

INSTITUTE OF THE THREE  
PRINCIPLES OF THE PEOPLE  
ACADEMIA SINICA

**Monograph Series No. 2**

THE MODERNIZATION OF CHINA:  
A SOCIO-HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

WEN-HUI TSAI

NANKANG, TAIPEI, TAIWAN  
REPUBLIC OF CHINA  
MAY 1982

**THE MODERNIZATION OF CHINA:  
A SOCIO-HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION**

**WEN-HUI TSAI**

**MAY 1982  
NANKANG, TAIPEI, TAIWAN  
REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

# **THE MODERNIZATION OF CHINA: A SOCIO—HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In our human history, no society has ever existed in a state of complete equilibrium. Various factors—physical, demographic, social and so on—are always present, making new demands. Change is always an on-going social phenomenon. Nevertheless, the changes that have occurred during the past one hundred years can be regarded as one of the most remarkable and fascinating experiences human beings have ever had. The technological development, two world wars, urbanization, the population bomb, the end of colonization, the emergence of new nations, and the rush toward modernization in non-western societies are the remarkable revolutions of our time. Among these, the end of colonization, the emergence of new nations, and the effort of modernization by non-western societies are of special significance for us.

Indeed, the struggle for independence and the effort to achieve modernization in order to join the ranks of the prosperous, powerful, and peaceful in non-western societies involve not only the domestic development of societies but also the relations among them. Modernization thus becomes a special kind of hope to the people of non-western societies. Political scientist David Apter (1965:1) once noted that “it embodies all the supreme human desires.” For the people in these societies, traditional ways of doing things are no longer the framework within which modern societies conduct their business. To them, “modern” means dynamic, concerned with people, democratic and equalitarian, scientific, economically advanced, sovereign, and influential.

But modernization is no easy task. This is particularly true in non-western societies. The problems of modernization in many non-western societies arise partially due to the lack of a smooth transformation based on societal internal differentiation. S. N. Eisenstadt (1966:1) said, “Modernization is the process of change toward those types of social, economic, and political system that has developed in Western Europe and North America from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth.” Similarly, in Asia, the modern situation, as Robert N. Bellah (1970:101) has found, “did not arise out of the East Asian past, either as natural

growth or as pathological aberration; rather it came from without. It came often sharply, even brutally, and it had no roots in the past."

Just like her Asian neighbors, the problems of modernization in China are also extremely complicated. The history of modern China is without any doubt a history of China's struggle toward modernization. It is a fascinating subject that has received a great deal of attention in the social science community in the recent years. The main purpose of this essay is to review the existing literatures on Chinese modernization with a goal of developing a theoretical synthesis that could explain the socio-historical process of modernization in China.

The essay will begin with a critical review of theories of Chinese modernization in western literatures, followed by a discussion of the views from Chinese intellectuals. Then, a four-stage developmental process of China's modernization effort during the past 140 years will be presented, with a description of main characteristics of China's modernization. Finally, a theoretical synthesis based on the existing literature and Chinese socio-historical experience will be proposed for further investigation.

## **II. WESTERN THEORIES ON CHINESE MODERNIZATION: A REVIEW<sup>1</sup>**

Hundreds of books and articles have been written about China's modernization, and many theories have also been proposed in recent years in an attempt to explain this experience. Basically, however, most of these theories seem to focus their attention on the following two empirical questions.

The first is concerned with the analysis of the structural weakness in the *traditional* Chinese society which handicapped the possible modernization before the 19th century. Such theorists as Max Weber (1968), Marion J. Levy (1955), Robert N. Bellah (1970), and S. N. Eisenstadt (1963) have all at one time or another tried to explain why modernization or industrialization did not occur within the Chinese *traditional* social structure.

The second question that China specialists are interested in concerns with the failure of Chinese modernization programs proposed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many researchers seemed to be often puzzled by the fact that although China and Japan started on their way toward modernization at almost the same time, Japan succeeded in becoming a modern nation-state while China failed. This group of researchers tended to focus their studies on analyzing the conflicts

between *modern* Chinese social and political structures and the modernization planning itself. Examples of this focus are Lucian Pye's (1968) work on the spirit of modern Chinese politics and Barrington Moore's (1967) comparison of the modernization efforts of the Nationalists and the Chinese Communists.

It is certainly true that our understanding of the process of Chinese modernization has greatly benefited from the above mentioned studies. Nevertheless, we feel that the explanations offered in them often seem fragmentary as well as narrow-minded.

Until now, what we really have are many small pieces of work aimed at explaining the faults of Chinese society and the weakness of various Chinese sub-systems in developing a Western type of politics and economy. No attempt has been made, however, to understand the incompatibility of the concept of modernization in Chinese existing social structure. No one has ever tried, for example, to investigate the conditions under which modernization became a great evil to the Chinese in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There is a lack of awareness in the existing literatures that the modernization process the Chinese experienced is quite different from one the Western world had experienced earlier. Thus, any new theory on Chinese modernization has to take into account such a difference between China and the West.

### **1. The Role of Traditional Religion in China's Modernization**

The most authoritative work on the study of the inability of the traditional Chinese social structure to develop a capitalist modernization is Max Weber's *Religion of China* (1968).

The major objective of Weber's work is to demonstrate that China's failure to develop a rational bourgeois capitalism was due to the absence of a particular kind of religious ethic for the needed motivation. The *Religion of China* was intended as a support for the major theme in his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1951), in which Weber tried to establish the protestant ethic as an independent causal factor in the development of modern capitalism in the West.

In *Religion of China*, Weber first examined five major concrete factors in the Chinese social system as characterizing features having relevance to the functional requirement of modern capitalism: the monetary system, cities and guilds, the

patrimonial state, kinship organization, and law. Although Weber saw many unfavorable conditions for the development of capitalism in these five major spheres, he did find such favorable ones as the absence of status restriction by birth, free migration, free choice of occupation, absence of compulsory schooling and military service, and absence of legal restraint on usury and trade. Weber (1968: 100) said, "From a purely economic point of view, a genuine bourgeois industrial capitalism not to appear in China was basically due to the lack of a particular mentality," such as that of ascetic protestantism.

Taking Chinese social structure on the material condition as given, Weber then compared the differences between Chinese Confucianism and Western ascetic protestantism. Reinhard Bendix (1962: 140–142) has summarized Weber's comparison as follows:

<b>Confucianism</b>	<b>Puritanism</b>
Belief in impersonal, cosmic order; tolerance of magic.	Belief in supramundane God; rejection of magic.
Adjustment to the world to maintain harmony of heaven and earth; the ideal of order.	Mastery over the world in unceasing quest for virtue in the eyes of God; the ideal of progressive change.
Vigilant self-control for the sake of dignity and self-perfection.	Vigilant self-control for the sake of controlling man's wicked nature and doing God's will.
Absence of prophecy related to inviolability of tradition; man can avoid the wrath of the spirits and be "good" if he acts properly.	Prophecy makes tradition and the world as it is appear wicked; man cannot attain goodness by his own efforts.
Familial piety as the principle governing all human relations.	Subordination of all human relations to the service of God.
Kinship relations as the basis for	Rational law and agreement as the basis

commercial transactions, voluntary associations, law and public administration.

for commercial transactions, voluntary associations, law and public administration.

Distrust of all persons outside the extended family.

Trust of all persons who are "brothers in faith."

Wealth as a temptation and unintended by-product of a virtuous life.

Wealth as the basis of dignity and self-perfection.

It was these differences, according to Weber, that contributed to an autonomous capitalist development in the West and the absence of a similar development in China. Weber (1968:240) noted that, "to a striking degree they (the Chinese) lacked rational matter-of-factness, impersonal rationalism, and the nature of an abstract, impersonal, purposive association. True 'communities' were absent, especially in the cities, because there were no economic and managerial forms of association or enterprise which were purely purposive."

*Religion of China* indeed represents an extremely stimulating work in the comparative study of the complex Chinese social system and is a source of provocative ideas for the study of its patterns of socioeconomic change. The value of this work is so enormous that most of the studies on Chinese society by contemporary Western scholars have often taken it as an indispensable theoretical point of departure. Because of its great importance, unfortunately, many of Weber's followers have tended to ignore the many empirical problems inherent in it.

In reviewing Weber's *Religion of China*, one must keep in mind that the underlying theoretical orientation of Weber's work on the study of China, India and other civilizations was not so much as to prove the existence of the capitalism in these societies, but rather to demonstrate the highly unique characteristics of rational capitalist economic development in the West. The basic foundation of Weber's comparative methodology was thus to demonstrate the great importance of the rational mentality of the Protestant ethic in the development of Western industrialization and the lack of such a mentality in all the other great civilizations, including China and India. With this preoccupation in mind, Weber thus tended to pick only those factors that favored his own arguments.

More specifically, in the case of China, Weber failed to make a necessary

distinction between the ideal and actual patterns of social behavior in traditional Chinese society. Confucian ethic, unlike Christian ideology, was often regarded only as an ideal that was too high to be reached by the common people in traditional China. The Confucian ethic was in fact never a major force in popular culture of the general population. Even those in the upper level of society rarely practiced it as rigidly as was required in the original text of Confucian Classics. What is now thought to be conservative may have been interpreted as progressive by different Confucian scholars in different periods of China's long history, because the context in Confucian classics was so vague that it could be interpreted in either way. It is therefore misleading to take Confucianism as comparable with Protestantism, as Weber did.

Weber also failed to realize that the country of China is too large to be taken as a "cultural whole." As many China specialists (e.g., Eberhard 1969, Freedman 1966) have noted that in China there are a great many local cultures existing, each with its own distinctive characteristics; even two nearby villages may sometimes have quite different patterns of behavior norms and values. Since Confucian ethic was often merely an ideal pattern, as we have mentioned, the differences existing in local communities must have had significant impact on the attitudes of the people living there toward socioeconomic development. One apparent example of such a local economic culture can be found in An-hwei province, for the people of An-hwei have been one of the most powerful business groups in China ever since the tenth century; they dominated Chinese commercial and banking businesses for many centuries. No other territorial group in China has had such distinctive economic orientation and achievement. If the people of An-hwei practiced Confucianism as precise as it was presented in the text which condemned commercial business as evil, there would not be any so-called An-hwei Businessmen in Chinese history.

One of the main arguments in Weber's *Religion of China* is that there was no tension found in traditional Chinese value system. He said (1968:235–236):

[There were] no tensions between nature and deity, between ethical demand and human shortcoming, consciousness of sin and need for salvation, conduct on earth and compensation in the beyond, religious duty and socio-political reality. Hence, there was no leverage for influencing conduct through inner forces freed of tradition and convention.

Here again, we saw that Weber took for granted that Confucianism played the sole role in traditional Chinese society. Weber failed to take into account the significant



impact of Taoism on the Chinese masses. As a school of philosophy, Taoism did represent one of the most conservative schools of thought in the traditional Chinese philosophical system. But as a religious sect, it was one of the most progressive and rebellious groups in Chinese history. History shows that revolutions and rebellions initiated by Taoists and their followers were frequently observed in several dynasties. In fact, Taoism was the religion of the Chinese peasantry. To say that Taoism is conservative, therefore, is to misunderstand its great potential for progressive change, which was often reflected in the Chinese peasantry, certainly the majority group of the Chinese population. To completely ignore the popularity of Taoism among the Chinese peasantry as Weber did is unforgivable.

In short, Weber's contribution on the analysis of Chinese social structure is overshadowed by his preoccupation in attempting to prove that the condition in traditional China was unfavorable to the development of rational capitalism.

Another similar theoretical argument on the relationship between religious belief and modernization in China is found in Robert N. Bellah's *Tokugawa Religion* (1970), which is designed to apply Weber's theory of industrialization to the Japanese case.

Although Bellah does not deal with Chinese religious belief directly in his *Tokugawa Religion*, he often cites Chinese examples for comparison with the Japanese experience. He says (1970:188):

At many points in this study implicit or explicit comparisons with China have been made. This has usually been prompted by the fact that so much of the cultural and religious tradition is common to both, whereas the process of modernization took such a different course in China and Japan. We have usually attempted, wherever this subject has come up, to use the basic value systems of the two societies as a primary reference point in explaining the differences.

The basic difference between China and Japan, according to Bellah (1970:188), is that "China was characterized by the primacy of integrative value whereas Japan was characterized by primacy of political or goal-attainment value." The integrative value in China thus are more concerned with system maintenance than with goal-attainment or adaptation, more with solidarity than with power or wealth. The human relations in China, in other words, is more concerned with particularistic ties than with universalistic attributes.

The Chinese saw the problem of system maintenance, according to Bellah

(1970:189), "in terms of a determinate set of human relations that only needed to be kept in a state of mutual adjustment for a harmonious and balanced social system to result. An adjusted equilibrium is indeed the ideal of Chinese society." Thus, the value of filial piety clearly superseded political loyalty. Even the political loyalty existed in traditional China was strongly "familistic." In short, Bellah argues, the traditional Chinese polity was not constructed for progressive change or goal-attainment, but for system maintenance.

Bellah concludes, therefore, the Chinese ethic lacks the dynamism which would overcome the traditionalism of the masses and transfer the primacy allegiance from the family to some larger collectivity. The rationalism inherent in the Confucian ethic seems to need to be linked with a value system in which political values has primacy if it is to have an influence in the direction of modernization.

From the above summary of Bellah's arguments, we can see he is under the great shadow of Weber, even though he did try to use a different language to describe it. For Bellah, the system maintenance of integration in Chinese society is responsible for the lack of goal-attainment or developmental motivation; whereas for Weber, it is the Confucian doctrine of nature harmony and integration that is responsible for the failure of the development of capitalist economy. The main difference between Bellah and Weber lies in the fact that Bellah tried to focus his study on the religious tradition in the lives of "ordinary people." while Weber was concerned with Confucian ideology. It seems to me, then, Bellah's approach is much closer to the true picture of Chinese daily life than Weber, for the reason we mentioned earlier.

The main problem in Bellah's comparison of Japan and China is that he seems to ignore the diversity of religious traditions among ordinary Chinese people. For it is evident that Japan's small population of "ordinary people" is much more harmonious ideologically and religiously than their Chinese counterpart. As we mentioned before, many different local cultures existed in China, and it is impossible to consider the Chinese "ordinary people" as a homogeneous group.

In methodology, Bellah also falls into the Weber's trap. Like Weber, Bellah attempts to show that China lacked the ability of developing a rational economy which was contrast in Japan. It is quite apparent that Japan is merely a substitute for Weber's West in Bellah's work. In reading *Tokugawa Religion*, frankly speaking,

there is a mixture of Weber's theory and Parsonian language in it.

## **2. Chinese Family Structure and Modernization**

Marion J. Levy, Jr. (1955) has developed an interesting theory on the inability of Chinese social structure for the development of modernization by looking into the role of the traditional family in China. Levy suggested that the Chinese modernization might fail because of the Chinese family's inability to change its inner structure to promote change. Levy constructed a comparison between Chinese and Japanese families in an attempt to emphasize the Chinese shortcomings in this particular respect.

Levy (1955:495-536) saw the major differences between Chinese and Japanese family structures that are relevant for modernization as (1) how family considerations enter the total social picture, (2) the fact that there was no single ideal type of family in Japan, and (3) the emphasis on primogeniture in Japan.

The first of these three main differences referred to the mechanism of social integration. Levy said (1955:531):

In Japan the family certainly occupied a position of strategic importance, but it was definitely subordinated to other considerations in the society. This created in the society a possibility overriding or manipulating various aspects of the family patterns for other purposes. In China this possibility of manipulating family patterns in terms of other aspects of the society was much more limited because the family structure of China was to a much greater degree the major focus of the society than was the case in Japan.

One distinctive example is that, in Japan, loyalty to the feudal hierarchy took clear precedence over loyalty to one's family. Every man's first duty in Japan was to his overlord while the family came second. In China, on the contrary, nothing is more important than one's own family.

The second of the differences between the Chinese and Japanese family structures in relation to modernization turns on the marked differences in class structures in the two societies. In theory, China could be seen to have an open class system while in Japan the class system was almost closed. This contrast was reflected in the status of the merchants in these two societies. According to Levy (1955:514-516), then, the Chinese merchants held roles of extremely low prestige because the open class system allowed the children of the merchants to move up into the official bureaucracy, either through such formal channels as examinations or

through such informal channels as capital donations or bribes. The ideal and highest goal of the upward mobility in China was service in the official bureaucracy; wealth was one way to move into this bureaucracy. Consequently, the status of merchants became a "transitory status" for those who failed in examination but whose goal was still to go to the official bureaucracy.

In Japan, Levy argued, the picture was completely different. The closed class system inhibited any movement from the bottom to the top, and thus, preserved the continuity of the status of merchants. Levy (1955:516) said that "one was born to the social position of one's parents. It was expected that one stay in it as well." No matter how rich a man was, he and his descendents still remained in the same social status. Thus, the Japanese merchants did not have any motivation or incentive to move up into the feudal hierarchy in this closed class system. They remained as merchants and worked hard to preserve thereby the welfare of their family. This group of Japanese merchants then became an important factor in that country's economic development.

The third of the differences lies in the fact that the Japanese family instituted a sort of business civil service within their own companies, and those men most successful in the business competition and destined to become major figures in the various enterprises of the family more frequently brought into the family membership. The role of equal inheritance on the part of all sons that held in China was not practiced in Japan, nor did the oldest sons always succeed to the family property or rights. Levy (1955:517) said that "he [the oldest son] could be, and sometimes, was, replaced by someone adopted as an oldest son, or he could even be replaced by a younger one. . . . This made possible at one and same time the continued concentration of wealth in a single family line and the creation of a cadet class."

The immediate consequence of such a system of adoption-related modernization is that economic capital could be easily passed from one generation to another within a single family. This also means that family wealth can be more effectively utilized in large-scale industrial investment, and the criteria of adoption, in terms of universalistic competence, may encourage an effective and successful business operation.

Although it may very well be true that the Chinese family was responsible for

the failure of the development of Chinese modernization, as Levy has suggested. The three major contrasting factors are, it seems to me, not very likely to be the most crucial ones in the different processes of modernization experienced by China and Japan. There are several problems in Levy's theoretical arguments.

First, there is some evidence that the Chinese can develop a successful entrepreneur society under the traditional family structure. Studies on the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia have clearly demonstrated this to be true (Skinner, 1957).

Second, the argument on the class structures in Japan and China is a strange one, for mobility is often regarded as the necessary condition to develop a capitalist system (Weber 1951). As a matter of fact, economic growth and development can hardly sustain without a free occupational mobility. In addition, I also find other reasons to question Levy's argument here. First, in a closed-class system like Japan's, there certainly was no motivation for upward mobility into a higher social class. A merchant is always a merchant under this system. Thus, is he expected to work hard all his life for nothing but wealth? Second, in a society as isolated as Japan's was in the pre-industrial period, the majority of the population would be peasants while the size of the merchant class was likely to be small. Then, how could the merchants inspire the peasants to join their revolt against the existing system, if they themselves had no chance to move up? Even Weber agreed, as we mentioned earlier, China, in comparison with Japan, probably had a better chance to develop its socio-economic modernization than Japan insofar as the class structures are concerned.

As mentioned earlier, Levy also argued that the role of the Chinese merchant is merely a transitory one because his ultimate goal is in the official bureaucracy. Levy claimed that such an open-class system encouraged the talented people to go to the official bureaucracy instead of staying in the merchant class, and by emphasizing the high value of the bureaucracy therefore has undoubtedly hurt the development of an entrepreneur class in China. But I do not believe this lack of an entrepreneur class development was due to the result of the recruitment process of the bureaucracy through which government recruited all the talented men while leaving only the less intelligent in the business world, as Levy strongly suggested. Rather, it seems to me, it is because the tremendous investment in both human energy and capital, which could otherwise be used in socioeconomic development,

went into the preparation for the examination that handicapped the business and other commercial developments. Very often, as stories told by history, ten years, or even one's whole life, could be and was spent in this important endeavor in traditional China in the hope that someday he would pass the examinations.

In regard to the third difference, one important question Levy leaves unanswered is what percentage of merchants in Japan practiced the idea of adoption? In other words, how many merchants in Japan actually adopted a capable business partner or co-worker from outside the family to succeed them in the business and replace their own sons in the family? Was this only a possible "ideal" or was it really practiced in most of the great Japanese merchant families? Levy did not provide any empirical evidence to support his argument.

In short, what may be the contrasting characteristics between the Japanese and the Chinese family structures may not be the "contrasting factors" at all in modernization processes experienced differently by these two societies. Moreover, Levy never gave us any explicit rationale or justification for his selection of the points he compared.

### **3. Chinese Political Structure and Modernization**

Three major works in this field will be discussed here. They are: Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1967), S. N. Eisenstadt's *The Political Systems of Empires* (1963), and Lucian W. Pye's *The Spirit of Chinese Politics* (1968).

Moore's main theoretical argument regarding China's failure to modernize is focused on the political implication of social structures in that country. First, according to Moore (1967:162-277), large numbers of lower-degree candidates at the bottom of the official Chinese system of ranking dissipated their energy in fruitless revolt and insurrection within the prevailing framework. Conversely, the lower ranks of the Japanese samurai provided much of the impetus toward modernization during the 19th century.

Second, according to Moore, the imperial Chinese society never created an urban trading and manufacturing class comparable to the one that grew out of the latter stages of feudalism in Western Europe. Since the Chinese believed that money-making activities represented a dangerous threat to the scholar-official's image and

legitimacy, the government was very careful not to allow such activities to get out of control. Thus, they taxed commerce for their own gain, or they turned business into state monopoly and kept the most lucrative positions for themselves.

Third, according to Moore, the Chinese government was too weak to have any national industrialization program because most of the commercial and industrial elements were foreign and largely beyond its control in the late 19th century. Further, any attempt to use modern technology was made by the powerful local provincial gentry for their own separatist purpose.

Fourth, Moore indicated, there was no independent ideology of the Chinese middle class in the nineteenth century.

Finally, China failed to adopt a commercial agriculture; the Chinese landowner showed no enthusiasm for improving production methods for the sake of the urban market. And because of this, Moore argued, the Chinese peasantry in the first half of this century turned against the urban-middle class oriented Nationalist government while giving their support to the Chinese Communists.

The main issue in Eisenstadt's study of the processes of change in Chinese society is that the condition necessary for the development of extensive marginal and total changes did not exist in traditional China. The principle type of change that dominated China's long history was, according to him, "accommodable change." He said (1963:323):

China presents a good example of a society in which processes of accommodable change occurred and of the concrete conditions under which they tend to develop. In China, throughout many centuries (until the end of the nineteenth century and the meeting with the West), accommodable and marginal (rebellious and dynastic) changes constituted the principal types of change. On the other hand, all the marginal types of change either evaporated or merged in the processes of accommodable change, becoming reintegrated into the basic framework of the political institutions.

Processes of accommodable change were connected with the social condition that made possible the continuous fundamental harmony in traditional Chinese polity. Conflicts among different political groups were often regulated through the existing norms and activities of the major political and regulative institutions of the society.

Eisenstadt (1963:325–326) argued that three vital tendencies capable of

undermining the existing institutional framework never fully developed in traditional China: (a) the potential trend toward feudalization as patrimonial decentralization which was often blocked by the gentry and the older aristocracy; (b) the tendency toward complete independence of the urban merchant and professional groups; and (c) the trend toward development of activitistic, universalistic, religious and cultural orientations. He then concluded that failure to develop these three great tendencies made the later modernization attempt more difficult.

The third major work on Chinese political institution and modernization is Lucian W. Pye's *The Spirit of Chinese Politics* (1968). His central argument is that there was an authority crisis, in Chinese politics in particular and in society generally. The lack of a national identity and of effective norms of authority made it difficult for the Chinese to move toward successful development and modernization. Pye (1968:5) said that "basic problem in development for the Chinese has been that of achieving within their social and political life few forms of authority which can both satisfy their need to reassert a historic self-confidence and also provide the basis for re-ordering their society in modern terms."

Thus, Pye concluded that it was impossible for the Chinese government to advance national political development, because they could not meet the essential requirements to penetrate more thoroughly into the society and mobilizing human and material resources more extensively than had been possible in the traditional system, so long as the Chinese were experiencing such an authority crisis.

We found there were two main issues in the three studies just summarized. Moore and Eisenstadt all focus on the lack of dynamic oriented change inherent in traditional Chinese social and political structures which then made any contemporary progressive change impossible. Pye emphasized the special importance of the authority crisis after contact with the West in the transitional period. In turn, Pye argued, such an authority crisis made the government unable to advance any political and economic developments of their own. Since political modernization is now generally regarded as the most urgent task in the whole process of modernization in the non-Western societies (e.g., Parsons, 1966, 1969; Weiner, 1966), the studies on Chinese political structure in relation to modernization is therefore greatly welcomed.

The theoretical arguments found in Moore and Eisenstadt's respective work did



not really go any farther than Weber's work which we mentioned earlier. What Moore and Eisenstadt really achieved, if any, is their attempts to narrow their focuses particularly to political and legal systems in traditional China, while Weber looked at a much general level of value system in traditional China.

There are some difficulties in Eisenstadt's theory of "accommodable change" of traditional Chinese society. First of all, he did not give us any satisfactory reason why accommodable change existed only in China, not other societies; he simply said that the pressure of integrative harmony was too strong for any total change in social and political structures to occur in China. Secondly, he also did not show us how China could maintain integration for such a long time or if there was any significant structural feature in the Chinese political system that contributed to such an integration in traditional China.

Sociologically, for the purpose of studying change and modernization, it seems to me, it would be very interesting to find out how China was able to avoid total change during her long history. In other words, what mechanisms were used in China to sustain its political and social systems functionally intact? For instance, the bureaucratic system of recruitment can be seen as a system-maintenance mechanism against total change in society. By requiring a complete memorizing of Confucian Classics without argument or question, the government was able to indoctrinate the traditional norms and ideology into every potential government official as the only line of thinking and way of doing things. Similarly, the strict practice of Confucian ideology, which was required for the promotion and upward mobility within the official bureaucracy, also contributed to political integration in traditional China. They reduced the possible chance of any deviant thought and behavior, and thus, revolution, among political leaders in the traditional Chinese society.

In general, I would agree with Pye's main argument of the crisis of authority responsible for the government's inability to mobilize China's resources for modernization. But his "identity crisis" bothers me. I do not believe the Chinese have ever doubted who they were during this period of social and political crisis in the 19th and 20th centuries. For the majority of Chinese, it was a question of Chinese against foreigners, not the Chinese against the Chinese. To them, the Manchu rulers and Westerners were both foreigners. Being against the Manchu

government did not mean being against the Chinese themselves (Tsai 1974).

The authority crisis emanating from such a political struggle resulted in the failure of the Chinese themselves to establish an efficient centralized government to deal with the challenge from the West. For instance, the revolutionary party of Dr. Sun Yat-sen before 1911 never admitted that the Manchus were Chinese. The party leaders believed that the Manchus were foreigners and barbarians and that they were responsible for the failure of system-maintenance and for the failure of creating an effective coping mechanism to deal with these crises. In fact, the leaders were convinced that they could solve the crisis situation themselves because they, as true Chinese, knew and understood the problems much better than the Manchu rulers. Thus, it is very unlikely that crisis in China resulted from the national identity crisis, as Pye has suggested.

On the contrary, the problems in China at that time were quite similar to those in other colonial societies—the problem of standing against colonial rulers, the problem of national independence, and so forth. Following this line of argument, one question might be of interest: why did the authority crisis not disappear in China after the successful revolution in 1911? One possible way to study this problem, it seems to me, is to analyze the ideological and political backgrounds of the Chinese political modernization leadership in the post-1911 period. It is evident that conflicts between traditional and modernization political leaders created a tremendous impediment to a smooth and well-planned social and political transformation in China. Nowhere does Pye make a serious attempt to analyze China in terms of a theory that applied to transitional societies as a whole.

More serious is the methodology upon which Pye develops his theoretical generalization. Although what he has said may very well be true, he offers no assurance of validity beyond his own expertise in the field; no empirical work is presented. The basis of his whole argument, as a matter of fact, his own personal experience of growing up in China. He also claimed that in this psychological oriented study of political culture, he did not need to be concerned with questions about the actual distribution of attitude and feelings throughout the Chinese population. The personal bias inherent in this work is most unfortunate.

#### **4. External Factors In Chinese Modernization**

Although most studies have generally agreed that the Chinese contacts with the West have had a significant impact on the process of Chinese modernization, very few systematic studies have been done in this respect. In fact, Western scholars seem very reluctant to admit that Western political, economic, and military interference in the nineteenth century created a tremendously difficult situation for the Chinese to work on their developmental projects independently from the West.

Most of these scholars (e.g., Levy 1970, Fairbank 1973) argue that the contacts with the West should have given China an advantageous opportunity from the West, but China failed to do so. For instance, Levy (1970) argued that China should have had an even better chance than Japan, because the Western countries had invested more capital in China than in Japan, and therefore, China should have been able to utilize more Western capital in its investment on modernization, as compared with Japan.

Both Levy and other scholars who took the same stand with him failed to realize the fact that Chinese economic programs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were under a great restriction from the West because of the Chinese economic dependence on the West. Historical evidence can be found that on several occasions Chinese developmental plans were rejected by the Western money-lenders whenever those plans were in conflict with the latter's. The Chinese had almost no freedom to do anything without permission from the West. Francis L. K. Hsu (1967:x) once said it sadly: "Since the middle of the nineteenth century China has never had the freedom of pondering its own way and moving at its own pace."

It is certainly very naive to blame either the West or the Chinese alone for the failure of China's modernization, even though the external forces in China at that time were very crucial. What is needed is a systematic analysis of both the advantages and disadvantages of the western impact on China, institutionally as well as psychologically.

In summary, our review of the western theories of Chinese modernization has found that most studies and theories on this subject tend to be fragmentary as well as narrow-minded, for too much emphasis is often put on a certain limited aspect of the Chinese social structure while ignoring all the others. Weber's study of Chinese traditional religion, Bellah's examination of traditional value system, Levy's work on the role and functions of the family, the respective works of Eisenstadt, Pye, and

of the modern world, no matter whether the Chinese accept it or not, Chen argued that the duty of human beings was not to preserve but to create civilization. He (9132:103) said, "The past civilization was a creation of our ancestors. But since the time and environment have been changed, we therefore have to create a new civilization to adjust to them. Otherwise, our race will become weaker and finally disappear." Thus, the adoption of western civilization will not destroy Chinese traditional heritage completely; the latter will retain its position in Chinese history as part of the world civilization.

However, Hu's proposal for a wholesale westernization faced a great challenge from other modernizing elite. The first came from Professor Pan Kuan-tan (潘光旦), a sociologist at Yang Ching university. Pan expressed his agreement with a wholehearted modernization but not with a wholesale westernization. But the main critical challenge came from two other groups among modernizing elite: the moderate liberals, and the leftists. For the moderate liberals, Hu's idea was too radical; but for the leftists it was too conservative.

The view of the moderate liberals was presented in a widely circulated manifesto, "Reconstruction of Civilization on A Chinese Base," issued by ten famous professors, including Sa Meng-wu (薩孟武), T'ao Hsi-sheng (陶希聖), Ho Ping-sheng (何炳松), and Huang Wen-hsan (黃文山), on January 10, 1935. The professors declared that they objected both to traditionalism and to blind imitation, and advocated preservation of the tradition with the addition of western learning according to the immediate needs of China. They indicated that in the process of reconstruction everyone should recognize that 1) China is China. She has her own peculiarity; 2) To either praise or criticize traditional Chinese values and institutions is useless. Chinese must re-examine their own tradition in order to preserve the best of it; 3) To adopt western civilization is necessary; but the adoption should be based on the needs of present-day China, and not accept everything; 4) The reconstruction of civilization on a Chinese base is to help Chinese people to catch up the West and to contribute to the world civilization; and 5) When the Chinese reconstruct themselves to be an integrated nation, then, they can help the world. Therefore, the reconstruction of civilization in China, according to the professors (1935:130–131), must be "not to be conservative, and not be blind in following others. Based on Chinese civilization, we use scientific methods with a critical attitude to re-examine the past, to preserve

such a "return to the old way." However, the Chinese conservatives in the mid-nineteenth century failed to realize the complexity of the social and political situations in relation to the internal unrest and foreign aggressions. The traditional theory of a cyclical change was not only invalid for the modern period, but also completely inadequate; progress forward now must be taken into consideration. It is not enough merely to restore the best of the ancient Chinese values and institutions but it is necessary to have a far-reaching plan of modernization in which China may find a place in the large universe. The lack of such a foundation made the failure of the "T'ung-Chih Restoration" movement inevitable. Wright (1967:299) said, "The country became weaker rather than stronger: sycophants filled the posts lately held by the great Restoration statesmen; and the successful foreign policy of the sixties gave way to an era of ever more humiliating treaties, loss of territory, and—in all but name—loss of sovereignty itself."

The ideological consequence of the failure of the "T'ung-Chih Restoration" is apparent: the conservatives lost their confidence on the old theory, whereas the radicals sought revolution as the only solution to save China. Although there were several attempts toward a smooth reform in the late-nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the revolution finally broke out in October 1911. Dr. Sun Yat-san and his revolutionary group overthrew the old Manchu Empire and established a new Republic, the first in China's long history.

Chinese modernizing elite, those foreign educated Chinese young intellectuals in particular, was quite understandably enthusiastic about the success of the Republican revolution and saw it as the beginning of a new era in China's return to world respectability. Unfortunately, their dream of a stronger and better China soon became a nightmare as China after the revolution fell into the hands of a group of warlords with endless civil wars while the threat of a Japanese dominance endangering China's independence became more and more real and unbearable. The fate of China's future thus became the central focus of a furious debate among the Chinese intellectuals in the post-revolutionary China.

The currents of Chinese ideological thought in the post-1912 period are too complicated to be easily classified. For the purpose of our discussion here we may classify the Chinese intellectuals of the period into two major groups: the modernizing elite and the traditional elite. The Modernizing elite are those reformers who

attempt to adopt western values and institutions into Chinese society in order to establish a new modern China. Within this group of modernizing elite, it is also necessary to differentiate the liberals who prefer the gradual transformation of Chinese modernization through education and other peaceful methods, and the leftists who are communists and/or socialists in favor of radical political action to achieve the goal of modernization in China.

The Confucians were the other major group of Chinese intellectuals in the post-1912 period. These traditional elite insisted that the traditional Confucian values and institutions were superior and thus must be preserved in China; they believed that China can be a strong nation based on a rebuilt Confucian theory. Some of the traditional elite even declared that someday the Confucian theory will regain its glory in the world when the Western materialistic civilization collapses.

It is certainly significant to note here, nevertheless, that many Chinese leaders of the period at one time or another had a foot in either group. And events have moved so rapidly in twentieth-century China that by clinging to certain views a radical might find himself soon grown conservative.

### **1. Hu Shih and the Modernizing Elite**

The central figure in the modernizing elite at the early Republican period after the 1911 revolution was Dr. Hu Shih, an American educated professor of philosophy at Peking University. Hu Shih argued the current crisis in modern Chinese society is mainly the result of the great mistake made by traditional Confucianism. He attacked the Chinese worship of meaning, the filial piety, symbolism, and Confucian classical education as not fitting into the present-day Chinese society.

For Hu Shih, civilization is an evolutionary process of imitation. "The greatest period of a race is the period of imitating others." Hu (1953: vol.3, 23) said, "When a race does not learn from others, the race is going to decline. The greatest age of China were the periods in which we sincerely tried to learn from the others. The great capacity for imitation in the Japanese race has made Japan a great nation. On the other hand, Chinese traditions do not fit into present-day society at all. There is no other way to save China from destruction than to imitate others. . .

We have to learn from others with whole heart. We have to imitate them. We have to learn how to educate people to kick out our stupidity, how to operate machines to conquer nature for human happiness, and how to establish efficient systems for business, industry, and even politics."

Hu Shih argued that the civilization of a race is simply the sum-total of its achievement in adjusting itself to its environment. Success or failure in that adjustment depends upon the ability of the race to use intelligence for the invention of necessary and effective tools. Advancement in civilization depends upon the improvement of tools. Thus, the difference between Eastern and Western civilizations is primarily a difference in the tools used. He (1928:25–27) said, "Every tool of civilization is produced by human intelligence making use of the matter and energy in the natural world for the satisfaction of a want, a desire, an aesthetic feeling or an intellectual curiosity." And, "there is no such thing as a purely material civilization."

The material civilization and spiritual civilization are not two contradictory concepts, they are in fact the two manifestations of human civilization. For instance, we say a motorcycle is a product of a material civilization, we do not merely mean the physical object but also the human intelligence used in its creation. Hu Shih deeply believed that the spiritual civilization must be built on the foundation of material progress. As a matter of fact, no spiritual civilization can be achieved without the satisfaction of material civilization. He (1967:55) said, "The great tragedy of our human world is that many people worked hard all their lives without achieving a minimal human happiness." He (1928:28–29) asked, "What spirituality is there in a civilization which tolerates such a terrible form of human slavery as the ricksha coolie? Do we seriously believe that there can be any spiritual life left in those poor human beasts of burden who run and toil and sweat under that peculiar bondage of slavery which knows neither the minimum wage nor any limit of working hours?" And, thus, he (1929:40) argued that "there is not much spirituality in a civilization which bound the feet of its women for almost a thousand years without a protest, nor in that other civilization (India) which long tolerated the practice of suttee or cremation of widows and has maintained the horrible caste-system to this day."

According to Hu Shih, modern Western civilization is built on the following concepts: a) The purpose of human life is to search for happiness, b) thus, poverty is a sin, and c) thus, illness is a sin. He (1959:56) said, "It is because poverty is a

sin that men have to develop natural resources, to encourage production, to improve manufacture, and to expand business. It is also because illness is a sin that men have to study medicine, to improve public health, to require physical exercise, to stop infectious diseases, and to improve human heredity. And finally, it is because the purpose of human life is to search for happiness that we want to have a comfortable living, a convenient transportation, a clean city, beautiful arts, a safe society, and good politics." Therefore, he (1928:34) said, there is no doubt that "modern technology is highly spiritual because it seeks, through human ingenuity and intelligence, to release human energy from the unnecessary hardships of life and provide for it the necessary conditions for the enjoyment of life. Whatever be the use of men may make of the resultant comfort and leisure, the relief of suffering and hardship is in itself spiritual."

Another characteristic of modern Western civilization is science. The spirit of science is to search for truth. It is truth that can release the human being from environmental, cultural, and superstitious sufferings to become a strong, intelligent, and free man. Hu Shih (1969:56) pointed out that "it was science and the new technology which restored to man the sense of self-confidence and created the modern civilization of the West... . . . A whole recognition of the material satisfaction is one of the significant characteristics in modern Western civilization." And "if the priests of the Medieval Age were justly canonized as saints, Galileo, Watt, Stephenson, Morse, Bell, Edison, and Ford certainly deserve to be honored as gods and enshrined with Prometheus and Cadmus. They represent that which is most divine in man, namely, that creative intelligence which provides implements and makes civilization possible." (1928:27)

The spirit of science also relies on its skepticism. Science teaches us not to despair of the infinity of knowledge for it is only through piecemeal accumulation of fragmentary information that we can hope to arrive at some knowledge of nature at all. Every piecemeal acquisition is progress, and every little step in advance gives to the worker a genuinely spiritual rapture. Hu Shih (1928:37) said, "The most spiritual element in science is its skepticism, its courage to doubt everything and believe nothing without sufficient evidence. This attitude is not merely negative, although on the negative side it has performed very great service in liberating the human mind from slavish subjection to superstition and authority. The attitude of



doubt is essentially constructive and creative: it is the only legitimate road to belief; it aims at conquering doubt itself and establishing belief on a new basis. It has not only fought the old belief with the irresistible weapon, 'Give me evidence,' but also raised new problems and led to new discoveries by the same insistence on evidence." For Hu Shih, it is this spirit of "creative doubt" which has made progress of science and the greatness of modern Western civilization.

One significant consequence of the great achievement in science in Western civilization is the emergence of a new religion which Hu Shih called "The Religion of Democracy." He (1928:37) said, "Modern civilization did not begin with religion, but it has resulted in a new religion; it did not much trouble about morals, but it has achieved a new system of morals." The basic idea of this modern religion is, Hu Shih (1953:10) said, that "we trust man rather than Heaven; we depend on ourselves rather than God; we do not want to imagine what is the Heaven, we want to build a human paradise in this world; we do not want to become an eternal deity, we want to be a happy and healthy man in this world; we do not want to think about religious philosophy, we want to be an intelligent man to improve this world; we will not easily believe God's ability, but we do believe in the capacity of scientific techniques and the future of our human being is not limited; we will not believe the eternity of soul, but we will believe the greatness of human character and of human right."

The development of the religion of democracy has its historical significance. The Industrial Revolution opened up the possibility of the emergence of such a religion. Hu (1928:38) said, "With the increase in material enjoyment and the rise of a large middle class, there has been simultaneously an expansion in man's imaginative power and sympathy. And with the restoration of man's confidence in himself as the agent to control his own destinies, there have developed the various types of social consciousness and social virtues. All this leads to the rise of the new religion of democracy, by which I mean to include the individualistic ideals of the eighteenth century and the socialistic ideals of the last hundred years." The ideals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, which were widely spread in the European continent, he (1928:38) said, "have become the war-cry of the American Revolution, the French revolution, and the revolution of 1848, and have vibrated through all the later revolutions."

The ideals of the religion of democracy have worked themselves into the constitutions of the new republics. They have brought about the downfall of monarchies, empires, and aristocracies. They have given to man equality before the law and freedom of thought, speech, publication, and religious belief. And they have emancipated the women and made universal education a reality. Hu (1928:40) said, "This religion of democracy which not only guarantees one's own liberty. . . but also endeavors to make it possible for every man and woman to live a free life; which not only succeeds through science and machinery in greatly enhancing the happiness and comfort of the individual, but also seeks through organization and legislation to extend the goods of life to the greatest number—this is the greatest spiritual heritage of the Western civilization."

Hu Shih made very clear the need of a psychological prerequisite in the process of Chinese modernization. He (1953: vol.1.430) said, "Today if we are going to try to investigate how to solve the problems of Chinese society, we have to re-examine our attitude towards these problems first." "We should re-examine ourselves: why did we fail? why is our national salvation movement still a failure today? There are still many people who do not believe our nation and race are sick. . . . Others do not try hard to cure our sickness." (1953: vol.4.451) The self-examination of Chinese traditions, according to Hu Shih, does not only require a new mentality but also a recognition of all the mistakes the Chinese have made, "There were several major events in recent Chinese history such as Sino-Japan War in 1894, the Russian occupation of Li Hsung Harber (旅順), the Boxer incident, etc., we reacted to these incidents strongly each time, but we have never achieved our goal to save China."

It is, therefore, the duty of the leaders, especially political leaders, to show what the problems are and how to solve them. Hu Shih (1953: vol.1.430) said, "Often we do not think seriously what kind of society and nation we want to have, and often we are also not willing to think about the direction which can lead us to reach the destination. Consequently, if somebody says left, we go left; others say right, we go right. If our leaders have great experience in world affairs, and if our leaders lead us with their eyes open, we may be able to reach the destination by following them. However, if they are blind, then we will be in great danger."

History has told us that Chinese political leaders have failed to direct us to build a better nation. People also have lost their faith too. It is now the responsibility of

Chinese modern intellectuals to take over the leadership and to call attention to the mistake made by those political leaders. Hu Shih (1953: vol.1.436) said, "We must open our eyes to find the right direction. We do not want to follow those blind leaders. . . . Our duty is that we will use our knowledge to observe objectively the true needs of the present-day China in order to decide our goal. We first want to ask what have to be destroyed, which is a negative goal. Then we are going to ask what we want to build, which is our positive goal." Hu Shih's solution to the problem is simple: Wholesale westernization.

Hu Shih then called for a wholesale and wholehearted westernization in China. He said (1932:677):

My own attitude is that we must unreservedly accept this modern civilization of the West because we need it to solve our most pressing problems, the problems of poverty, ignorance, disease and corruption. These are the real enemies we are facing, and none of these can be subjugated by the old civilization. . . . And I am convinced the old traditions will not be lost even when we take an extreme view of the need for modernization, because civilizations are conservative by their nature. By the natural inertia of cultures, the vast majority will take good care of those traditional values. But it behooves the leaders to go as far as they can in order that they may bring the masses to move a few steps farther in the direction of solving the most urgent problems of the nation by means of every instrumentality which this new civilization can offer.

Although the common goal of the Chinese modernizing elite in the period was the same: westernization in China, the methods of achieving this common goal were quite different in various groups of the modernizing elite. Conflicts of opinion rapidly developed over the ideological reconstruction of Chinese life. The doctrines of socialism, anarchism, nationalism, and communism were widely spread among Chinese modernizing elite in the period.

In such an atmosphere, Hu Shih's advocacy of "wholesale westernization" inevitably received both praise and challenge from Chinese modernizing elite. One of the strong supporters of Hu Shih's proposal was Professor Chen Hsu-ching (陳序經). In his various articles and books, Chen strongly agreed with Hu's opinion that the future of Chinese civilization must rely on a thorough westernization. In his *The Future of Chinese Civilization*, Chen indicated two major reasons for a thorough wholesale westernization in China: first, western civilization is indeed more progressive than the Chinese; and second, western modern civilization is the symbol

of the modern world, no matter whether the Chinese accept it or not, Chen argued that the duty of human beings was not to preserve but to create civilization. He (9132:103) said, "The past civilization was a creation of our ancestors. But since the time and environment have been changed, we therefore have to create a new civilization to adjust to them. Otherwise, our race will become weaker and finally disappear." Thus, the adoption of western civilization will not destroy Chinese traditional heritage completely; the latter will retain its position in Chinese history as part of the world civilization.

However, Hu's proposal for a wholesale westernization faced a great challenge from other modernizing elite. The first came from Professor Pan Kuan-tan (潘光旦), a sociologist at Yang Ching university. Pan expressed his agreement with a wholehearted modernization but not with a wholesale westernization. But the main critical challenge came from two other groups among modernizing elite: the moderate liberals, and the leftists. For the moderate liberals, Hu's idea was too radical; but for the leftists it was too conservative.

The view of the moderate liberals was presented in a widely circulated manifesto, "Reconstruction of Civilization on A Chinese Base," issued by ten famous professors, including Sa Meng-wu (薩孟武), T'ao Hsi-sheng (陶希聖), Ho Ping-sheng (何炳松), and Huang Wen-hsan (黃文山), on January 10, 1935. The professors declared that they objected both to traditionalism and to blind imitation, and advocated preservation of the tradition with the addition of western learning according to the immediate needs of China. They indicated that in the process of reconstruction everyone should recognize that 1) China is China. She has her own peculiarity; 2) To either praise or criticize traditional Chinese values and institutions is useless. Chinese must re-examine their own tradition in order to preserve the best of it; 3) To adopt western civilization is necessary; but the adoption should be based on the needs of present-day China, and not accept everything; 4) The reconstruction of civilization on a Chinese base is to help Chinese people to catch up the West and to contribute to the world civilization; and 5) When the Chinese reconstruct themselves to be an integrated nation, then, they can help the world. Therefore, the reconstruction of civilization in China, according to the professors (1935:130–131), must be "not to be conservative, and not be blind in following others. Based on Chinese civilization, we use scientific methods with a critical attitude to re-examine the past, to preserve

the present, and to create the future."

In short, what these ten professors suggested is a selective assimilation; they want to keep the best part of the traditional heritage and to mix it with the best of western civilization. Such a viewpoint is not new at all in China, according to Hu Shih. He said in his reply to the ten professors, "In their manifesto, the professors expressed their dissatisfaction with earlier attempts by Ch'ing scholars to combine Chinese classics and Western technology. This is quite a surprise, because their "Reconstruction of Civilization on A Chinese Base" is merely the newest form of "Chinese moral, Western technology." Although they spoke in a different way, their spirit was the same as Cheng Tsu-tong (張之洞) in the nineteenth century." The fundamental mistake these professors made, according to Hu Shih, is that they did not realize the nature of cultural change. Hu indicated that the common characteristics of cultural change are 1) Civilization per se is conservative. The civilization of a race has a great conservative nature which can correct the deviant patterns within it on the one hand, while resisting the invasion of foreign civilizations on the other; 2) The contact of two different civilizations will eliminate some parts of a civilization which are not useful any more; 3) In the process of such change, there is no standard criteria which can be taken to decide what part we want to keep and what we want to give away; 4) There is a limit on the process of cultural change. It is completely impossible to destroy the fundamental conservatism in a civilization. Regardless of changes in life, Chinese will still be Chinese. Hu Shih (1967:135-137) then urged that "Chinese modern leaders should not worry about the crisis of the Chinese base, but about the conservatism of the traditional Chinese civilization. The crisis is not the non-appearance of their characteristics of Chinese political organization, social institutions, and ideological thoughts such as these ten professors worried about; what we should worry now is that there are just too many bad traditions in Chinese political organization, social institutions, and ideological thoughts. Therefore, we must accept the world civilization of science and technology, and the spirit behind it. We should let this world civilization have free contact with our traditional civilization. The final consequence of such a contact is undoubtedly a Chinese based civilization."

According to Hu Shih, the result of the contact of Chinese and Western civilization will not be the complete dismissal of Chinese traditional civilization but

the emergence of a new Chinese civilization having modern world characteristics including both Chinese and western traits. The difference between Hu Shih and other professors, thus, lay in their method of modernization in China. Since for Hu Shih, reformers should go as far as possible in order to eliminate the inadequacy of traditional civilization; a wholesale westernization is only a beginning; the final stage is a new Chinese civilization having both Chinese and Western characteristics. For the ten professors, the reformers have to be careful not to lose their heads in the process of modernization; everything has to be planned from the beginning. Chinese must re-examine their tradition in order to preserve the best part of it and to accept the best part of Western civilization in terms of China's need.

Another criticism of Hu Shih and his followers came from the leftists which included socialists and communists such as Chen Tu-hsui ( 陳獨秀 ) and Li Ta-chao ( 李大釗 ). Although Hu Shih shared with the leftists the belief that the problem of China can only be solved by a thorough westernization, the ideologies and methods of reform of Hu and the leftists were quite different. Ideologically, Hu Shih emphasized strongly Dewey's experimentalism and Huxley's skepticism, while the leftists evoked Marxism and the dialectic method in the analysis of Chinese social and political problems. Hu Shih and his followers were convinced that the problems of China could not be solved altogether, but must be tackled individually. They insisted that there was no single prescription which could cure every kind of disease. Only through education and the proper approach to practical problems can China be modernized.. Hu Shih and his followers strongly believed that revolution was not necessary; a gradual reform in every aspect of society in terms of a far-reaching plan was what China needed at the time. "In "Our Political Aims," Hu and his followers said (1953:141-143), "We deeply believe that the worse disease of China is that planning is a necessary condition for efficiency; and that even an ordinary plan is better than nothing. . . . We want to have a government of constitution, of publicity, and of planning. . . . In order to reach this aim, we suggest that 1) a peace conference be held between south and north; 2) peace talks must be based on the re-establishment of the Congress; 3) the size of the army be reduced; 4) the number of government officials be reduced; 5) the election system be improved; and 6) a public and well-planned finance be maintained.

Thus, it is clear what Hu Shih and his followers suggested is not the overthrow

of the Chinese government through violence. Rather it is a plan for gradual reform on different levels of the political and social systems in China at the time. Meanwhile, Hu and his followers thought it was too early for China to have a national democracy; China must practice democracy on a small-scale basis first, i.e., on a local or provincial level, before the development of a national democracy. During this initial stage, Chinese politics must not rely on any political party; it would be best for the country to be without any organized party.

Such a political point of view immediately received criticism from both Chen Tu-hsui and his communist comrades. In an article, "My opinion on Contemporary Chinese Political Problems," Chen accused Hu and Hu's supporters of not understanding the true factors of Chinese political conflicts. Chen pointed out that the Chinese political conflict was due to the independence of warlords in each province, and the failure to control these warlords by the central government. Therefore, the proposal for a local democracy would create more problems than it solved in this situation. Chen (Hu 1953:119–128) said, "My solution for the present-day Chinese political problems is to organize a strong political party in order to destroy the warlords, to establish an integrated nation, and to guard against the international imperialism. Only through such a method, can China be a true independent nation."

Similar criticism is also indicated in a manifesto issued by the Chinese communist organization, "The Chinese Communists' Proposal on the Political Situation." The communists labeled Hu's proposal as a compromise between pacifism and capitalism. The communists wanted to have immediate action directed toward the final goal of revolution. The educational process and gradual reform were for them too slow to have any effect.

While Hu Shih and his followers took the student movement in 1925 as a great achievement of the educational and cultural movement, the leftists regarded it as the symbol of the direct political struggle between the government and the people. And while the liberals remained in the academic circle to advocate freedom of thought and expression, the leftists went out on the street to organize workers and students to protect the government's policy in domestic and foreign affairs.

## **2. Hu Shih and Chinese Traditional Elite**

As has just been discussed, the debate between Hu Shih and the other

modernizing elite was focused mainly on the proper ideological foundation and the methods of modernization in China. The argument between the modernizing and traditional elites was, however, concerned with the role of Confucianism in society in the age of crisis. Hu and the other modernizing elite pointed out clearly the inadequacy of Confucian values and institutions in the process of Chinese modernization; and the Confucian six classics were not capable of educating Chinese youth on the one hand or of creating a new leadership in the other.

Although the traditional elite did not give Hu Shih and the other modernizing elite any serious or fatal challenge on the latter's search for Chinese modernization, there were some older intellectuals such as Liang Shu-ming ( 梁漱冥 ), and Ku Hung-ming ( 辜鴻銘 ), who raised the matter of resisting the acceptance of western civilization. Their arguments on maintaining the Chinese tradition were supported later by Liang Chi-chao ( 梁啓超 ), a famous scholar and earlier reformer who had changed his attitude after a visit to Europe in 1919, where he saw the collapse of western scientific civilization during and after the World War I. For Liang Chi-chao, the war in Europe was clear evidence of a basic social intellectual malaise in the West which stemmed from its blind worship of science. He (Chow 1967:328) said,

Those who praised the omnipotence of science had hoped previously that, as soon as science succeeded, the golden age would appear forthwith. Now science is successful indeed; material progress in the West in the last one hundred years has greatly surpassed the achievements of the three thousand years prior to this period. Yet we human beings have not secured happiness; on the contrary, science gives us catastrophes. . . . The Europeans have dreamed a vast dream of omnipotence of science; now they decry its bankruptcy. This is a major turning-point in the world thought.

Therefore, Liang believed that the Chinese would assume great responsibilities in the reconstruction of world civilization. "Oh, our lovable youths!" said Liang (Chow 1967:328), "Attention! March On! Millions of people on the other shore of the ocean are worrying about the bankruptcy of material civilization, sorrowfully and desperately crying for help, waiting for your aid. Our ancestors in Heaven, the Sage, and the older generations are all earnestly hoping you will carry out their task. Their spirit is helping you!" But in order to contribute to world civilization, Liang pointed out that Chinese youth must love and respect their own civilization first.

A stronger view of traditionalism came from Liang Shu-ming, a professor of Chinese philosophy. In his book, *Eastern and Western Civilizations and Their*



*Philosophies*, (1921) and his article, "The Final Awakening of the Chinese People's Self-Salvation Movement," Liang Shu-ming attempted to develop a new formulation of Confucianism.. He tried to show that Chinese civilization was relevant to the modern world. According to him, Western civilization sought satisfaction from the external world and from other people; the Chinese attitude was one of harmonization and satisfaction through adjustment; and the Indian attitude was escapist. The failure of western civilization in World War I indicated it would give way to the Chinese, resulting in a higher world civilization which would mold the Scientific and material successes of its predecessor to mass intellectual, moral, and ethical nature. On the problem of China, he argued that because China was different from Western nations, it would be wrong to import such Western political systems as democracy and communism. Liang (Wu 1954:100) said, "The foundation of a race is its spirit. To give up one's own spirit would result in destroying one's future. The future and the new life are developed on this spiritual basis which can not be imported from outside and be devalued. One should hold its own position to develop its characters."

The third influential traditional defendant was Ku Hung-ming ( 辜鴻銘 ). Ku was an European-educated scholar. He had a M.A. degree from a university in England; he had the experience of living in several European nations; and he also knew many European languages. Compared with Liang Chi-chao and Liang Shu-ming, Ku's ideals were even more conservative and critical. Essentially, Ku's defense of traditional Confucian values emerged from his criticism of Western civilization. His argument rarely touched on Western technology. His central focus was the moral aspect of life. According to Ku, Confucian values were immortal while Western civilization would not last for long; the Western political and legal systems were based on the concepts of right and obligation which were not good enough to keep society at peace. Ku characterized the Chinese people as deep, broad, simple, and possessed of a "Divine Duty of Loyalty." The moral emphasis in Confucianism made Chinese society peaceful for several thousand years.. The essential problem of China's survival today, according to Ku, is not technology but morality. The future of China relies on her moral, not her material development. He then accused the modernizing elite to realize such an essential problem in China while begging for the help of the West in attempting to solve China's own problem.

In summary, the Chinese intellectual's views on modernization in China were

largely defensive in nature. The modernizing elite promoted modernization in an effort to upgrade China's respectability, while the traditional elite resisted modernization with the aim of the preservation of traditional Confucianism.

#### **IV. FOUR MAJOR DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES**

In Chinese usage, the word "modernization" was first referred to as the process of imitation and adoption of the western model of technological development. Later, the extent of modernization was expanded to include the upgradings of the traditional Chinese socio-economic-political system to be compatible with the societal growth in the contemporary era.

Historically, the Chinese modernization process can be divided into four major developmental stages, each with its own distinguished characteristics. They are (I) Involuntary and Defensive Westernization, 1840–1895, (II) Reform and Revolution, 1896–1911, (III) Identity Crisis and Disorganization, 1912–1948, and (IV) Communist vs Capitalist approaches, 1949 to the present.

(I) Involuntary and Defensive Westernization—the first stage in the Chinese modernization process is distinguished by the involuntary Chinese acceptance of Western technological superiority. The period begins with the Opium War in 1840 and ends with the defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895. In general, modernization was seen in this stage as a cause for destruction and discontent. Several international and domestic events at the time have contributed in making the Chinese awareness of Western superiority and the painful acceptance of Western technology.

In international affairs, we saw the frequent defeats of the Chinese at the hands of Western nations and Japan. During this period, China had wars with almost every major power in the West and with Japan. The treaties signed with foreign nations include the following:

- a) 1842 The Treaty of Nanking, signed with English.
- b) 1858 The Treaties of Tientsin, signed with English-France allied forces.
- c) 1860 The Treaties of Peking, signed with English-France allied forces.
- d) 1881 The Treaty of Ili, signed with Russia.
- e) 1895 The Sino-Japanese Treaty.

After each defeat, China had to grant certain privileges of trade and concede part of its territory to the winning nations. Moreover, China sustained a great loss of

sovereignty by permitting foreign war vessels and commercial ships to navigate rivers in the interior, by the clause allowing consular jurisdiction, by allowing foreign missionaries to buy land in the interior, and by permitting a settlement zone for foreigners in major cities (Ho & Tsouo 1968, Li 1967, Eberhard 1968, Fairbank & Teng 1968).

At the same time, troubles in China's extraordinary vast countryside grew in size and became uncontrollable. Suffering from the political corruption of Manchu Court, from foreign interference with their traditional way of life and from natural disasters that frequently occurred during the period, the dissatisfied peasantry joined various underground secret societies in an effort to get protection and started to rebel against the corrupt government. In 1851, the Taiping Rebellion broke out and spread over a large portion of China before it was suppressed in 1864, the Nien Rebellion broke out in 1853 and lasted until 1868, and the Moslem Rebellion broke out in Yunnan and ran its course from 1855 to 1873. Although these long-lasting rebellions did not establish any rival governments to contest the court at Peking, the need for change became apparent (Li 1967, Chang 1955, Ch'i 1957, Feng 1957).

China was thus forced to recognize the Western superiority. A group of Chinese ruling elite and intellectuals felt that the only way to save China was to introduce and accept Western technology, especially military technology. Under the leaderships of Tseng Kuo-feng and Li Hung-Chang, a number of Westernization programs were installed. The list included the following important accomplishments:

- 1863 A foreign language school was established.
- 1865 The Kiangnan Arsenal was established.
- 1867 The Nanking Arsenal was established.
- 1870 A machine factory was enlarged at Tientsin.
- 1871 A foreign-style fort was planned for Taku.
- 1872 Students were sent to study in America. Officers were sent to study military science in Germany. The China Merchants Steam Navigation Company was organized.
- 1875 A plan was made to build steel warships.
- 1876 A request was made to open a bureau to study foreign sciences in all provinces; also to add a new subject on foreign affairs in the civil

service examinations. Students and apprentices from the Foochow shipyard were sent to study in England and France. Seven army officers were sent to Germany for advanced training.

- 1878 The Kaiping coal mine was opened.
- 1879 A telegraph line was opened from Taku to Tientsin.
- 1880 A plan for a modern navy was launched, beginning with a program to purchase warships from foreign countries. A naval school was established at Tientsin.
- 1881 A railroad (about six miles) was completed.
- 1882 A dockyard was built at Port Arthur. A cotton mill was planned at Shanghai.
- 1885 A military preparatory school was established. The navy yamen was inaugurated.
- 1887 Mints were established at Tientsin and Paoting.
- 1888 The Peiyang Army was organized.
- 1891 The Lung-chang paper mill was founded at Shanghai.

The above list of Westernization programs is heavily focused on improving Chinese military strength by buying Western warships, by setting a modern communication network, by studying Western military strategy, by developing natural resources, and by learning foreign languages (Teng & Fairbank 1963, Li 1967).

At the same time, the traditional sector of Chinese intellectuals was undergoing a stage of self examination and evaluation in a fanatical effort to slow down Western invasion of Chinese culture. The traditionalists claimed Western civilization as being materialistic and lacking spiritual virtue, and thus inferior to Confucian teachings.

Traditionalist Feng Kuei-fen Said,

The intelligence and wisdom of the Chinese are necessarily superior to those of the various barbarians, only formerly we have not made use of them.

.....  
If we let Chinese ethics and famous (Confucian) teachings serve as an original foundation and let them be supplemented by the methods used by the various nations for the attainment of prosperity and strength, would it not be the best of all procedures? (Teng & Fairbank 1963:52-54)

By the end of the period, however, the traditionalists gradually lost their appeal for the preservation and restoration of Confucian order as China lost war after war to every foreign nation they had fought against and faced an immediate total destruction.

Mary C. Wright (1967) refers this effort of the traditionalists as "the last stand of Chinese Conservatism," by which she suggested thereafter there was no effective formal defense of the Confucian ethic.

As one can see easily the only purpose of the Westernization programs at this stage was to save China from foreign domination. Military reform programs became the prime target for Westernization, while social and political institutions still remained largely untouched. The ultimate goal of the government sponsored Westernization programs was to achieve military equality with the West while at the same time maintaining the traditional social and political systems as intact as possible. Gasster (1972:15) points out, "all that they (the Chinese) did . . . they considered means of defense. Each step had to be justified on the grounds that it would help to keep the foreigners out; at the same time, each experiment had to be guaranteed not to impinge upon the essentials of Chinese life."

In short, what the Chinese leaders really intended to achieve during the period in the first stage was only a limited partial change on the improvement of military technology, not an extended change on the part of social structure.

(II) Reform and Revolution—The second stage in the Chinese modernization process begins with the campaign by K'ang Yu-wei for an extensive reform program on the socio-political institution of China immediately following the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and ends with the success of the overthrow of the Ch'ing dynasty under the revolutionary leadership of Dr. Sun Yat-sen in 1911.

The dream of building a strong new China through the reapproachment of a Confucian revival and a military Westernization was completely destroyed in 1895 after China lost the war to Japan. Most Chinese had never regarded Japan as a strong or superior nation in any respect. The defeat thus was an unbelievable shock to everyone. The feeling of shame and inferiority quickly spread through the whole country, from the scholar-officials at the top of the hierarchy to the common people at the bottom, and from the urban centers to every corner of the countryside throughout China. The inefficiency and inadequacy of a partial reform such as a military Westernization program launched during the first stage now became apparent and manifest. People now demanded a radical change and a far-reaching plan covering every aspect of the social, economic, educational, and political systems. Two groups of activists emerged during the period. The

first was a group of lower and middle ranking officials under the leadership of K'ang Yu-wei which advocated extensive social and political reforms, while the second group was led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen who saw total revolution is the only way to save China.

K'ang Yu-wei was a reformed Confucian scholar who believed China's problems were rooted deeply in the Confucian Classics which had been misinterpreted and malpracticed until now. K'ang argues the need of reform was not anti-Confucianism but an integrated part of the true Confucian teaching. He says.

For China, on the great earth, has had a ceaseless succession of sacred emperors and the country has been famous. Her principles, institutions, and culture are the most elevated in the world. . . . . Among all countries on earth none is her equal. Only because her customs are unenlightened and because of a dearth of men of ability, she is passively taking aggression and insult. . . . . The water in the ocean is bubbling and boiling. In our ears and in our dreams the noise of artillery is roaring. All you gentlemen, how can you avoid the grief of being ruined and (becoming) subject to the rule of a different race? Are we trying to avoid slander? O you close-door scholars, are some of you coming to the point of speaking about respecting the emperor and respecting the barbarians? (Teng & Fairbank 1963:153)

K'ang Yu-wei won the support of a small group of Chinese scholar-officials and was introduced to Emperor Kuang-hsu. On June 16, 1898, K'ang was appointed Probationary Secretary in the Tsungli Yamen to carry out his reform programs.

K'ang's proposed reform included the following:

- a. Changing the topics for themes in the district, provincial, and metropolitan examinations from the selections from the Four Books to topics on current problems.
- b. Establishing a bureau of agriculture, industry, and commerce in Peking.
- c. Abolishing the sinecure appointments in the imperial supervisorate of instruction, office of transmission, court of imperial entertainments, court of state ceremonial, and grand court of revision.
- d. Including the test of knowledge and techniques of Western artilleries in the recruitment and training of military personnels.
- e. Requiring students in all levels of schools in China to engage in both Chinese and Western studies.

Although K'ang was able to attract the support of the Emperor, the reform lasted only one hundred days as the Emperor was put under house arrest by the Empress, Tz'u-hsi who was the real power holder of the time, after an unsuccessful coup d'état in against the Empress. K'ang was able to escape out of Peking, but

five of his top supporters were captured and later executed by the Empress. Many of K'ang's followers went underground and joined the revolutionary movement led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in working for the overthrow of the Ch'ing dynasty and for building a new China.

Unlike K'ang Yu-wei, Dr. Sun Yat-sen was not a Confucian scholar. He was educated in Hong Kong and Hawaii and trained in Western medicine with a very limited knowledge on the Chinese Classics. In fact, in his early years Dr. Sun was not much of a revolutionary theorist but merely an activist. His program for China's reconstruction developed more slowly than his persistent plotting to overthrow the Manchus. Nevertheless, the failure of K'ang's reform movement gave Dr. Sun and his revolutionary party a great opportunity to expand its organization and to challenge the Manchu regime militantly. Four major goals of Dr. Sun's revolution at that time were (1) Drive out the Tartars, (2) Restore China, (3) Establish the Republic, and (4) Equalize land ownership.

Dr. Sun's revolutionary ideas gradually ripened among the educated class within and without China after K'ang's failure. He was particularly popular among the advanced Chinese students abroad, and his headquarters was located in Japan. From 1906 to 1911, eleven serious attempts were made to overthrow the Manchu regime by military means:

- 1906 The attempt at P'ing-hsing and Liu-yang, Hunan.
- 1907 The attempt at Chaochow and Huang-kang, Kwangtung.
- 1907 The attempt at Huichow in Kwangtung.
- 1907 The attempt at Anking, Anhwei.
- 1907 The attempt at Ch'in-chou and Lien-chou in Kwangtung.
- 1907 The attempt at Chen-nan-kuan, Kwangsi.
- 1908 The attempt at Anking, Anhwei.
- 1910 The attempt at Canton.
- 1910 The attempt to assassinate the regent, Tsai-feng.
- 1911 The attempt at Huang-hua-kang, Kwangtung.

Although these attempts all resulted in failure, they did plant seeds for later uprisings and the further spread of revolutionary ideas from the Southeastern Coast of China to the interior provinces. A large scale uprising at Wuchang on October 10, 1911 finally turned into a successful revolution for Dr. Sun's party which overthrew

the Manchu regime. A republican government was established on January 1, 1912.

(III) Identity Crisis and Disorganization—The third major developmental stage in China's modernization effort covers the entire period of the so-called republican China, from 1912 to 1949, before the takeover of the mainland by the Chinese Communists. The major characteristic of this period was the Chinese search for identity. The intellectuals were considering various ideologies for modernization, the political elites were advocating diverse Western political systems, and the new merchants on the East coast and in the urban centers were advertising for a free capitalist economy in China (I-tsu 1972, Levenson 1970, Hou 1965, Tsai 1974). Conflicting programs were proposed and put into practice, and the results were chaos and disorganization (Tsai 1975).

This period also marked the beginning of the total withdrawal of the traditionalists. No one wanted to return to the old traditional ways without reservation. The question people asked now was what kind of modern system China should adopt—republic or dictatorship, capitalism or socialism, democracy or something else. Various groups fought for their own beliefs and systems, and each had its own version of what China's future ought to be (Tsai 1975, Pye 1975, Levenson 1970, Ch'ow 1967, Ch'ien 1970).

Thus, the May-fourth Movement of 1919, the civil war between the Nationalist and the Chinese Communists throughout the most part of this period, and even the fighting among the warlords during the 1920s, can all be seen as incidents of how various groups fight for their own version of China's future. The conflicts we saw in this period were not really a case of the modernizing elite fighting against the traditionalists, but rather a case of struggles for power between competing modernizing groups. It was, in short, a period of confusion, of searching for identity, and of power consolidation.

Yet, during this period, we also saw a brief period of constructive development moving toward making a better China. In a ten-year period between 1927 and 1937, China enjoyed a temporary unity under one single leadership, Chiang Kai-shek. The improvements included the following:

a) In transportation—The national railway system was extended from 8,000 kilometers to 13,000 kilometers, the highway from 1,000 kilometers to 115,700 kilometers, and three national and regional airlines began to offer commercial air



service.

b) In finance and economy—The national banking system was reorganized into an integrated network, inflation was partially under control, and the volumes of export and import trade increased significantly.

c) In agriculture and mining—A Farmer's Bank was established to provide loans for needed rural developments, a natural resource commission was put up to be in charge of industrial development and mining enterprises, and a national industrial planning was first proposed.

d) In education—The number of universities and colleges increased from 70 to 108, middle schools from 954 to 1956, teacher's schools from 236 to 816, and vocational schools from 149 to 494.

Unfortunately, the effort was interrupted by the outbreak of Sino-Japanese War and the World War II. The subsequent civil war between the Chinese Communists and the Nationalists after the War made the continuation of modernization programs impossible (Hsueh 1971, Li 1967).

(IV) Communist vs Capitalist Approaches—The Chinese Communists victory on the mainland and the Nationalists withdrawal to the island of Taiwan in 1949 marked the beginning of a new era in China's long struggle for modernization. It signified not only the formal separation of two political regimes, but also the differential adoption of modernization path: the Communist approach on mainland China and the Capitalist approach in Taiwan.

During this period, most of the conflicting elements which we saw in earlier stages have largely been eliminated and each political government has established a firm policy on modernization programming. The results are different.

In Taiwan, the Nationalist government under the leaderships of Chiang Kai-shek and his son, Chiang Ching-kuo, has taken a very active and effective role in planning the island's economic growth and has successfully built a progressive growing capitalist economy in Taiwan over the past 30 years. Between 1953 and 1977, the government has carried out six successive four-year economic plans through which Taiwan's economy has switched from agriculture to an export-oriented industry. The result is a rapidly growing economy characterized by export expansion, higher national income, the increase of GNP, and more employment opportunity. Statistically speaking, the foreign trade volume reached to \$23,714 million and 89.1% of exports

came from industrial products in 1978; average income per capita reached \$1,722 in 1979; and an annual economic growth rate of 10.5% in 1978 (China Yearbook 1979, Statistical Yearbook 1979, The World Bank 1980).

Economist Herman Kahn (1979) has singled out Taiwan, along with South Korea and Japan, as "heroes" of development for they have lifted themselves from object poverty to middle income levels in less than a decade. Kahn (1979: 329-330) predicts that Taiwan is now within a decade or so of becoming fully a mature industrial economy and that it should soon become a fullfledged member of the affluent groups of nations. In a report prepared for the World Bank, Fei, Randis & Kuo (1979) also have a similar high praise for Taiwan; they note that Raiwan's success is rare among less developed countries due to its extremely rapid rates of economic growth, better distribution of income, and lower rate of unemployment.

Economic success is not the only merit the Nationalist government in Taiwan has been able to achieve, other social conditions and people's livelihood have also been improved as well. During this period, the average life expectancy has increased from 53.1 years for male and 57.3 years for female in 1951 to 69.2 years for male and 74.3 years for female in 1978; the total number of schools increased from 1,504 in 1950 to 4,950 in 1979; the student population ratio increased from 139.6 per 1,000 population in 1950 to 260.5 per 1,000 in 1979; and the percentage of people living in urban cities with a population of 100,000 or more increased from 27.5% in 1957 to 45.4% in 1978. The 1979 government report also shows that in every 10,000 population there are 1,468 telephones, 1,858 T.V. sets, and 319 automobiles.

Rapidly growing economy, high living standard, equal distribution of income, and a stable political government have made Taiwan a "model" for development in the Third World Countries.

The Chinese Communists seized power from the Nationalists in 1949. The strategy for economic development was built upon much trial and error practice and from Chairman Mao's experience in his guerrilla days. Over the thirty year period in Communist China, the economic policies that served as vehicles for the strategy occurred can be summarized in seven distinct "waves":

- 1) Economic reconstruction and land reforms . . . . . 1949-1952
- 2) Industrialization, nationalization, and collectivization:

the first five year plan . . . . .	1953-1957
3) The Great Leap Forward . . . . .	1958-1959
4) Readjustment and recovery; priority given to agriculture . . . . .	1960-1965
5) The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution . . . . .	1966-1969
6) Balanced growth . . . . .	1970-1977
7) Four Modernizations . . . . .	1978-

We call the economic policies and growth in Communist China as a series of "waves" because of their inconsistency and great fluctuation within and between "waves."

There have been considerable disagreements among scholars on the economic situation in Communist China. Some feel that the Communists' achievement is indeed impressive. Al Imfelt (1976:148) says, "After examing so many elements of China's model of development in isolation and in various combinations, one can only reassemble the whole and ask, is it working? The answer, obviously, is yes." Alexander Eckstein also has similar observation, he (1977:310) says, "China's economic performance must be considered as impressive. . . . There is very little doubt that the Chinese economy has been growing quite rapidly."

However, such a positive evaluation of the Communists' economy has been challenged by quite a few scholars who insist the Communists is basically a backward country economically. They argued the so-called economic achievement of the Communists is too small and limited to allow any real appreciation. This is particularly true when one compares the economic achievement of Taiwan with that of the Communists. Furthermore, the social and cultural developments of Taiwan can not be matched by the Communists.

Thus, this fourth stage of Chinese modernization is characterized by two competing socio-economic approaches between the Communists and the Republic of China in Taiwan. The result has been different: Taiwan is about 30 years ahead of the Communists in socio-economic development.

## V. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINESE MODERNIZATION EXPERIENCE

The Chinese struggle for modernization has been a very long and painful experience. We have seen historically that China responded to the call for modernization in the late nineteenth century first with a very involuntary and defensive action, followed by various attempts at reform and revolution and by a

period of disorganization, chaos, and confusion. They have finally achieved some success in bringing the society to a state of relative stability and strength which we see today. What is more important to every Chinese is that China has once again regained its self-respect and the respect of the rest of the world.

The modernization process of China during the past 140 years has distinguished itself in several important ways that differ from both its own traditional reform movements in the earlier dynasty and modernization of Japan and other developing societies.

(1). It is a process of Westernization—As has been mentioned, modernization is the process of change toward those types of social, economic, and political systems that have developed in Western Europe and North America from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth and have then spread to other European countries to the South American, Asian, and African countries. In the non-Western societies, therefore, it is a process of what Kautsky (1972) has called “coming from without.”

It is precisely this process of change toward those Western types of social, economic, and political systems that China has been deeply embraced in the past 140 years. The new systems are essentially foreign to China and thus lack support from the traditional sector of the society.

Although scholars (e.g., Levy 1970, Morse 1969, Black 1966, More 1963) have argued that modernization and Westernization are not the same process, to people of the developing societies the two terms are synonyms. This is particularly true in the case of China. The initial call for modernization in nineteenth century China was in response to Western dominance. Chinese had always seen themselves as the center of the world before the arrival of Western civilization. Pye (1972:101) says, “the Chinese understandably developed a deep sense of cultural superiority. Others might be rude and militarily vicious, but the Chinese had no reason to doubt, in spite of some unfortunate experiences, that they were culturally the center of the world, the Middle Kingdom, as they called themselves. Although during the last thousand years of the imperial order all or part of China was ruled by alien conquerors, the Chinese persisted in feeling supremely self-assured.”

The Chinese strongly believed that their history has shown Chinese civilization is so superior that it can absorb any foreign element in the process of “sinification,” becoming Chinese. Thus, even when China failed to contain Westerners and lost

almost every war at the hands of the Westerners in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Chinese still were reluctant to accept the fact that the West was superior. The self-awareness movement, as has been mentioned, was aimed at preserving and restoring Chinese culture while supplementing it with Western "materials." But when China lost its war to Japan, a country that had been China's inferior younger brother for several centuries, it was the most demoralizing blow to the Chinese superiority complex. The only reason the Japanese defeated China, the Chinese leaders believed, was Japan's total Westernization. After this defeat, the question was no longer whether China should adopt Western culture or not, but how to Westernize.

The necessity for an extensive Westernization involving military as well as socio-cultural change gradually became apparent. From 1895 to 1910 they founded schools in which Western languages, mathematics, and science were taught; they studied international law, established a Western-style foreign office, and began to engage in Western-style diplomacy; they built arsenals and shipyards in which they could manufacture modern weapons and introduced new concepts into military training; they sent students abroad; and they began to think about adopting western methods of transportation and communication. After the 1911 republican revolution, they even established an American-style republican-democratic government. In the period under the Nationalist rule, from 1912 to 1949, western-trained intellectuals consisted of the majority of Chinese new leadership (Tsai 1974). In the Chinese Communists regime, a total withdrawal from the traditional way of life has been launched by the Communist leaderships. "To catch up the West" has been the ultimate goal in Chinese effort toward modernization.

(2). It is an extensive and far-reaching process of change—The second major characteristic of the Chinese modernization process lies in its extensive scope of involvement and far-reaching consequence of impact. Although stability and integration had been two of the most distinguished traits of traditional Chinese social structure, China did experience ups and downs from time to time throughout its long history. Not only were there political revolutions overthrowing the old dynasty in favor of establishing a new dynasty, but also several large-scale reform movements were organized in various dynasties aiming at changing parts of the existing social-economic institutions. But not any of these movements and revolutions in the earlier history of China can match the extensiveness in scope and result to that of

the modernization attempt during the past 140 years.

Political revolutions, social reforms, and other types of change in traditional China were aimed at a partial change within the existing social structure, and their main purposes were not for a total destruction of the system involved, but for what Eisenstadt has called "accommodable change."

Eisenstadt argued that processes of accommodable change were connected with the social condition that made possible the continuous fundamental harmony in traditional Chinese society. Conflicts among different political groups were often regulated through the existing norms and activities of the major political and regulative institutions of the society.

Modernization, on the contrary, is for a total change. It affected every aspect of Chinese social structure; traditional political system, Confucian ideology, moral value, religious belief, educational system, and economic activity were all under attacks from the new systems of ideals coming along with modernization. Whether one likes it or not, China will change in the direction of greater modernization or more precisely Westernization.

Chinese intellectuals and political leaders were convinced that a complete overhaul of the existing social structure was necessary and that the inevitable solution was Westernization.

They indicated that the age of resistance to Western civilization had been passed; the Chinese now should go straight ahead to a wholesale Westernization and a whole-hearted modernization.

As the call for modernization became the supreme goal of the Chinese leadership, family institution was gradually changed. The political system was shifted from traditional monarchy to, first, republican-democracy, then to Communism. Confucianism and folk belief are now being labelled as backward and superstitious and foreign education became the highest symbol of achievement. Various competing systems of Western culture dominated the new China in the period between 1912-1949. In short, almost every aspect of Chinese life has been under the influence of Western culture as a result of the attempt to modernize during the past 140 years.

(3). It is a revolution from the top—Although students of modernization in Western societies have generally stressed the necessity of the development of a modern attitude in the general population as a prerequisite for the modernization of a society,

many researchers on the modernization in non-Western societies have found that perhaps the most important factor in these societies is the political leadership, and that the political style of the leaders in a society not only affects the type and function of political structure but also the tempo and destination of the society's economic and social transformation. Morse (1968:375) said:

If modernization is a super problem - as it is - it can be resolved only if the group in power recognizes the problem and correctly apprehends its nature, if it then creates the kinds of organizational structures required to mobilize the requisite inputs and compliances, and if it gives suitable guidance to the search for solution to the various subproblems of economic development, reinstitutionalization, and the like.

The basic assumption here is that modernization will be easier if the power structure is controlled by a radical centralized modernizing elite, dedicated to changing basic institutions in order to create what, in their view and that of their supporters, will be a more just and progressive social order.

Chinese modernization experience offers a good example of the modernization initiated and directed by the political leadership. As we mentioned earlier, China was forced into Westernization as the result of Western dominance in the nineteenth century; the initiation of all the programs was from the top layer of the society, the leadership. The great majority of the general population was not seriously affected by the Western threat at that time. As a matter of fact, not until the Communist revolution did the change finally reach villages and countryside.

China did have a group of political and social leaders dedicated to modernization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But what made China fail in achieving a quick strike on modernization was the lack of a strong center of political leadership in planning and coordinating the various modernization programs that were put into practice in a hurry. Dr. Hu Shih (1953:455) pointed out "the difference between Japanese success and Chinese failure is mainly that Japan did not lose its social center; their works were continuous and accumulative under that center, and every effort was tied to its central political organization, i.e., the Emperor. In China, we did not have any center; everything we did often disappeared after changes in political administration. Policy, organization and leadership were all changed. Everything had to start again from the very beginning. Nothing could be designed for a long term perspective."

Modern Chinese history showed frequent changes in national administration because it was entirely built upon the charisma of the leaderships that were unstable, short-lived, and troublesome in character. For example, during the seventeen years of the Pei-yang regime (1912–1928), there were seven different presidents and two vice presidents of the republic, there were also thirty-three terms of national cabinet in which twenty-nine different people served as premiers and/or acting premiers. From 1928 to 1949, there were fifteen different presidents and vice presidents of the Executive Yuan (the cabinet) in the nationalist government (Tsai 1974). The lack of continuity shown in national politics thus made a long term modernization programming impossible.

The stability of political leadership continues to play an important role in the fourth stage after 1949. Although both Communist China and Taiwan have achieved an impressive success in economic growth and in maintaining social integration, Taiwan has obviously enjoyed a greater success than that of Communist China. Even leaders of Communist China today admit they are behind Taiwan at least thirty years in development and that they should learn the Taiwanese experience. One of the main reasons for this gap in developmental scale between Taiwan and Communist China is that Taiwan has been able to carry out six successive economic plans step by step successfully under a cohesive modernizing leadership, while in Communist China economic plannings suffered ups and downs all the time as the power struggle continued within the national leadership.

The political leader's vision on China's future, the ability of political leadership to commit itself for a long-ranged developmental change, the strategy and planning the political leaders employed in developing China, and the cohesiveness of power structure have proved to be vital in China's efforts toward modernization.

## **VI. TOWARD A SYNTHETICAL THEORY**

### **1. Two General Modernization Theories**

So far, we have examined in great detail the process of China's modernization and the existing interpretations of that process. Now, we must turn our attention to the construction of a higher level abstraction of a synthetical theory that could provide a better explanation of Chinese modernization and that could be empirically tested with a certain degree of historical truth.



In developing such a theory, we must keep in mind Chinese experience of modernization is not occurred and operated in a vacuum, i.e., in an isolated environment with no external contacts. Rather, the whole process has been part of a world experience. China started its modernization as a response to external pressure and it has continually been affected by external factors throughout its course of development. Theories of modernization and national development in other parts of the world thus could be used for the construction of a theory for China.

In general, modernization and national development theories can be categorized into two competing schools of thought: Convergence theory vs dependency theory. Convergence theory in essence suggested that internal factors such as value, culture, and social structure of a given society will determine the course of modernization and that all societies will tend to move toward a western type of new social structure.

The chief feature of the dependency theory is its insistence that it is not internal characteristics of particular countries so much as the structure of the international system—particularly in its economic aspects—that is the key variables to be studied in order to understand the form that development has taken in non-western industrializing countries. The theory argues the sovereign states of the developing countries have long been dependent for an evolving mixture of technology, financing, markets, and basic impacts on the international economic system dominated by the capitalist power. These less developed countries may be called "hooked" for they cannot exist without their dependence (Smith 1979:248–249). Wallerstein (1974:390) declares that "in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there has been only one world system in existence, the capital world economy."

The great merit of the dependency theory is that it makes us aware how intense and complex the interactions between the developed and underdeveloped countries were. But as Smith (1979:257) has put it so adequately the theory "is biased and ideological, distorting evidence." Smith feels the theory deprive local histories of their integrity and specificity, making local actors little more than the pawns of outside forces. He (1979:258) says, "The error of this approach is. . . . that it refuses to grant the part any autonomy, any specificity, any particularity independent of its memberships on the whole. Such writing is tyrannical."

In comparison between the convergence theory and dependency theory, one can find the strength of the convergence theory lies in its emphasis on those internal

variables such as institutional arrangements, cultural values, and demographic characteristics that have contributed in the modernization of a society. In contrast, the dependency theory places a great weight on the external variables and the interconnections between the developed and underdeveloped countries.

## **2. A synthetical View**

There are a few empirical questions that have to be examined if one is to understand fully the problems and process of Chinese modernization. Those questions can be grouped under these three headings: (1) The problems of impetus, (2) the responses to the impetus, and (3) the structural change in society.

(1) The problems of impetus: In any study of the process of modernization, the first empirical question must be asked is "Why change occurred?" In the case of China, the questions related to the causes of change in China may include:

- a. If the traditional social structure had remained almost unchanged for several thousand years, why did rapid change occur during the past 140 years?
- b. Is there any reason or factor behind such a change? What kind of impetus to change emerged during this period?
- c. Is the traditional Chinese social structure functionally incompatible with the modern development, as some theories seemd to suggest?
- d. Is there any significant change in China in the value system or individual attitude toward social stability and integration in this period?
- f. Is the impetus to change the result of internal or external pressure?
- h. What was the role of the West during this period of change?

(2) The responses to the impetus: once there is an impetus to change, the question of how to respond becomes very important. Some societies simply ignore the potential for change, others respond slowly and conservatively, while still others respond with a very vigorous program. In the case of China's modernization process, the following three empirical questions are most important:

- a. What was China's initial response to change for modernization?
- b. What was the attitude of the elite in the society toward the threat for change?
- c. When change became inevitable, how did China deal with the emerging problems?

(3) The structural change in society: Here, we must look into the problem of

structural conductiveness and inconduciveness toward change. More specifically, we must look into every major social institution—economic, political, religious, educational, and communication, etc.—to see what part they played either for or against change, their positions in the whole social system, and their interactions with other social structures. Finally, we must also look into the conflicts between the traditional and the new social systems and determine what impact they had on the advance of the process of modernization. From these perspectives, the following empirical questions must therefore be asked in the study of China's modernization:

- a. How many key traditional social systems have been abolished in favor of modern western models?
- b. How did these new western models work in transitional China?
- c. What are the consequences of such changes on the integration and stability of the society?

The above questions on Chinese modernization cannot be answered by either convergence theory or dependency theory alone. A synthesis is thus needed. As mentioned earlier, convergence theory is strong in examining internal changes in the course of Chinese modernization development. Taking from such a theoretical perspective, we will find:

(1) In the traditional Chinese value system, there was a lack of impetus for progressive change. The emphasis on harmony and integration in the main streams of the traditional Chinese ideology has created a highly stable and tradition-oriented society in China before the turn of the present century.

(2) The traditional social and political structures built upon such a tradition-oriented value system was able to keep the society stable for several thousand years without-serious challenge or disorganization because traditional China was, to a certain degree, geographically isolated from other great civilizations and culturally superior than its own neighboring societies.

(3) Modernization in China is basically a process of westernization ever since it started in the mid-nineteenth century. Many of the major social institutions have gradually been changed in favor of a western mode of social structure. In education, political, economical, and ideological spheres, we have noticed the shift from tradition to western modernity.

Dependency theory, as has been discussed, seems to be best in explaining the

external factors that have undercut Chinese modernization effort. Taking from such a theoretical perspective, we have to pay attention to the facts that:

(1) Contacts with the West in the nineteenth century seemed to explore the shortcomings of the Chinese social system, and thus, resulted in a stage of disorganization and possible collapse, because the West obviously had a superior technology than China at the time. Increasing contact between the West and China made the revision and reform of the tradition-oriented Chinese social system inevitable and even necessary.

(2) China's location in the world political economy dominated by the Western capitalist nations must be considered of prime importance in China's failure to develop industrial capitalism during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. China was quite strongly incorporated as economic and political satellites of the Western capitalist powers and thus lacked the autonomy to develop needed industry while at the same time thwarted its ability to industrialize.

(3) The lack of a strong centralized political organization in modern China in coping with problems of change has created an uncertain and ambiguous situation in which a smooth transformation from tradition to modernity became impossible. There was no well-defined goal by which the members of the society could sincerely follow. Everybody fought only for his own particular interest, nothing else. As a result, no continuity could be possibly achieved in China's modernization programming during the period.

A synthetical view of the Chinese modernization therefore must take into account the following variables:

(I) Internal Factors:

1. Demographic factors (e.g., population size and composition).
2. Geographical location (e.g., its relations with the neighboring states).
3. Domestic politics (e.g., the elite integration, the attitudes toward modernization of the elite).
4. Value system (e.g., Confucianism, stability and integration-oriented ideology, religious beliefs).

(II) External Factors:

5. International political-economic order (e.g., China's position in the international world order).

6. Resources allocation and distribution (e.g., China vs the developed countries).

7. Foreign capital investment (e.g., foreign loans).

An analysis of any of the above variables will not only provide us an analytical frame of reference in understanding the past process of China's modernization, it will also help us in making a prediction of the future course and final goal of China's modernization effort. The road toward modernization has been long and painful in the experience of Chinese people, it is about time we give this experience a thorough and systematic investigation.

### Footnotes

1. Portion of this section was published in an article entitled "Toward a synthetic theory of Chinese modernization," in *Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol23, Taipei: National Taiwan University, 1973.

### References

Apter, David E.

1965 *The politics of Modernization*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

1968 *Some Conceptual Approaches to the Study of Modernization*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Ballah, Robert H.

1965 *Religion and Progress in Modern Asia*. N.Y.: Free Press.

1970 *Takugawa Religion*. Boston: Beacon Press.

1970 *Beyond Belief*. N.Y.: Harper & Row.

Bendix, R.

1962 *Max Weber*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

Bennis, Warren G. et al. (eds.)

1976 *The planning of Change*. N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Binder, Leonard

1966 *Ideology and Political Development*. N.Y.: Weiner.

Black, C.E.

1966 *The Dynamics of Modernization*. N.Y.: Harper & Row.

Chien, Tuan-sheng

1970 *The Government and Politics of China*. 1912-1928, Stanford: Stanford University

- Press.
- China Year Book Publisher  
1979 *China Yearbook*. Taipei.
- Chow, Tse-tsung  
1967 *The May Fourth Movement*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Eberhard, Wolfram  
1966 *A History of China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Eckstein, Alexander  
1977 *China's Economic Revolution*. N.Y.: Cambridge University Press.
- Eisenstadt, S.N.  
1963 *The Political Systems of Empires*. N.Y.: Free Press.  
1966 *Modernization: Protest and Change*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall
- Fairbank, John K. & Ssu-yu Teng (eds.)  
1963 *China's Response to the West*. N.Y.: Atheneum.
- Fairbank, John, et al.  
1973 *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Fei, John C.H. et al.  
1979 *Growth with Equity, The Taiwan Case*, N.Y.: Oxford University Press.
- Franke, Wolfgang  
1970 *A Century of Chinese Revolution*. N.Y.: Harper Torchbook.
- Freedman, Maurice  
1966 *Chinese Lineage and Society*. London: Athlone Press.
- Gasster, Michael  
1972 *China's Struggle to Modernize*. N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Ho, Ping-ti & Tang Tsou (eds.)  
1968 *China in Crisis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hou, Chi-ming  
1965 *Foreign Investment and Economic Development in China, 1840-1937*.  
Cambridge, mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Howe, C.  
1970 *Employment and the Economic Growth in Urban China, 1945-1957*.  
N.Y.: Cambridge University Press.
- Hsu, Francis L.K.  
1967 *Under the Ancestors' Shadow*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.
- Hu, Shih  
1928 "The Civilization of the East and the West," in C.A. Beard ed., *Whither Mankind*  
N.Y.: Longmans, Green & Co. pp. 25-41.  
1932 "Conflict of Culture," in B. Lasker & W.L. Holland eds., *Problems of the Pacific*  
1931. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 471-477.  
1953 *Hu Shih Wen Chen*. Taipei: Far East.  
1967 *Hu Shih Yu Chung Hsi Wen Hwa*. Taipei: Shiu-liu.
- I-tsu

- 1972 *Ching-mo min-chu' Chung-kuo cheng-tang fa-chen shih*. H.K.: Chung-san.
- Imfeld, Al  
1976 *China As A Model of Development*. Trans. by M. J. O'Connell.  
New York: Maryknoll.
- Kahn, Herman  
1979 *World Economic Development*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Kautsky, John H.  
1972 *The Political Consequences of Modernization*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Lenski, Gerhard  
1974 *Human Societies*. New York: MacGraw-Hill.
- Levenson, Joseph R.  
1970 *Lian Chi-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China*. Berkeley; University of California Press.
- Levy, Marion J., Jr.  
1955 "Contrasting Factors in the Modernization of Japan and China," in S. Kuznets et al. (eds). *Economic Growth: Brazil, India, Japan*. Durham: Duke University Press.  
1968 *The Family Revolution in Modern China*. New York: Atheneum.  
1970 *Modernization and the Structure of Societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Li, Chien-nung  
1967 *The Political History of China. 1840-1928*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Moore, B.  
1963 *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Morse, C. (ed.)  
1968 *Modernization by Design*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Parish, William and Martin K. Whyte  
1978 *Village and Family in Contemporary China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Parsons, Talcott  
1977 *The Evolution of Societies*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Pye, Lucian W.  
1972 *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.  
1975 *China: An Introduction*. Boston: Little Brown.
- Sa, Meng-Wu et al.  
1935 "Reconstruction of Civilization on a Chinese Base." (No publisher listed).
- Skinner, W. G.  
1957 *Chinese Society in Thailand*. Ithaco: Cornell University Press.
- Smelser, Neil J.  
1968 *Essay in Sociological Explanation*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Smith, Tony  
1979 "The Underdevelopment of Development Literature: The Case of Dependency Theory." *World Politics* (Spring), pp. 247-288.
- Statistical Division of the Executive Yuan  
1979 *Statistical Yearbook of Republic of China*. Taipei, Taiwan: The Executive Yuan.

Tsai, Wen-hui

1974 *Patterns of Political Elite Mobility in Modern China.*

Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. University of California at Berkeley.

1975 *Essays on the study of Chinese Modernization.*

Taipei: Oriental Cultural Service.