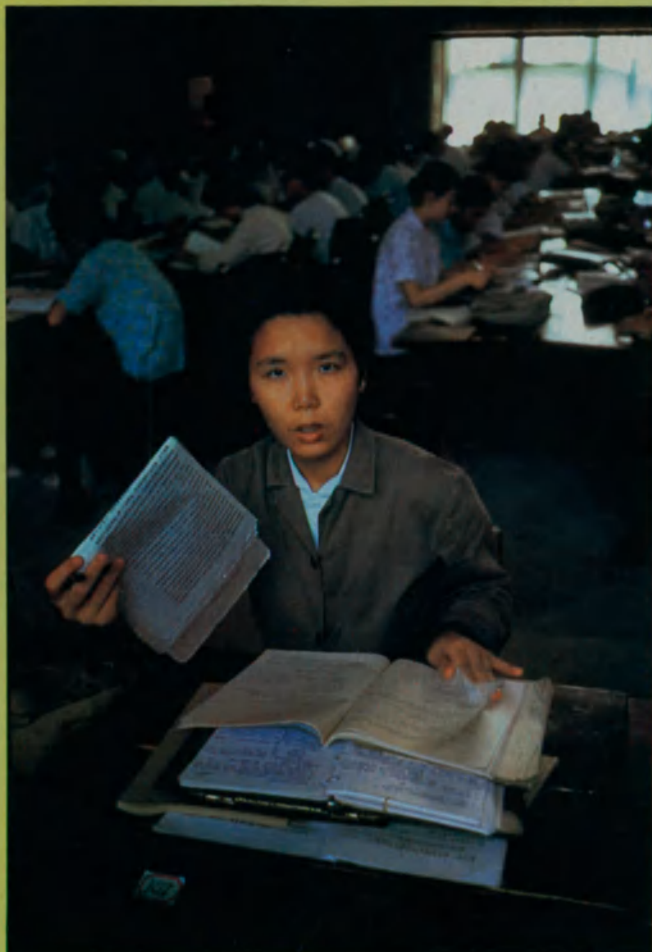


A literature of combat

Self-portrait of a popular woman writer

by Ding Ling

Photo © China, Beijing

Ding Ling, whose career spans more than half a century, is one of China's most popular authors. She is seen here during a visit to a farm co-operative in 1955.

I am a Chinese writer, and for the first sixty years of my life I lived, worked and wrote in the wake of the Chinese people, by whose difficulties I have been guided and inspired. In this way I came to know the world and its contradictions, but at the cost of many trials and tribulations. Today, at seventy-seven, one hope remains—to be able to serve my fellow countrymen until I die.

I was born in 1904, at a time when the Manchu Empire was in its death throes, into a family of notables, a breeding-ground of mandarins such as described in those great classic Chinese novels *Dream of the Red Chamber,* by Cao Xueqin, and *The Scholars,* by Wu Jingzi.

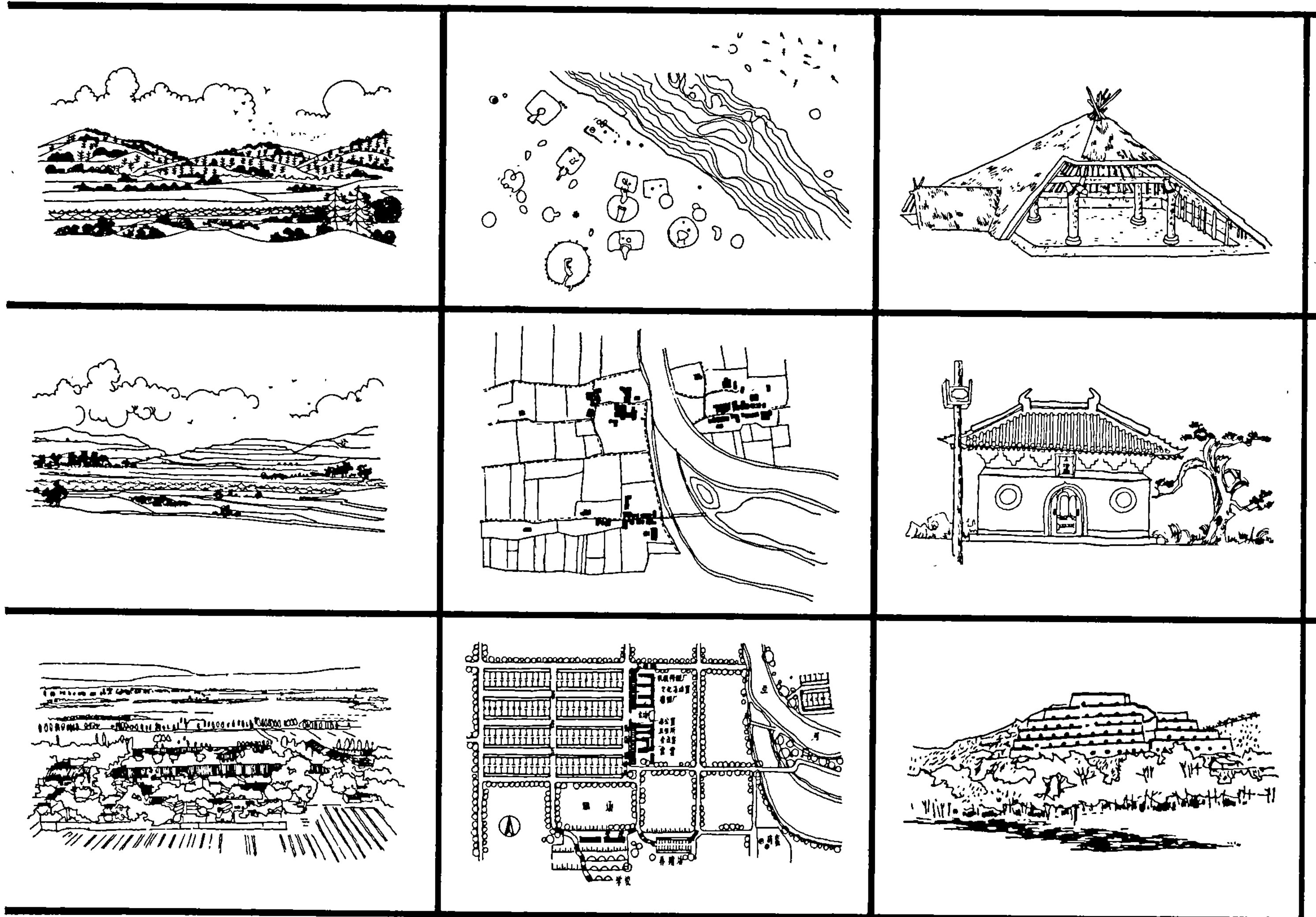
My family was a replica in miniature of feudal society in decline and its history was a chequered one. The branch of the family to which my father belonged was impoverished and going rapidly downhill, and when I was four years old my father died completely ruined. My lonely childhood gave me an insight into the miserable lot of the people in the Chinese society of the beginning of the twentieth century and opened my eyes to the selfish attitudes which governed relationships between one man and another. I found comfort in, and learned much from, reading the great Chinese classic novels. European renaissance literature and foreign literature of the nineteenth century was also grist to my mill. And it was this reading that sowed in me the seed of my vocation as a writer.

I had the good fortune to have an enlightened mother. After my father's death she freed herself from the shackles of the family, becoming a teacher to maintain her independence. She had adopted Western democratic ideas and nourished a vague hope of a socialist revolution. She often told me stories of great historical figures, Chinese and foreign, from both remote and recent times, who had distinguished themselves by their heroism, generosity of spirit and loyalty. These stories helped to dispel the melancholy that had taken root in my young heart.

I was fourteen years old at the time of the events of May 1919 and my mother and I plunged into this current of patriotic, reformist protest which was later to be known as the May Fourth Movement. This experience was a revelation to me, shaking me out of the sheltered personal world in which I had enclosed myself. Previously I had looked on my studies as a means to earn a livelihood, to achieve personal success and to restore my family to its former glories. Suddenly I discovered new and nobler aims: to take part in the struggle to lift the people out of their wretched state, to break the centuries old feudal system and to free China from its colonial status.

Leaving my provincial school at Changsa, in Hunan, I went to Shanghai where I enrolled in the first school for girls established by the Communist Party. There I met several famous revolutionaries who taught me much and encourag-▶

CHRONICLE OF CHANGE



Landscape | Topography | Architecture

▶ed me in the path I was taking. The Chinese Communist Party had only recently been founded and was still feeling its way forward, seeking to elaborate a doctrine in which would merge the Chinese revolutionary tendency and the Marxism-Leninism the Party was propagating in China. I was too inexperienced to play a useful part in the Party's work and action. With my petty bourgeois illusions I was eager to soar directly towards the extremes of liberty. But everywhere I came up against the harsh realities of the day and I soon sank back into a mood of deep depression.

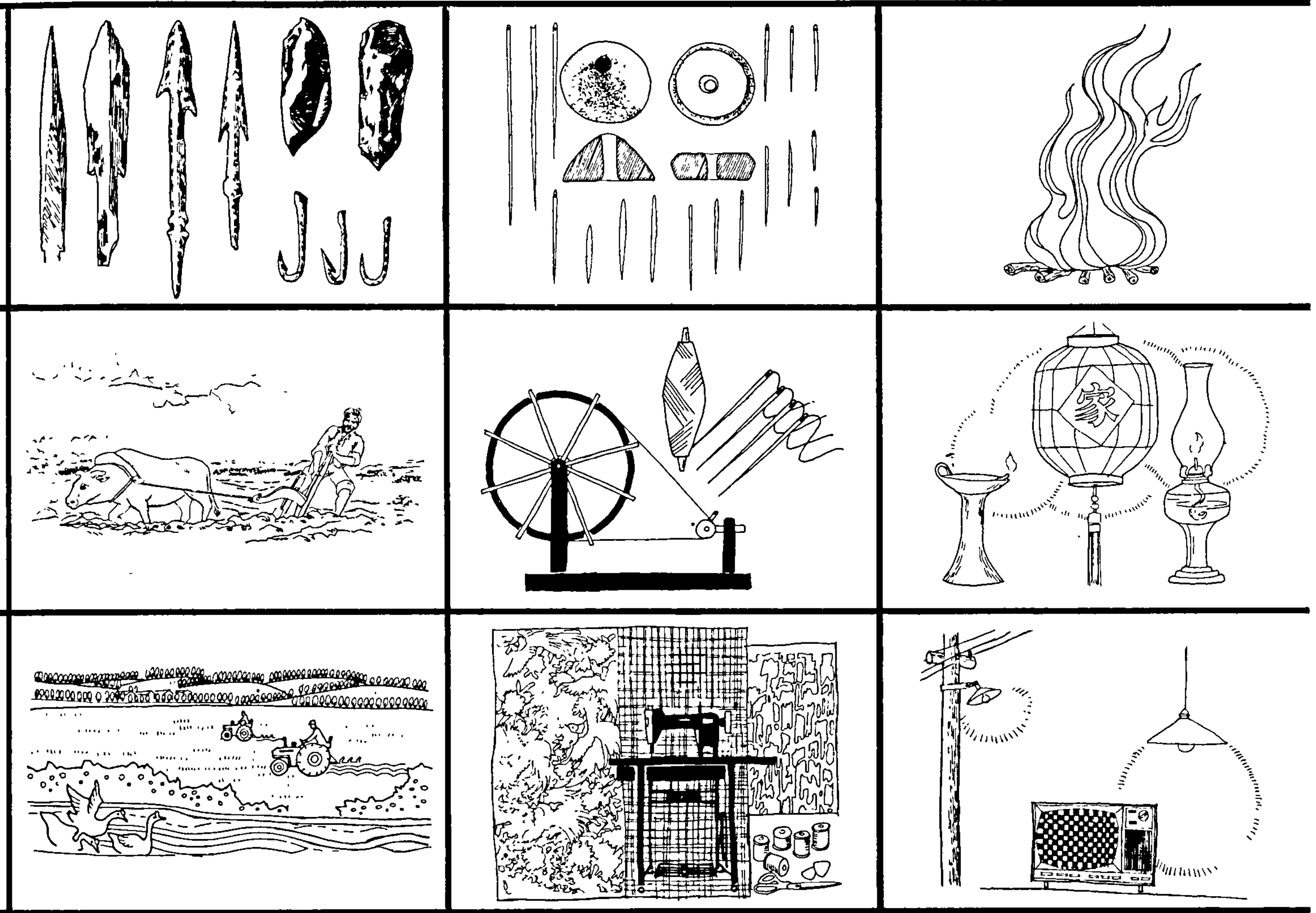
I felt isolated and demoralized, but I was still young and vital enough to feel the urge to cry out, to express myself. The only outlet available to me was to pour out on paper my feelings of revolt against the society of which I was a prisoner. It seemed natural, then, for me to follow the example of Lu Xun, Mao Dun and my communist mentor Qu Qiubai, who was to die later in a Guomindang gaol. Like them I became a writer, not out of personal vanity or out of a love of art for art's sake, but to defend my fellow countrymen and help them to achieve liberty. The same objectives motivated other writers, both my contemporaries and those of the following generation, to engage in a literature of combat, even though there were at the time, as there are also today in our vast country, authors who were only concerned with literature as an art form.

After the failure of the 1927 revolution and the massacre of militants by the Guomindang, I felt obliged to reflect more deeply on political matters. I had already acquired a certain reputation in literary circles and could have mixed with the uppercrust, found a good job and then climbed gradually up the social ladder. Indeed, this was what some of my friends chose to do. But this option was not for me. I hated the vanity of this coterie and its obsession with celebrity and material advantage, so I continued along what seemed to me to be the right path.

During the 1930s, while the Guomindang reactionaries were stepping up their "white terror", I became a member of the China League of Left-wing Writers, in Shanghai, which was headed by Lu Xun and directed by the Communist Party. Subsequently, I joined the Chinese Communist Party since I wanted to give myself up totally to the cause of the people, to share their destiny, their cares and their sufferings, to live and die with them. During the 1920s my female characters had been petty bourgeois intellectuals in revolt; from the 1930s onwards they were based on working women and peasants. This the Guomindang government could not tolerate and a single article of this nature published at that time could lead to imprisonment.

Then, just half a century ago, five members of the League, including my husband Hu Yepin, and ten revolutionaries were assassinated by the Guomindang police in the sinister Longhua prison in Shanghai. Although the world has witnessed many other horrors since then, it is hard to imagine how young writers could have thus been so cruelly gunned

A Chinese strip cartoon shows how the ancient village of Banpo became the model brigade of Fenghuo.



Implements | **Domestic utensils** | **Energy**

Cartoon taken from *Daily Life in China* © CCI, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

down. In fact, mere possession of a book with a red cover was considered ground for arrest. Many writers were summarily executed in prison or on pieces of waste ground, with no pretence at a trial. They are counted among the martyrs of the revolution.

In 1933, I myself was arrested and imprisoned and only escaped death thanks to an appeal made by the China League for the Protection of Civil Rights, founded by Song Qinling, the widow of Sun Yat-sen, Cai Yuanbei, the former rector of the University of Beijing, the writer Lu Xun and others, and the protests of well-known foreign authors such as Henri Barbusse, Romain Rolland, Maksim Gorki and Paul Vaillant-Couturier. All my books were banned and I became the object of scurrilous political and personal attacks in the press. About three years later, with the help of Lu Xun and the Party, I was able to flee Nanjing, then the official capital, and settle in the communist base in northern Shanxi.

During the Sino-Japanese War, I followed the communist eighth army to the front, working as a propagandist. Thereafter I continued my literary work in Yenan, the focal point of the struggle against the occupying forces. After the war against the Japanese imperialists was won, the struggle for liberation went on against the Guomindang forces. I also took part in the agrarian reform which abolished the feudal land system and redistributed the land. In the new China that had just been established I was given the task of helping in the reorganization of literary life. So absorbed was I in this task that I almost forgot that I too was a writer. It was only when this practical work was completed that I began once again to be haunted by the characters buried deep within my soul. I became eager to reveal their existence by writing them into my novels, stories and essays.

When I write, I do not allow myself to become entangled in problems of style or form or to impose on myself the strait-jacket of any literary school whatever. Nor do I take into account what the critics will say. Once my work is published, the only thing that matters to me is what my readers think. My pen follows the thread of my imagination and I stick to my first impulses, not trying to refashion the characters I have known and loved in my life and who become the heroes and heroines of my books.

Today I am more than ever convinced that we, the Chinese people, one thousand million individuals, united in a common inspiration and led by the Communist Party, will succeed in enriching our lives, liberating our thinking, living democratically and working and learning together. In this way, and only in this way, will our country be able to contribute largely to human progress and world peace. In this way too, Chinese literature, with its own special attributes, will play its part in enriching the universal artistic heritage of mankind.

■ **Ding Ling**

Photo © Claude Sauvageot, Paris

A

Photos *China*, Beijing

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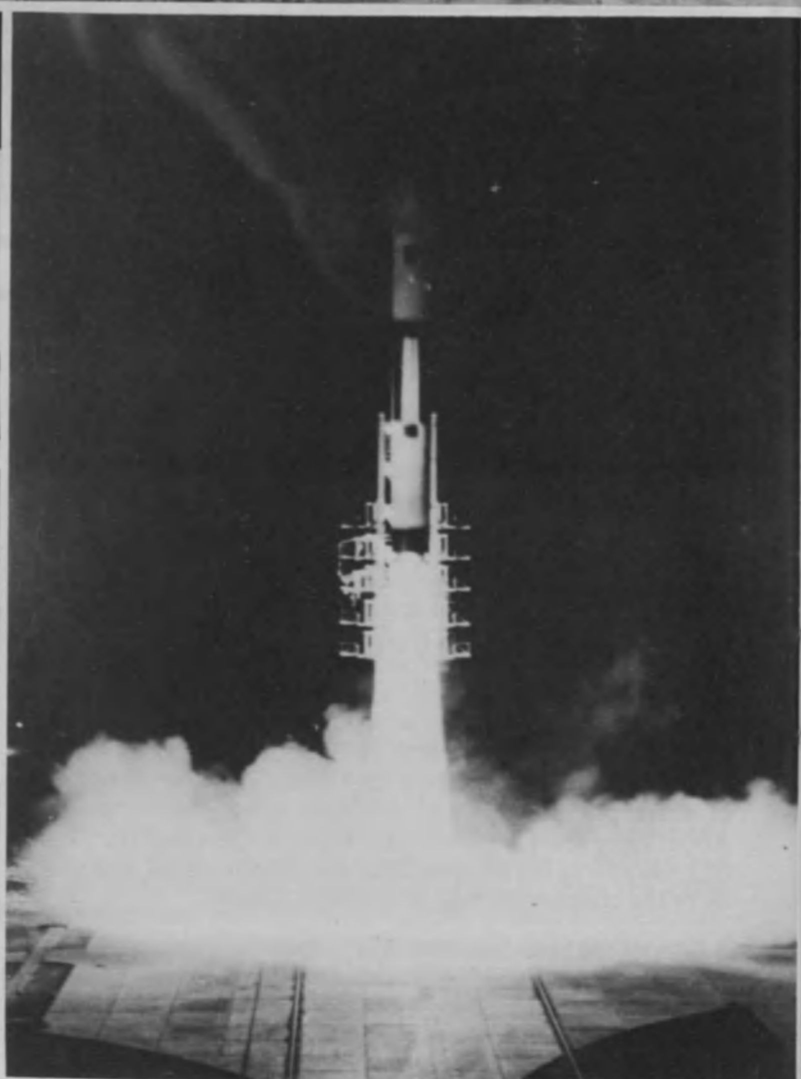
C

Photo Bruno Barbey © Magnum, Paris



D

The modernization of science and technology

Old China is credited with the four great inventions of the compass, paper-making techniques, printing, and gunpowder. New China has embarked on a far-reaching programme for the modernization of science and technology as a key to development. Photos on these pages evoke a very small selection of scientific and technological activities and achievements in China today.

A. Chinese archaeologists are systematically and scientifically excavating, restoring and preserving the tomb of emperor Qin (d. 210 BC), guarded by the army of life-size clay soldiers whose discovery was one of the most exciting events in archaeology in recent years.

B. Chief engineer Zhi Bingyi (left) has invented a new method for adapting Chinese characters to the computer.

C. Farm kitchen equipped with methane produced from fermented organic wastes. This system is widely used for cooking and lighting in the countryside.

D. On 20 September 1981, for the first time, China launched three space research satellites from a single rocket. China has launched 11 satellites since 1970.

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Photo (4) M. Claye © Jacana, Paris

5

Photos © *China*, Beijing

1. Plants are more sensitive to air pollution than people. Following experiments which attracted international interest, Chinese scientists have identified a number of species which can be used as pollution-detectors or as agents for purifying the atmosphere of toxic gases. Here, staff of the Botanical Institute of southern China use smoke to select pollution-sensitive plants.

2. Normal tissue of the rose-laurel leaf

3. Section of a rose-laurel leaf. Tissue cells show signs of being affected by toxic gases.

4. *Ficus elastica* is one of some 20 trees and bushes whose leaves are resistant to chlorine and sulphur dioxide and are capable of purifying the atmosphere.

5. *Hibiscus rose-sinensis* is a detector of chlorine.

Immortal clay

From neolithic times to today, a panorama of Chinese ceramics

by Li Jixian

Red pottery tripod jug dating from the 3rd or early 2nd millennium BC.

Photo Erich Lessing © Magnum, Paris

PERHAPS nowhere in the world have pottery and porcelain assumed so much importance as in China. The influence of Chinese ceramics in other world regions has also been profound for in the development of pottery glazes and porcelain as in other fields China can claim a long priority over the rest of the world. Below, some of the key stages and great achievements in the history of Chinese ceramics, a tradition which has surged back to life in modern China.

Neolithic origins. The Yangshao culture, so named after a site discovered in 1920, developed in the Yellow River Valley during neolithic times. Craftsmen of this culture produced pottery painted with exquisite geometric patterns and lively animal motifs which, together with the black pottery with etched designs of the Hemudu culture of Zhejiang Province, reveal the outstanding creativity of the ancient Chinese.

The earliest earthenware was somewhat loose-textured and porous, but by late neolithic times the Chinese had learned to use earth containing kaolin, or China clay, to make wares which they fired at temperatures as high as 1,000 degrees centigrade.

Next Chinese potters stumbled upon the secret of glaze. When firing pottery they may have noticed that scattered alkaline ashes left glossy specks on the wares, for they began to leave ashes on the surface of semi-finished pottery before firing it. Glaze smoothed the coarse surface of the pottery, made it easier to wash, and added greatly to its beauty. Thus came into being the earliest kaolinic porcelain, covered with a yellowish lead glaze produced by high-temperature firing. (Chemical analysis has shown that the primitive celadon wares of the Shang dynasty of 3,000 years ago are basically identical in composition to later porcelain).

From the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220 AD) to the Three Kingdoms and the Southern and Northern dynasties (221-581 AD). Potters working during the Eastern Han dynasty, especially those who produced the celadon wares of the southeast, further improved the firing process, producing smoother surfaces. Celadon ware is decorated with glazes ranging from various shades of green to blue and grey. The colours are the result of a wash of liquefied clay (slip) containing iron that was put over the body before glazing. The iron interacted with the glaze during firing and coloured it. The Three Kingdoms Period and the Southern and Northern dynasties witnessed the rapid development of celadon wares. Potters began to apply a thick and even dark green wash to the body before glazing.

The Tang dynasty (618-906) was a great period in the development of Chinese pottery. The two major products were the white pottery of Xingzhou (Hebei Province) and the celadon wares of Yuezhou in Zhejiang Province. Famed for its refine-

LI JIXIAN *is engaged on research in the Art Institute of the Academy of Chinese Arts. A specialist in ancient Chinese ceramics, he has written over a dozen studies on such themes as the earthenware of the* gijia *culture and porcelain in the reign of the emperor Kangxi.*

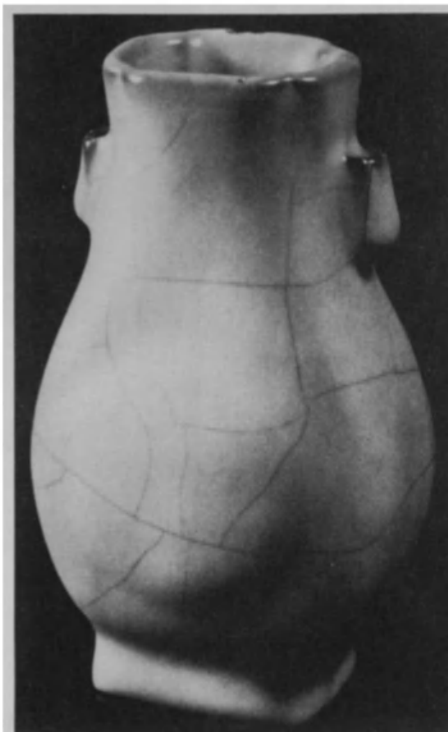
Tang potters were unsurpassed at modelling horses in a variety of spirited poses and producing highly expressive glazed or unglazed figurines. Works shown here were unearthed at Xi'an (Chang-an) China's ancient capital and the starting point of the Silk Road.

Photos © *China*, Beijing

ment and whiteness, Xingzhou pottery was described by a contemporary scholar, Lu Chu, as being "as white as snow" or "as white as silver". The transparent glaze of Yuezhou ware won the admiration of many poets, who praised its glossy smoothness as "the emerald green of a thousand peaks" and described its transparency as "autumn water".

Finė clay and refined firing techniques gave the wares a mellifluous sound when tapped, and ceramics were in fact used as musical instruments in ancient China, especially during the Tang dynasty. The excellent musician Guo Daoyuan produced sweet sounds by tapping with chopsticks on twelve teacups (six from Xingzhou, six from Yuezhou) filled with different volumes of water; the sound was more pleasant than that of musical instruments made of bronze.

It was also during the Tang dynasty that potters developed the world-famous "three-colour" glazed pottery figurines. They created forms and motifs that vividly illustrate the life and culture of feudal society in China.



This vase with two tubular handles is an example of the exquisite *guang* ware produced during the Song dynasty (height 10 cm).

Photo © Musée Cernuschi, Paris. Private collection, Paris

Ming three-colour vase dating from the late 16th-century.

Photo Erich Lessing © Magnum, Paris

The Song dynasty (960-1279) marks a high point in the history of Chinese pottery. Each of the five famous wares for which this period is celebrated—*Ding, Ru, Guang, Jun* and *Ge*— was noted for its own unique style. The exquisitely beautiful *Ding* ware was noted for its smooth, cream-coloured glaze, with underglaze decorative designs made by transfer printing, painting or engraving in the paste. *Ru* ware was covered with a thick glaze mixed with powdered agate to produce a dark green colour. The sturdy crystal green *Guang* porcelain gave the impression of great age. The *Jun* potters mixed a small quantity of copper oxide into their glazes which after firing became red or purple.

The origin of the unique crackled surface of *Ge* ware is recorded in a Chinese folk-tale which tells how once upon a time two brothers of Longquan county in Zhejiang province each opened a pottery workshop. The goods produced by the elder brother sold far and wide, to the dismay of the younger brother who could not sell his own wares. One day when the elder brother was about to open the door of his kiln, the younger brother, spurred by envy and hatred, splashed cold water on the wares inside. The surface of the pottery cracked at once, and to his great surprise the younger brother had created a successful new product for his elder whose kiln was from then on known as the *Ge* (elder brother) kiln.

The Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and **the Qing dynasty** (1644-1911) were the golden age of painted white pottery. Jingdezhen, perhaps the best-known factory in the history of Chinese ceramics, became the leading centre. Its basic product was underglaze blue and white porcelain, the emergence of which, together with that of red porcelain, marked the beginning of the painted pottery period. Production of blue-and-white underglaze porcelain became the mainstay of the Chinese porcelain industry and was exported all over the world.

The development of *famille rose* porcelain also opened up new avenues of creativity. *Famille rose* is the name given in nineteenth-century France to enamelled porcelain in which rose pink, made from gold chloride, predominates. These products brought great prosperity to Jingdezhen.

Modern China. During the past thirty years several of the ancient kilns have been restored and many new porcelain factories established.

Jingdezhen now produces imitations of traditional colour-glazed porcelain, among which *jihong* (crimson) pottery is one of the most precious. New glazes have also been developed on the basis of traditional wares. Kilns with a long tradition such as the Longquan kiln of Zhejiang, the Cizhou kiln and Ding kilns of Hebei, the Jun and Ru kilns of Henan and the Jianyang kiln of Fujian have succeeded in producing replicas of the old wares which match the best ancient porcelain. ■

The sport of sages

by Yan Naihua

Photo © Rinnie Tang, Paris

ON a vast green carpet, eighty-three-year-old Fu Maokun is demonstrating how to wield a long sword. A veteran practitioner of the Chinese martial arts (*wushu*) who won fame in his youth when he killed a buffalo with a blow from the side of his hand, he twirls the weapon, over a metre long, with great force.

Fu Maokun's performance is followed attentively by a young boy, Huang Mingjian, who in his turn manipulates a three-metre-long rod, making it whizz noisily as it hurtles through the air.

Their brilliant display, loudly applauded by 5,000 spectators, was part of a national demonstration of *wushu* recently held in the ancient city of Xian. No less than 232 adepts took part, showing their skill with sword, spear and rod, as well as the various forms of Chinese boxing. In addition to these exhibitions of the traditional martial arts, some of the participants also displayed such rarely seen exercises as the "devil's foot" and the "Buddhist sword".

Wushu (often called *gongfu* outside China) is one of the country's most popular sports. A unique phenomenon, it has a long history for Chinese workers have always considered *wushu* to be an excellent physical and moral exercise as well as a form of self-defence. There are four categories of *wushu*: boxing with bare fists, contests involving the use of weapons, and contests between either two or several adversaries.

There are several forms of *wushu* boxing, each adapted to different conditions. *Changquan* boxing, which demands astonishing rapidity and great suppleness, is practised above all by children and adolescents. *Taiji* boxing, with its gentle, relaxed movements, is particularly suitable for elderly persons, the sick and those with a weak constitution. *Xingyi* boxing calls for energy and great self-control, and is practised both by young people and adults. *Nanquan* (southern boxing) which is popular in some of China's southern provinces, consists largely of arm movements, precise leg movements, and shouts through which the fighters express their force. *Shaolin* boxing is very popular in northern China. Its neat figures and brisk movements are extremely impressive. There are also the "imitative" forms of boxing, so-called because they imitate the movements of, for example, the praying mantis or the drunkard, and are based on meticulous observation of living creatures and human nature.

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Such ancient weapons as long spears, sticks and longswords are used or so-called "short" weapons such as swords and hooks, as well as flexible weapons such as nine-knot whips, articulated sticks and chain hammers known as "shooting stars".

Combat may take place between two or several persons who, according to the appropriate figures, with or without weapons, execute the precise movements which are required. *Wushu* consists of rhythmical sets of evolutions composed of basic movements such as dodging, turning, leaping, sudden changes of position, and high and long jumping. Execution of these movements calls for harmony between manual gestures and movements of the eyes and legs; the action should take place at headlong speed, the fighter should be steadfast as a rock, the movements as fluent as running water and as swift as an attacking snake. When watching a contest it is always astonishing to see the rapidity with which blow follows blow.

Wushu is a sport which is suitable for young and old alike. It can be practised at any time of the year, and no complicated equipment is required. In China it has been popular for centuries. Morning and evening *wushu* adepts of all ages can be seen in the streets enjoying their favourite sport. In the big cities such as Beijing and Shanghai there are over 100,000 amateurs of *wushu*. Some towns have created martial arts schools and clubs for teenagers, as well as organizing training courses in *taiji*.

Wushu is a deeply rooted tradition in rural China. In certain parts of Hebei, for example, the sport has long been popular. The city of Cangzhou (population 200,000) has a hundred-odd training establishments where over a hundred experienced boxers teach their art to more than 40,000 youngsters and teenagers. Of the 500 villages in Yongfeng district, over 300 have a *wushu* organization. In the village of Diquan in Boye district, two-thirds of the families practise the sport, part of a tradition which goes back hundreds of years. They apply themselves to *wushu* before and after work and even during moments of relaxation in the fields, where it is often possible to see two young people taking part in an impromptu contest to universal delight.

The massive popularity of *wushu* has led to the emergence of many gifted young practitioners, and the great enthusiasm for the sport has encouraged constant

refinements in movements and style.

From the time of the Western Zhou dynasty (11th century-722 BC) *wushu* was considered, like shooting and riding, as a military sport. The existence of *xiangpu*, a kind of wrestling which is popular in modern Japan, is already mentioned during the Han dynasty (202 BC-220 AD). Towards the end of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) a boxer of the monastery of Shaolin named Chen Yuanfu popularized his art in Japan. Combined with Japanese *jujitsu*, it was eventually transformed into judo, today an Olympic sport. Many Japanese, Korean, Thai and Philippine schools of boxing have also been influenced, to a greater or lesser degree, by Chinese *wushu*.

In recent years *wushu* has attracted a wide following outside China. In Japan, the first country to adopt the Chinese martial arts, the Union of Shaolin Boxing, founded by Do Shin So, has 2,600 branches and over a million members. In Malaysia the Jingwu Club is a national sporting organization with activities throughout the country. In Singapore, *wushu* comes under the auspices of the National Federation of Martial Arts; in the Philippines it is represented by the Guanghan Martial Arts Commission. National competitions, tournaments and demonstrations are regularly organized in these countries of southeast Asia, and five regional competitions have been held since 1969.

Wushu has a growing number of followers in the United States and Canada. There are some forty *wushu* clubs in New York City alone, and other centres where *wushu* is popular include San Francisco, Boston and Los Angeles. Several demonstrations have been organized according to the Chinese method, i.e. the participants are grouped in three categories: boxing, weaponry and polyvalent.

A wave of enthusiasm for *wushu* has also swept through Europe. In the United Kingdom, 200,000 people practise the Chinese martial arts, and in France a Chinese martial arts association groups forty clubs and 4,000 members. In March 1982, for the first time, the European *gongfu* federation meeting in the United Kingdom brought together representatives from the UK, France, the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany, Spain and Switzerland. Since then it appears that other countries have expressed a wish to join the Federation. It seems highly probable that *wushu* will soon be an Olympic sport. ■

On Lao She

1899-1966

ONE of the major figures of twentieth-century Chinese literature, Lao She (his real name was Shu She-Yu) was born in humble circumstances in Beijing in 1899.

When he was only two years old, his father, a soldier in the Manchu army, was killed during the defence of Beijing at the time of the Boxer uprising and from then on his early life was one of great poverty. Despite this handicap he worked his way up to become a teacher and at the age of seventeen he was principal of an elementary school.

In 1924, Lao She went to England where he earned a living by teaching Mandarin Chinese and collaborating in the translation of Chinese classics. He is said to have been inspired to write his first novel by reading the works of Charles Dickens to improve his English.

By the time he returned to China, in 1930, his early novels had established his reputation as a humorous writer. He portrayed the comic side of the life of the poor, a life he knew so well from personal experience; but it was a humour that was always close to tears.

A prolific writer, he produced in rapid succession three volumes of short stories and two novels: *The Life of Zhang Tian-Zi* (1934) and *Xian-zi the Camel* (1936), better known under the title of its English translation as *Rickshaw Boy*. These highly successful novels marked a watershed in his writing; leaving his earlier individualistic themes, he turned to a preoccupation with the overall social environment.

During the Japanese war, Lao She turned to the theatre and, as head of the National Writer's Anti-Aggression Association, he wrote several patriotic propaganda plays of somewhat uneven quality. His best known plays were written after the establishment of the communist regime, including *The Dragon Whisker Drain* (1951), which was about the construction of Beijing's new sewage system, and *The Teahouse* (1957) which has been widely performed in Europe. During the last twenty-seven years of his life Lao She wrote some forty plays, operettas and musicals as well as a number of historical and literary essays.

Lao She's death was as tragic as it was unexpected. In August 1966 he became one of the first victims of the long period of disorders that ravaged China for some ten years. He will be remembered as a man of the people who made the people laugh, and through their laughter understand the deeper meaning of the world around them. ■

The changing Chinese family

by Fei Xiaotong

THE family is the basic unit of Chinese society. The changes which are taking place in its structure are an integral part of the far-reaching social transformation that China has experienced in the last thirty years.

When Western sociologists talk about the family, they are usually referring to what they call the nuclear family, consisting of husband, wife and children—the typical profile of the family in Western societies. In China the notion of the family is broader; it designates an extended group which is based on the nuclear family and may include as a basic social unit three or four generations living together and even distant relations.

The small nuclear family of husband, wife and children is an increasingly common pattern in China's cities.

Photo © Marc Riboud, Paris

In the past it was generally thought that the great majority of Chinese families were "big families" or "associated families" grouping several generations. This impression may have been due to the influence of novels and plays, such as Cao Xueqin's *Dream of the Red Flag*, Ba Jin's *Family* and Cao Yu's *The Storm*, which are set in this type of family.

It is true that in old China the rules of "family piety and fraternal duty" acted as a check on the disintegration of the family and the independence of its members. Feudal morality required that sons and daughters should unconditionally obey parents and brothers, and a family in which five generations lived together constituted a social ideal. But in reality "big families" were far from being the majority in China.

In my book *Peasant Life in China*, published in 1938, I noted that the average Chinese family then consisted of from four to six members. The same fact emerged from a study of a village near Lake Tai, carried out at a forty-five-year interval, in 1936 and 1981. I also stressed in this study that the peasant economy, then usually practised on a small scale, was ill-adapted to the structure of a big family. Although they were influenced by traditional morality, the peasants had to break up the family unit for economic reasons such as the division of the land into smallholdings, as well as for internal family reasons. Thus a father would often divide the family property and live with his elder son. When the elder son married and a new member joined the family, a clash between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law would often cause the family to split up permanently.

Elderly peasants still remember the times when many families were broken up by poverty and discord. Before the Liberation, even in the Suzhou-Hangzhou region which was considered an "earthly paradise", peasant families included many widowers, widows, orphans, and men and women abandoned by their wives and sons, who lived in extreme destitution.

Although the data are incomplete, it seems clear that the number of "associated families" was relatively higher among the richer city-dwellers and landed proprietors. This was because financial resources were concentrated in the hands of the head of the family, according to the customary practice of the feudal and paternalistic landed proprietor class. Among the working people of the towns and cities, as among the peasants, the proportion of nuclear families was growing.

From a strictly sociological viewpoint, four categories of family may be distinguished:

1) Incomplete nuclear families from which the husband or wife is absent, for one reason or another or in which unmarried orphans live together. This type of

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Although its structure is changing, the family is still the basic social unit in modern China. Help from elderly parents or parents-in-law enables the couple to work outside the home. Right, three generations of the Tscheng family on a commune near Shanghai.

Photo René Burri © Magnum, Paris

family is unstable and is considered abnormal.

2) Nuclear families, or small families, consisting of husband, wife and their unmarried children.

3) Extended families consisting of the nuclear family and its satellites, usually the widowed father or mother, but sometimes including distant kinsfolk and even persons unrelated to the family.

4) "Associated families" or big families consisting of two or three nuclear families. In most cases the associated family consists of two overlapping generations, but a variant exists in the form of nuclear families created by brothers and sisters living under the same roof.

On the basis of this kind of classification, the situation of the village we investigated in 1936 and 1981 is as follows:

	1936	1981
Incomplete families	27.6 %	18.1 %
Nuclear families	23.7 %	39 %
Extended families	38.4 %	21.6 %
Associated families	10.3 %	21.3 %

During these forty-five years, the village underwent profound changes corresponding to the transformation of a feudal or semi-feudal society into a socialist regime. The table above shows that in 1981 nuclear families predominated, accounting for nearly 40 per cent of the total, whereas the number of extended families had dropped to little more than 20 per cent. The number of incomplete families had also dropped while the number of associated families had doubled.

Several factors have modified the family structure. In a society in which the means of production have become the property of the community, the head of the family no longer has the power to control the distribution of wealth by virtue of his exclusive possession of land and other means of production, as he did under the old patriarchal system. Work in common in the production brigades, the balancing out of incomes, affinities, and the housing problem are enough to explain the increase in the percentage of "associated families", often to the detriment of the extended family.

But one of the major reasons for this change is the big increase in the number of elderly people. In the village studied, there were ninety-four persons over the age of sixty in 1936. In 1981 there were 195. Thus the improvement in health care and living conditions has produced a situation in which the elderly are far more numerous than before but often just as dependent on their children, and have contributed to the enlargement of the nuclear family, even transforming it into a big associated family. Today children are legally obliged to support their parents who can no longer work.

The standard of living of the village has risen distinctly since before the war, partly due to the establishment of factories. It is thus not surprising that the number of nuclear families has risen. Nevertheless, housing problems have not yet been entirely solved, and they play a major role in the rise in the percentage of "big families", even if the latter are not the same as the patriarchal clans of former times. Thus, although the percentage of incomplete families decreased by a third between 1936 and 1981, 78 out of 950 men in 1981 were single. Young men looking for a wife, widowers or divorcees, these single men found it very difficult to marry, notably because of the housing shortage. Some of them have joined extended families and helped to transform them into associated families.

In extended families or large associated families, there are tensions quite different from those caused by the aggressive authoritarianism of the head of the clan. These too are largely due to housing problems. Almost half the families in the village studied have tried to cushion the impact of these difficulties by the practice of *fen zao*, cooking apart: mother-in-law and daughter-in-law live together but cook separately.

Other tensions may arise from certain changes in the status of women. Women who work in the production brigades or in the factories which have been set up in the village are paid their wages directly. Although they usually hand over their earnings to the head of the family, these women now have a certain freedom as to how they spend their money. Many young village women deduct the cost of a permanent wave from their earnings before handing them over to the head of the family, even if this practice is frowned on by their elders. These are the Chinese peasant woman's first steps towards economic independence.

When this independence is more strongly asserted, it may exacerbate conflicts between the generations and provoke clashes. It sometimes happens, for example, that the mother-in-law prefers to live alone, aided by her son who makes her a monthly allowance.

On the other hand, especially in the towns, when the two members of the basic couple work, the presence of the parents-in-law, or at least that of the mother-in-law, in the home is often warmly welcomed for although many kindergartens and creches have been set up near the factories, society's needs in this sphere are still far from being fully met. By looking after the small children, the parents-in-law allow the couple to work outside the home. In this respect the extended family, far from breaking up, tightens its links and becomes a solid nucleus. ■

Over the centuries, the interplay of cultures between China and the West expressed itself in many, often surprising ways. Above, the ruins of an extraordinary Sino-Rococo edifice in the Yuanmingyuan, a vast garden in the northwest suburbs of Beijing. It was designed by the Italian Jesuit Giuseppe Castiglione (1698-1768) who was a painter and functionary at the Qing imperial court where he was known as Lang Shi-ning. The white marble building is carved with European motifs but the tiled roof and other features were typically Chinese.

Chinese civilization and the West

by Zhang Kai

IN the ancient world economic and cultural contacts between Europe and Asia reached their zenith during the second century AD. At that time the Silk Road and its western connexions, the vital trade link between East and West, stretched some 12,000 kilometres across the known world from Xian to Gades (modern Cadiz) on the Atlantic Ocean. Along it, from East to West, travelled Chinese silk, Arabian incense, precious stones, muslin and spices from India. In the other direction went glass, copper, tin, lead, red coral, textiles, pottery and currency.

Caravans had been making the long journey regularly from about 106 BC following the epic explorations of Zhang Qian, who had been sent by the Emperor Wudi as ambassador to the ancient Yuezhi people in Bactria. It was from about this time that regular supplies of silk began to flow to the West, and China became known to Europeans as "Serica" (the land of silk). Virgil, the great Roman epic poet, who was born in 70 BC, wrote a poem in praise of silk which he imagined as being combed from the leaves of trees.

While the camels were plodding heavy laden along the Silk Road, a new marine route was being developed. In about 100 BC a Greek ship's captain named Hippalos discovered that use could be made of the monsoon winds to make rapid direct sea voyages from the Red Sea to the Indian ports of Barbaricum, Barygaza and Muziris, where Chinese goods could be obtained from Indian merchants.

The sea route was safer and more economical and sea-borne trade between East and West grew rapidly reaching unprecedented heights during the Tang (618-906 AD), the Song (960-1279 AD) and the Yuan (1260-1368 AD) dynasties. The seven missions to the "Western Oceans" undertaken by the famous admiral Zheng He, between 1405 and 1433 AD undoubtedly gave a further fillip to Chinese sea-borne trade.

The period of the Tang dynasty also saw the spectacular rise of Islam, the great new power that was to affect East—West relations so profoundly. The first Arab embassy to China took place in 651 BC and the conquest of Persia in 652 BC brought Arab domination to the frontiers of Chinese influence. Arabs began to play an extremely important role as a medium of cultural and commercial exchange between East and West. It was through the Arabs that ancient Chinese inventions such as the compass, paper-making, printing and gunpowder were introduced to Europe.

Chinese porcelain predominated in trade by the "Marine Silk Road." From the Song dynasty onwards Chinese porcelain was introduced throughout south-east Asia, the Indian sub-continent, Arabia and the eastern coastal regions of Africa, and from the sixteenth century onwards it reached Europe and even America.

Also during the sixteenth century Chinese lacquerware began to reach Europe in considerable quantity, its vivid

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patterns and exquisite colourings arousing astonishment and admiration. By the end of the seventeenth century French craftsmen at the Gobelins factory in Paris were producing imitations which were known as *ouvrage à la Chine* which retained the characteristic elements of the Chinese style.

Chinese painting, handicraft, sculpture and architecture may all be said to have made a decisive contribution to the development of the eighteenth century European style which came to be known as rococo. The influence of Chinese architectural styles can be seen in a number of European imperial palaces and the traditional Chinese arch-shaped roofs and upturned eaves were often successfully transferred.

Chinese-style garden layouts were also highly popular in the West. With their apparently random arrangements of lakes, mounds, artificial rocks, pavilions, towers, winding paths, pagodas, they broke away from the symmetrical, stereotyped gardens of Europe. The Chinese influence is still strongly evident at Kew Gardens, near London, one of the most famous gardens in England.

Another Chinese export which was to have a profound influence on European, especially English, social life was tea. Originating in the China of antiquity, tea cultivation and the tea-drinking habit spread first to Japan and Korea and then throughout Asia. By the seventeenth century tea, then considered a great luxury, was being drunk in England and America. Today in England tea is an indispensable adjunct of daily life in all social classes and the English now consume about a fifth of the world's total tea production.

Material goods were not, however, the only Chinese exports to travel the trade routes. Unseen among the bales of silk, crates of tea and porcelain came a wealth of spiritual, philosophical, economic and educational ideas whose impact on the West was to be profound.

In the first half of the fourteenth century descriptions of their travels to China by the merchant adventurer Marco Polo (1254-1324) and the franciscan friar Odoric of Pordenone (1286-1331) aroused European curiosity about the mysterious "gigantic dragon of the East" of which they spoke. But it was not until the turn of the sixteenth century that a clear picture of Chinese thought began to emerge.

From the middle of the sixteenth century, missionaries were sent in successive groups to China from the Western world. Some, like the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) adopted Confucian-style clothes, learned the Chinese language, studied the Chinese classics and established close contact with senior officials and the élite of society, even gaining admittance to the imperial court. Their deepening understanding of China and their admiration for its highly developed civilization are reflected in the reports they sent back to the Vatican on politics, economy, culture and art and daily life and customs in China.

In 1585 the *Historia de las Cosas más Notables, Usos y Costumbres del gran Reyno de la China* (History of the Great Empire of China), compiled by the Spanish missionary Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza (1540-1617), was published in Rome. It was immediately translated in several European languages and widely circulated, arousing enormous interest in things Chinese. During the eighteenth century works concerning China proliferated. They included *Edifying and Curious Letters,* published in thirty-four volumes, a *General History of China,* in thirteen volumes, and *Memoirs on the History, Sciences, Arts, etc. of the Chinese,* in sixteen volumes.

These publications raised European interest in China to fever pitch. Scholars immersed themselves in the study of Chinese philosophy, politics, economics, pedagogics, state systems, military ideology and strategy, literature, art, garden landscaping and social customs.

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Photo taken from *Stèles, Peintures, Equipée,* by Victor Segalen © Librairie Plon et Club du Meilleur Livre, Paris

These ideograms (above, *dong* or east; below, *mian* or face) were inscribed on a Chinese stela (a slab or pillar of stone used for commemorative purposes) to indicate the direction in which the monument faced. While travelling in China on an archaeological mission, the French poet and physician Victor Segalen (1878-1919) was struck by these "monuments reduced to the form of a tall stone table bearing an inscription". In his book *Stèles* (1912), Segalen wrote: "This space riven by points, penetrated by the nine firmaments, who surrounds and contains it? Beyond the confines is the Extreme, and then the Great Void, and then what lies beyond?"

In the field of philosophy, Confucianism in particular captured the attention of European philosophers. Confucius' teachings, as contained in the *Sishu* (Four Books) and the *Wujing* (Five Classics), had been translated into Latin by Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit missionary Niklaas Trigault. Later, other works on Confucianism and the Confucian school of idealist philosophy of the Song dynasty were introduced to Europe and Confucius came to be revered as a learned prophet and a master of ethics and political philosophy.

The principle of *Li* (propriety), considered by the Confucian school of idealist philosophy of the Song dynasty as the supreme law, appealed greatly to many European philosophers, especially those with anti-religious tendencies.

Gottfried Leibniz, the eminent German philosopher, was one of the first in Europe to recognize the significance of Chinese thought for Western culture. For some time he devoted himself to the study of Chinese philosophical ideology and he had a wide interest in all things Chinese. He maintained that if China could send people to Europe to give guidance in "the ▶

Completed in 1298, the reminiscences of the great Italian trader and traveler Marco Polo brought to the Western world unprecedentedly vivid and accurate first-hand descriptions of life in China. Marco Polo's exciting travels are the subject of a major new TV film directed by Giuliano Montaldo, of Italy, with an international team. In addition to many Chinese actors, the star-studded cast also includes John Gielgud and Burt Lancaster. Left Kublai Khan leads the expeditionary army in putting down Nayan's armed rebellion.

Photo © *China*, Beijing

Photo © *China*, Beijing

aims and practice of natural theology", it would revitalize the decadent and corrupt ethics of Europe. He also gave much time to the establishment of a scientific society in Berlin to promote cultural exchanges between Europe and China.

The French writer Voltaire, a leading figure of the Age of Enlightenment, also had a high respect for Chinese philosophy. He maintained that the Chinese people had all the virtues and were in advance in many branches of learning.

The great Russian writer and thinker Leo Tolstoy found that he had many ideas in common with the philosophy of Laozi and at one time he even planned to translate the *Daode jing* (The Supreme Way of Life) into Russian.

During the eighteenth century, Chinese influence was also felt in the field of economics. François Quesnay, the French economist who founded the physiocratic school of economic thought and who proclaimed that *laissez-faire* in economics followed natural law and advocated an economy based on agriculture, drew heavily on Chinese experience. In his book *On China's Autocracy,* he wrote that the "natural law" was the "legislative foundation of mankind" and the "supreme norm of human behaviour." He pointed out sorrowfully that this law was neglected everywhere except in China and declared that the Chinese system of government should become an example to be emulated by all European countries. His advocacy of Confucianism and Chinese thought earned for him the sobriquet of "the Confucius of Europe."

A number of European scholars of the Age of Enlightenment considered the educational system of feudal China to be a model to be followed. The eighteenth century German professor of theology Christian Wolff greatly admired the graded educational system in China in which there were separate schools for children and adults. He maintained that this system coincided with the natural law of the human spirit.

Schools in China not only taught their students reading and writing skills, they also gave them lessons in ethics and instructed them in methods of acquiring knowledge.

In military affairs the Chinese classic *Bing-fa* (The Art of War), written by Sunzi in the fourth century BC and a book with which Napoleon Bonaparte was familiar, had a considerable effect on the formation of military ideology in Europe and on the application of military strategy and tactics in war.

In the literature and art of the West the influence of Chinese civilization can similarly be seen. Some experts maintain that the well-known Western fairy tale Cinderella is a variation of a legendary story in *You Yang Za Zu,* written by Duan Chengshi in the time of the Tang dynasty. A Chinese classic play *An Orphan of Zhaos,* was translated into English, Italian and French. It was re-written by Voltaire as a five-act play called *The Chinese Orphan,* in which Confucian ethics were described. Some scholars maintain that the great Goethe's unfinished play *Elpenor* was inspired by *An Orphan of Zhaos.*

It should not, however, be forgotten that the interplay between China and the West was a two-way affair. While the influence of the rich heritage of ancient China was pervading the West, the advanced science and technology of the West and its philosophical and artistic ideas were in turn being absorbed in China, thus cementing the bonds of friendship and understanding between two of the great civilizations of the world.

Zhang Kai

The Silk Road

Venice
Rome
Istanbul
Antakya
Beirut
Palmyra
Damascus
Hamadan
Baghdad
Teheran
Damghan
Samarkand
Mary
Wazirbad
Bamian
Khyber Pass

Photo Unesco

The African encounter

CHINESE contact with Africa dates back to ancient times. On his return to Chang-an, the capital of China under the Han dynasty, after a mission to the "Western Regions" (a term which designated the area west of Yumenguan, including what us now Xinjiang and parts of central Asia) Zhang Qian mentioned in his report to Emperor Wudi that he had heard of a place in the West called Liqian. Contemporary scholars have confirmed that Liqian was none other than Alexandria, in Egypt.

At that time Egypt was under the rule of the Roman Empire and Alexandria was the communications centre for Asia, Africa and Europe. The largest metropolis in the Western world, it enjoyed great commercial prosperity. Legend has it that Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, wore robes made of Chinese silk brought to Egypt along the Silk Road.

The reign of Emperor Wudi also saw the establishment of a flourishing sea-borne trade between China and India and a sea route was opened up between India and the Roman Empire. According to Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* about 120 trading ships left Egypt every year bound for India and Sri Lanka. Chinese silk and other commodities were carried via India to Alexandria and thence across the Mediterranean to Rome.

The Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties saw an uprecedented development of sea-borne trade between East and West. Under the Tang dynasty, China's merchant ships, some reputed to have five-storey forecastles, sailed as far as the Gulf. Under the Song dynasty, Chinese shipbuilding techniques further improved. Zhou Qufei, a twelfth-century Chinese scholar, described the Chinese ocean-going merchant ships of his day as "capable of carrying several hundred people, with food supplies that could last a year and even with pigs kept and wine made on board".

Exceptionally well rigged and navigated by compass, these ships were particularly suitable for long, ocean-going voyages. In 1433, on the last of his seven famous missions to the West during the Ming dynasty, Admiral Zheng He led a huge fleet with as many as 27,000 men aboard, reaching as far as the mouth of the Red Sea and the coast of East Africa.

The Admiral's voyages raised China's overseas trade to a new high. Chinese porcelain became popular in East Africa. In his book *The Rediscovery of Ancient Africa* Basil Davidson notes that some princes and merchants in East Africa had Chinese porcelain ornaments in their homes and drank tea from porcelain cups. Chinese porcelain fragments have been found in Tanzania and ancient Chinese coins have been unearthed in Mogadishu, Brava, Mafia Island and Kilwa Island.

In North Africa, Chinese cargoes were shipped to Egypt through the Red Sea and then transported to Morocco for sale. Chinese paper-making techniques were introduced to Egypt in 900 and to Morocco in 1100. In the tenth century Chinese printing techniques became known in Egypt and were used in printing the Qur'an. Since Chinese gunpowder was introduced to Egypt in the latter half of the thirteenth century nitre has been known to the Egyptians as "Chinese snow."

Thus Chinese products were introduced to Africa at about the same time as they reached Europe and the contacts between China and Africa were perhaps closer and more direct. ■

The great ancient trade route linking China and the West was a highway for ideas and cultural contacts as well as material goods. Left, scene from *The Legend of the Silk Road*, a ballet in six acts.

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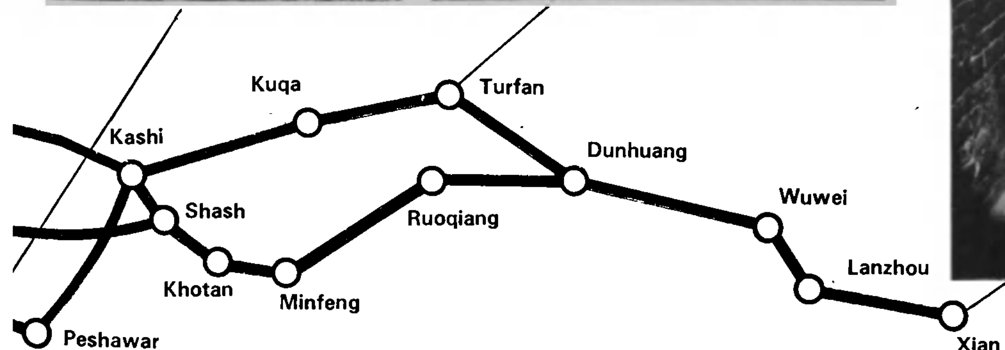

Photo Ariane Bailey, Unesco

The why of the needle

The story of acupuncture and moxa

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by Joseph Needham

JOSEPH NEEDHAM, *world-famous British historian of Chinese science, is director of the East Asian History of Science Library at Cambridge. For more than forty years he has been engaged on a monumental, multi-volume history of* Science and Civilization in China *of which he is the director and principal contributor. The present article has been taken from his latest work* Science in Traditional China, *published by the Chinese University Press, Hong Kong, in 1981.*

ACUPUNCTURE and moxa, as everybody knows, are two of the most ancient and characteristic therapeutic techniques of Chinese medicine. Acupuncture can be defined broadly as the implantation of thin needles to different depths at a great variety of points on the surface of the human body—points gathered in connected arrays according to a highly systematized pattern with a complex and sophisticated, if still essentially medieval, physiological theory behind it. The classical theory was based on conceptions, still of great interest today, of a continuous circulation of *qi* (the "primordial breath") and *Xue* (blood) around the body.

Moxa consists of the burning of *Artemisia* tinder, *ai,* either in the form of incense-like cones, whether or not laid directly on the skin, or a cigar-shaped stick held just above it. The points chosen for application are in general identical with those of the acupuncture system. Depending upon the degree of heat there can be

either a mild thermal stimulus, like a fomentation, or alternatively a powerful counter-irritant cautery. Very broadly speaking, the acupuncture technique was from ancient times onward thought most valuable in acute diseases, while the moxa was considered more appropriate in chronic ones, and even for prophylactic purposes too.

Now, acupuncture as a method of therapy, including sedation and analgesia, involving the implantation of needles, first developed during the Zhou period, in the 1st millennium. Today the needles are very thin, much thinner than the familiar hypodermic needles. Implantation into the body was made at different places at precisely specified points according to a charted scheme, based on ancient physiological ideas. The theory and the practice were, one finds, well established already, well systematized, in fact, in the 2nd century BC, though much development followed. The technique remains in universal use in China and in all Chinese communities at the present day.

The classical view of the circulation of the *qi* was that it passed through a network of channels round and round the body. This was the *jingluo* system, an arrangement of what we call acu-tracts and acujunctions, twelve main tracts, and eight auxiliary tracts, the famous *qi jing ba mo*. Each of these tracts contains anything from ten to fifty acu-points (as we call them), the *shu xue*, at which the needles are implanted or over which the moxa is burnt. But besides the *jingluo* system of acu-tracts there is also the *jing mo* system, which we translate as the "tract-and-channel network system," involving not only the circulation of *qi* in the tracts but also the circulation of blood in the blood vessels. It is extremely interesting to know that the idea of circulation existed so clearly and so long before the demonstration of the blood circulation by Sir William Harvey in his *De Motu Cordis et Sanguinis in Animalibus* of 1628.

The cardinal importance of the system of acupuncture in the history of Chinese medicine is not denied by anyone, but its actual value in objective terms remained until recently, and to some extent still does remain, the subject of great differences of opinion. For example, you can find in various countries in East Asia modern-trained physicians, both Chinese and Occidental, who are sceptical about its value, but on the whole in China they are rather few, and the vast majority of medical men there, according to our experience, both modern-trained and traditional, do believe in its capacity to cure, or at least to alleviate, many pathological conditions.

The whole subject took a rather dramatic turn during the past fifteen years on account of the successes achieved in China in the application of acupuncture for analgesia in major surgery. Here there is no long and tortuous medical history to be followed up, no periods of remission or acute relapse, no chronic conditions with uncertain responses, no psychosomatic guesswork. Either the patient feels intolerable pain from the surgical intervention, or he does not, and the effectiveness can be known within the hour, or even sooner. More than any other development, this acupuncture analgesia (or anaesthesia, as it has often been called with undeniable but infelicitous logic) has had the effect of obliging physicians and neurophysiologists in other parts of the world to take Chinese medicine seriously.

One view commonly expressed (mainly by Westerners) is that acupuncture has acted primarily by suggestion, like many other things in what they often call "fringe medicine," and some do not hesitate to equate surgical acupuncture analgesia with hypno-anaesthesia.

It is quite clear that in terms of neurophysiology the acupuncture needles stimulate various receptors at different depths, which send their afferent impulses up the spinal cord and into the brain. Perhaps they trigger events in the hypothalamus which activate the pituitary gland and lead to an increase of cortisone production by the suprarenal cortex, or perhaps they stimulate the automatic nervous system in such a way as to lead to an increased output of antibodies from the reticulo-endothelial system. Both these effects would be of great importance from the therapeutic point of view, and in fact they are among the leading theories used at the present day to explain the therapeutic effects of acupuncture. In a way, it is easier to explain the analgesic effect than the therapeutic effect, but of course if cortisone production and the things allied with it are really stirred up by acupuncture or if antibody output is increased by it, it would be easy to see that acupuncture therapy could have been of enormous value, even in diseases such as typhoid and cholera where we know perfectly well the causative invading organism. On the other hand, in another situation, the needles may monopolize afferent input junctions in the thalamus, medulla, or spinal cord, in such a way as to prevent all pain impulses getting through to the cortex regions of the brain, thereby successfully inducing analgesia. ▶

Implanting thin needles in the body at points indicated on ancient charts, modern Chinese surgeons use acupuncture, China's time-honoured technique for relieving pain, as a form of anaesthesia. Left, anaesthesia being carried out by acupuncture at a Nanjing hospital.

Photo © Marc Riboud, Paris

Furthermore, there is no question that acupuncture analgesia is connected in some way, we do not yet know exactly how, with the opioid peptides of the brain. It was one of the most exciting and fascinating discoveries of the last five years, that our own brains manufacture substances known as enkephalins and endorphins. Enkephalins and endorphins are very powerful analgesics, and they are made in our own brains, so here is another way in which you can see how the acupuncture needles at the periphery could stimulate neurons to fire off and release these highly powerful enkephalins or endorphins.

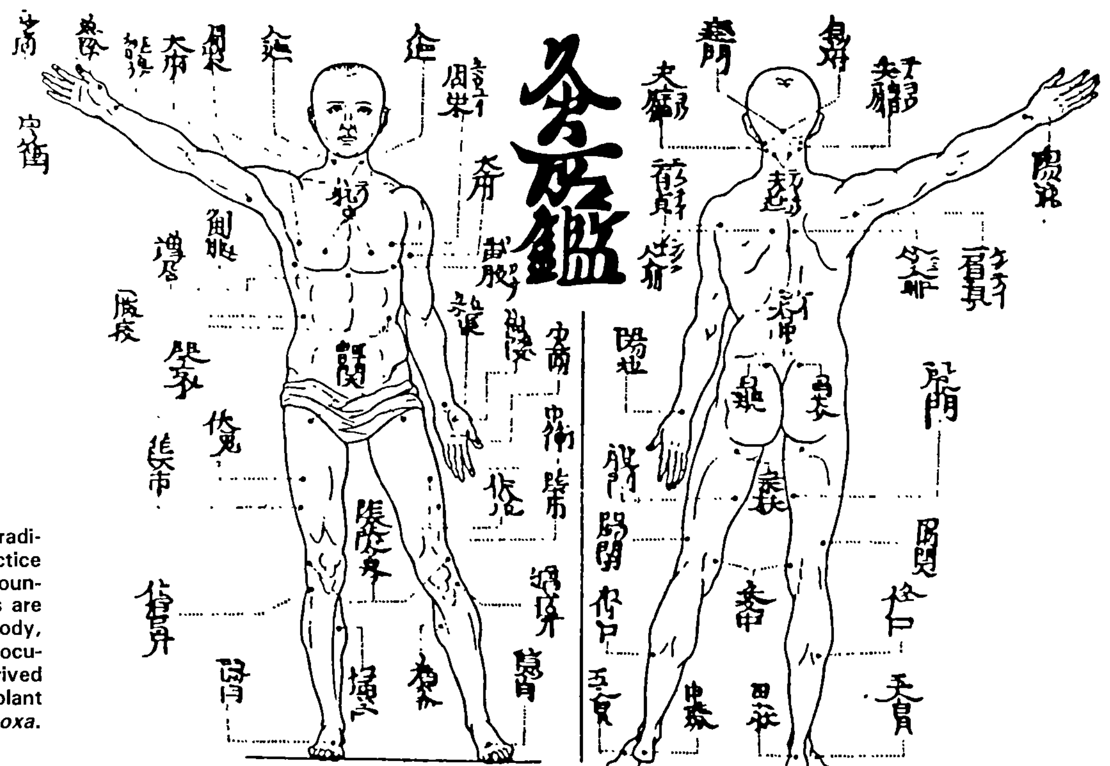
Something remains to be said about the theoretical setting of acupuncture and other Chinese traditional methods, such as the medical gymnastics which are so important in China. Here I am talking about the relative value placed in Chinese and Western medicine respectively on aid to the healing and protective power of the body, on the one hand, as against direct attacks on invading influences, on the other. In both Western medicine and Chinese medicine these two concepts are to be found. In the West, besides the seemingly dominant idea of direct attack on the pathogen, we also have the idea of the *vis medicatrix naturae*, the natural healing power of the body and the strengthening of resistance to disease which comes right down from the time of Hippocrates and Galen.

In China, where the holistic approach might have been thought to dominate, there was also the idea of combating external disease agents, whether these were malign or sinister *pneumata*, the *xie qi*, from outside, of unknown nature, or distinct venoms or toxins left behind when insects had been crawling over food. That was a very old conception in China. So the attack on external agents was certainly present in Chinese medical thought too. The other one, the *vis medicatrix naturae* was surely largely what the Taoists meant in China by *yang sheng*, the nourishment of life and the strengthening of it against disease.

It is fairly clear that whatever the acupuncture procedure does, it must be along the lines of strengthening the patient's resistance and not directly fighting invading organisms—that is, not the characteristic "antiseptic" technique which has naturally dominated in the West since the origin of modern bacteriology. In this connexion, it is a significant fact that while Westerners are often prepared to grant value to acupuncture in things like sciatica or lumbago, for which modern Western medicine can do very little anyway, Chinese physicians have never been prepared to limit either acupuncture or moxa to such conditions; on the contrary they have recommended it and practised it in treating many diseases for which we all now believe we know the organisms (like typhoid and cholera), and they have claimed at least remissions if not radical cures.

In addition, there was a third idea, which sprang from the idea of balance or *krasis*. The idea was as much Chinese as it was Greek. It viewed disease as essentially a malfunction or imbalance, one or the other component entity in the body having unnaturally gained the lead over the others. Since the development of modern endocrinology, this conception has taken a new lease on life, but it was present from the beginning in both civilizations. European bloodletting and purging was a direct if crude result of it, because it was thought that "peccant humours" had to be got rid of; but in China a defective balance between *Yin* and *Yang*, or deviant relationships between the Five Elements, were generally diagnosed and altered in a more subtle way. Acupuncture was the first court of appeal here again. We have little doubt that many interventions of that kind did return the living human body with its nerves and hormones to a more even keel, though exactly how the medieval physicians visualized the interplay of the two great forces always remains rather difficult for us to understand in our time.

The universal reproach directed against therapeutic acupuncture by modern scientific medicine is the lack of statistical evidence. The absence of adequate clinical control experiments, the existence of the



Moxa, or moxibustion, is another traditional Chinese pain-relieving practice that has since spread to other countries. Small cones of dried leaves are burned on specific points of the body, as shown in the 18th-century document at right. The term moxa is derived from the name of the wormwood plant most frequently used, *Artemisia moxa*.

Photo © Editions Tchou, Paris

A doctor at Wuxi near Nanjing applies a moxa stick to a patient's skin. Each stick burns for four or five minutes.

Photo René Burri © Magnum, Paris

placebo effect, and the relative paucity of quantitative remission and follow-up data in contemporary China are hindrances, of course, but let no one say that the Chinese were unaware of the possibilities of spontaneous recoveries and remissions. There is a passage in the *Zhou Li* which talks about the official physicians of the imperial government. The *Zhou Li* is a treatise written in early Han times about the kind of government bureaucratic organization which ought to have existed in the Zhou period, even if it never did. It was a kind of system of the ideal government organization. Speaking of the *Yi Shi*, the chief medical officer of the imperial government, it said: "The *Yi Shi* is in charge of the whole medical administration of the country, and he collects all efficacious drugs for the purpose of healing diseases. All those suffering from external maladies, whether of the head or body, are treated separately by appropriate specialists. At the end of the year he uses the records of each physician to decide on his rank and salary. Those who have cured 100 % of their patients are graded in the first class, those who have had 90 % recoveries are in the second class, those who have been 80 % successful are placed third, those who have cured 70 % are considered fourth class, and the lowest grade of all contains those who could not cure more than 60 %." Then the commentator in the 2nd century AD, Zheng Kang-Cheng, has a fascinating commentary in which he says that "the reason why those who failed with four out of ten patients were placed in the lowest grade was because half of the cases might well have recovered anyway, even without any treatment at all." This text implies clearly the keeping of clinical records, and the comment seems to us an admirable example of the scepticism and critical mentality of the scholars of ancient China.

When one looks back, one sees how great was the medical literature concerning acupuncture and moxa which grew up in China through the centuries. Many matters of absorbing interest arise as one looks through it. For example, first of all there was the deep conviction of Chinese scholars and physicians about the circulation of *qi* and blood in the body, determining a rate of flow only sixty times slower than that which modern physiologists since Harvey have recognized, and that with a priority of about two thousand years. Then there was the discovery of the viscero-cutaneous reflexes, the connexions of many parts of the body's surface with events occurring in the internal organs. Then, too, there was something I have not spoken of at all, the appreciation of diurnal or circadian rhythms, and longer biological rhythms in man, and the development of an abstruse calculus on the basis of this to determine when acupuncture and moxa should best be performed. Finally there was the development of a very interesting module system for locating acupoints in human bodies of different sizes and proportions.

There have been a number of misunderstandings in the West about acupuncture and moxa. They have nothing whatsoever to do with parapsychology, occult influences, or psychic powers, and consequently do not deserve the praises of those who believe in such things. They do not depend entirely on suggestion, nor on hypnotic phenomena at all, and they are not contradictory of modern scientific medicine. Consequently they do not deserve the *odium theologicum* of the medical profession in the West. Acupuncture with moxa is simply a system of medical treatment which was already two thousand years old when modern science was born, and which has developed in a civilization quite different from that of Europe. Today the explanations of its actions are being sought in terms of modern physiology and pathology. Great advances have been made already in this direction though the end is not yet in sight. It looks as if the physiology and biochemistry of the central and automic nervous systems will be the leading elements in our understanding, but many other systems, biochemical, neurochemical, endocrinological, and immunological are sure to be involved.

Another problem of great interest is the exact nature of the acu-points in terms of histology and biophysics. Since modern science did not spontaneously grow up in Chinese culture, acupuncture and moxa are traditionally based upon a theoretical system essentially medieval in character, though very sophisticated and subtle, indeed full of valuable insights and salutary lessons for modern scientific medicine. Again, the exact reinterpretation and reformulation of these theories, if such a thing is possible, will be a difficult matter for the future. However, we think it likely that in the oecumenical medicine of the coming years there will be a definite place for acupuncture both in therapy and in analgesia. Exactly how far this will be so, it is too early to say.

■ **Joseph Needham**

Unesco translations of Chinese literature

Unesco has for many years promoted the translation and publication of major works of Chinese literature. Notable titles that have appeared in English include:

Anthology of Chinese Literature from Early Times to the Fourteenth Century. Comp. and ed. by Cyril Birch. Associate editor Donald Keene. New York, Grove Press, 1965. XXXIV+492 pp.; London, Penguin Classics, 1967.
Basic Writings of Mo Tzu, Hsün Tzu and Han Fei Tzu. Extracts, trans. by Burton Watson. New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1967. 140, 177, 135 pp. (in I volume).
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CHUANG TZU. Chuang Tzu. Basic Writings. Extracts trans. by Burton Watson. New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1964; reprint., 1967. IX+148 pp. (Philosophy.)
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WANG YANG-MING. Instructions for Practical Living and Other Neo-Confucian Writings. Trans. with notes by Wing-tsit Chan. London, Allen & Unwin, 1967. 161 pp. New York, Hillary, 1967. 161 pp.

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The first two volumes are currently available in English and French, and the first volume has just been published in Spanish and Portuguese. Initially Unesco intended that the eight-volume work should have been published in its entirety before the end of 1983. However, as preparation of the *History* has proceeded it has become apparent that an extension is necessary in order to permit the production of a finished work of authoritative scientific quality which would respond to the hopes of the international community. Consequently it has been necessary to modify the publication timetable of the different volumes in such a way that the entire work will be available to the public at the end of 1985.

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