

THE FIRST PHILOSOPHIC CONTACTS  
BETWEEN EUROPE AND CHINA<sup>1</sup>

Until now the history of the first contacts between China and Europe in modern times has been studied principally from a political point of view or from an economic and commercial one, as well as from its religious aspects. The cultural aspects and more particularly the philosophical consequences of these contacts have hardly been touched upon except by Chinese scholars with little knowledge of European sources, or inversely by European historians who have not made sufficient use of Chinese sources. For about fifteen years I have devoted two or three of my courses at the Collège de France to studying the Chinese thinkers of the Ch'ing period,<sup>2</sup> and this has led me to touch upon certain questions which the introduction of European ideas in China by Jesuit mis-

Translated by Martin Faigel.

<sup>1</sup> Lecture given at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Tokyo on February 3, 1966, and at that of the University of Kyoto on February 22, 1966.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Annuaire du Collège de France*, 1950 and 1951.

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sionaries at this time poses. Occupied with other research in recent years, I have not followed at close hand the many studies which have been devoted to these questions by Chinese and Japanese scholars, notably by Professors Fang Ho of Taipei, Saeki Yoshiro of Hiroshima, and Goto Sueo of Tokyo, and I am not familiar with the recent Marxist interpretations, those of Hiu Wai-lu, of Kwan Fong, or the recent ideas of Fong Yiu-lan or the other collaborators of the Pekinese magazine "Philosophic Studies" (*Tcho-hiu yen-kiou*). I must apologize for using documentation which is not up-to-date or not according to the fashions of the day and which at any rate is very incomplete, for I am not a specialist in this subject. I would especially like to address myself to the Chinese reactions to the first Sino-European contacts rather than the European reactions, which—in Europe at least—are better known and which still more so are outside my field of competence.

It seems to me that the history of Chinese thought between the end of the Ming and the end of the Ch'ing (15th-19th centuries) is dominated by the important critical movement which found its culminating expression in the 18th century in what we call the school of the Han (*Han-hui chia*), that is, the scholarly movement which advocated a return to the Confucianist exegesis of the beginning of our era, that of the Han. From the beginning this school criticized the school of the Sung (*Sung-hui chia*), that is to say, the interpretation of the Confucianist classics (*ching*) which had been established in the 12th century by Chou I and which, starting in the Mongol period (1313 A.D.), had become the official doctrine of the Chinese imperial governments. This reaction against the orthodox tradition of the Sung sometimes showed itself as a phenomenon of Reform, sometimes as one of Renaissance, if one may in fact borrow these European terms and apply them to Chinese experiences. The Chinese themselves have used the terms in their studies on the critical movement in question. The well-known work by Liang J'i-ch'ao, "A brief account of the studies of the Ch'ing period" (*Ch'ing-tai hui-chou chai-luan*, 1921) was originally meant to be the preface to a book on the history of the Renaissance in Europe, and the author stressed in it the points of analogy, as well as the differences, that he noted between the Ch'ing culture and that of our Renaissance. For his

part, Hou Che, the author of a book on *The Chinese Renaissance* (Chicago, 1934), spoke (in the preface that he wrote in 1934 for the handsome biographical collection compiled in Washington under the direction of Arthur W. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, 1943-44) of a "great Renaissance of studies which occurred in the midst of the interior disintegration and the exterior conquest" at the beginning of the Ch'ing.

Nothing is more vague and misused in Western historiography than the term or the idea of the Renaissance. Since the time that Liang J'i-ch'ao and Hou Che were struck by the parallels, the European Renaissance has been the subject of discussions among us which have shaken the concept created in the 19th century. Professor W.K. Ferguson's book on the concept of the *Renaissance in Historical Thought* (New York, 1940) makes one reflect on the transitoriness of the fashions and viewpoints which gain currency in historiography. It was evidently the Renaissance which originated in Italy between the 14th and the 16th centuries, that which Michelet and Burckhardt intended a century ago, that Liang J'i-ch'ao and Hou Che had in mind in their comparisons. But since then, we have seen our Renaissance move farther and farther back, for Nordström (*Moyen-Âge et Renaissance*, 1929) into 12th century France, then for Étienne Gilson back into the high "Middle Ages," with the very notion of the Renaissance ending up by dissolving into thin air. Similarly, in China as well, one could move the real modern Renaissance back from the 17th or 18th centuries under the Ch'ing, to the 11th and 12th centuries under the Sung, that is, back to the major renewal of Confucianism and the school of Chou I, against which the "Renaissance" of the Ch'ing brought to bear so much energy. My eminent colleague from Kyoto, Professor Miyazaki Ichisada, has recently studied the points of contact of an artistic nature which it is possible (but not to my eyes convincingly) to show between the "oriental Renaissance" (*toyo fukko*) and the "occidental Renaissance" (*seiyo fukko*).<sup>3</sup> What he means by the oriental Renaissance is indeed that of the Sung. In reality, if one wants to use the term Renaissance, it would be wiser, it seems to me—at least in Sinology—to use it in a typological way, following Toyn-

<sup>3</sup> *Ajia-shi kenkyū* ("Studies in the History of Asia"), Kyoto, 1959, II, pp. 336-387.

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bee (who has given the sub-title "Renaissances," in the plural, to a section of his *Study of History*, vol. IX, 1954), without letting oneself be drawn into specific parallels which risk being more or less forced. The great resurrection under the Wei and the Chin, in the 3rd and 4th centuries of the Christian era, of the schools of ancient philosophy, Taoism, Legalism, etc., following the eclipse of Han Confucianism, is in fact a typological "Renaissance," as is as well the return to Confucianism under the Sung, following the Buddhist period of the Six Dynasties and of the T'ang. It is in this sense alone that one can call a "Renaissance" the movement beginning in the 17th century under the Ch'ing which attempted to restore the true Confucianism of antiquity, purified of the Buddhist (and Taoist) adulterations that the school of the Sung began to be accused of.

The same things can be said about the word and the concept "Reformation." At the start of the Ch'ing, certain major figures like Yen Yuan (1635-1704) and his disciple Li Kong (1659-1733) do present themselves as Reformers. The ideas of Yen Yuan derive from a philosophic revulsion caused by a strange mix-up of family names: without knowing it, Yen Yuan had been adopted by a family in which he piously fulfilled the duties imposed upon him by familial piety and the cult of ancestors, until by chance he discovered that his real father had disappeared and that his so-called ancestors were that only in name. This discovery overturned Yen Yuan's ideas and drove him for the rest of his life into an intense campaign against the divorce of "names" (*ming*) and "realities" (*che*). The result of a practical situation, the ideas of Yen Yuan retained an essentially practical character; his doctrine is a pragmatic one. Shortly before his death, he founded a sort of institute in which were taught the military arts, archery, horsemanship, boxing, the study of history, mathematics, astronomy, and mechanics. On the level of philosophy, his need for "realities" is shown by a belief in the immanence of Reason, of the *li*, which was to mark indelibly all the metaphysics of the Ch'ing. "Could that *li* be separate from things and facts?" wrote his disciple Li Kong, commenting on the *Luan-yu* of Confucius. The world of reason, the well-ordered world of the *li* that the Sung school opposed to or superimposed on the world of raw nature, on the primordial "breath," on the *k'i*, was for Yen Yuan

immanent in the *k'i*, in the same way that the natural virtues which man receives from Heaven, his "celestial" nature (*t'ien-hsin*), are not opposed to his physical corporeality (*bing*), but for man, as for the universe, the metaphysical lives in the midst of the physical. Out of this, in the domain of practical morality, arose the results which give to Yen Yuan the characteristics of a Reformer.<sup>4</sup> But Yen Yuan reminds me of Hui-neng, the great Reformer of Buddhism under the T'ang (8th century), rather than of Luther or Calvin. They share the same dislike for bookish knowledge and passive meditation, the same rejection of empty speculation in a vacuum, the same strongly belligerent style.

And one could list numerous other cases of Reformation and Renaissance in China. In fact, all the cultural history of China could be seen as a cycle of Renaissances and Reformations which never ceased to renew the living sources of the culture. In Europe on the other hand, the southern Renaissance of the 15th century as well as the northern Reformation of the 16th seem to me to fall within a linear framework and are related to the idea of progress, which is of Judeo-Christian origin, while in China it is a question of constant returns to an ideal past. A comparison of the Ch'ing philosophic movement with the European moral and religious reformation of Christianity or our renaissance of ancient literature, art, and philosophy, with the meaning that these terms carry in European historiography, is therefore valid only on a *typological* level; on the level of contingency, it is valid only to the extent that the critical movement of the Ch'ing did in fact feel the true impact of our Renaissance and our Reformation through the presence of Jesuit missionaries. This is the problem to which I will return presently.

In general it is Ku Yen-wu (1613-1682) who is credited with the movement, both Renaissance and Reformation, which was to characterize the Ch'ing period. The ideas of Ku Yen-wu were formed against a background of the shock of the overthrow of the Ming and the Manchu conquest, unexpectedly occurring

<sup>4</sup> In his cosmological diagram of the Way of Heaven (*t'ien-tao*), Yen Yuan indicated that in the center it should have the Sovereign on high (*Chang-ti*), the supreme God of antiquity, but that He could not be depicted. Fong Yiu-lan (*History of Chinese Philosophy*, 1934 edition, pp. 978-979; trans. Bodde, II, 1953, pp. 636-638) remarked that this personage is entirely superfluous in Yen Yuan's system. Do we have here some echo of the Jesuit theories on *Chang-ti*?

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when he was 31 years old. His ideas can be divided into two parts. On one hand, Ku Yen-wu opposed the scholasticism of the Sung and especially the idealism, tinged with mysticism and quietism, that he ascribed to Wang Yang-ming and which, he felt, had caused the decline of the Ming. He intended to return to Confucianism a sense of reality and to make it a doctrine which was true to life. He insisted on the importance of collecting knowledge and works in order to act upon the world instead of escaping into a unitarian absolute of an otherworldly nature. In Chinese terms, he was for the gradual (*tsien*) as opposed to the sudden (*tuan*), otherwise called the totality. On the other hand, aware of the necessity of beginning with the restoration of Confucianism to its original authenticity if it were to remain alive, he advocated the return to sources, to the original texts of the canon (*ching*), or at the very least, to the exegesis which preceded the Sung. Out of this came his orientation towards the study of the concrete (*p'u-hui*), towards philology rather than philosophy. And so Ku Yen-wu, whose moral temperament was that of a reformer, became at the same time a man of a renaissance, the initiator of a philological movement which was to assume far-reaching proportions in the course of the following centuries. He had in him something of Luther and Erasmus.

It was in the 18th century, during the reign of Ch'ien-lung, that the philological aspect of Ku Yen-wu's work bore fruit. It was then that textual criticism reached a level of acuity and a radicalism whose results inevitably had an impact on the level of ideology. It is sometimes said that if the major intellectuals of Ch'ing China were so interested in philology, it was because Manchu tyranny and censorship did not allow them other outlets for activity and expression. I find this difficult to believe; there are deeper reasons than this. Whatever one may claim, the Ch'ing period was no less brilliant for its philosophy than for its philology. According to my lights this was in fact one of the great periods of Chinese philosophy.<sup>5</sup> One should take note that for

<sup>5</sup> Authors as diverse as Father L. Wieger (*Histoire des croyances religieuses et des opinions philosophiques en Chine*, 1917, p. 681), A. Forke (*Geschichte der neueren chinesischen Philosophie*, 1938, p. 464), and Fong Yiu-lan (*Hsin yuan-tao*, 1945, pp. 112-113; trans. Hughes, *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy*, 1947, p. 203) are in agreement in declaring that philosophy reached a low water-mark in this period. On the contrary, Liang J'i-ch'ao (*Ch'ing-tai hui-chou chai-luan*, 1921) and

China, or to be more precise, for Confucianism, the Classics (*ching*) play the part that the Bible does for Christianity; and the entire history of Confucianist thought since the Han can on the whole be related to the exegesis of these scriptural sources. It is within this tradition of exegesis that the successive phases of philosophic and religious thought outline themselves, much as Christian tradition can be envisaged as a function of the interpretation of the Scriptures. The exegesis of Chou I, especially his interpretation of the word *li*, which clearly reflects the meaning that the word had taken on in Chinese Buddhism, is a work of syncretism, in the manner of St. Thomas Aquinas, who at about the same time was trying to reconcile Christianity and Aristotelianism. Chou I wanted to reinterpret the old terms of the philosophic vocabulary of antiquity, especially the word *li*, which the Buddhists had used as a term for the metaphysical absolute as it was conceived in the Great Vehicle, by contrast to individual and contingent facts (*chi*). He wanted to restore to the word *li* its old, pre-Buddhist meaning of the natural order, of the rational organization of the universe, immanent in the multiplicity of beings and in all things (*wan-wu*), out of which arises a complete system of social and individual ethics. However, probably without being aware of it himself, through involved and ambiguous movements, he ended up preserving the supra-natural meaning which the term had acquired under the influence of India. But the Ch'ing philologists went back to the texts of antiquity which treat the question of *li* and proved that the ideas of Chou I were only a muddle of contradictory and corrupted statements. This was demonstrated with dazzling accuracy by a scholar who had perhaps the most acute mind of the 18th century, Tai Chen (1724-1777). In his "Critical exegesis of the meaning of the [technical] terms of Mencius" (*Mong-tse tsu-yi chou-chen*, 1769-1772), Tai Chen dealt in detail with the word *li*, which appears over and over in Mencius, and destroyed the metaphysical interpretation given to it by the school of Chou I. For Tai Chen, as for Yen Yuan, the *li*, as it was understood in antiquity, was immanent in the *k'i*, that is, the natural forces of the universe. Widening the scope of his inquiry, Tai

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Hiu Wai-lu (*Chin-tai Chong-kuo ssu-hsiang hui-chou che*, 1947, preface) put it at the philosophic level of the Golden Age of the warring kingdoms.

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Chen developed from his philological and literary interpretation an entire philosophy, a system of morality which was closer, he believed, to that of pre-Buddhist antiquity. In Western terms, he returned to pre-Christian paganism as did the Humanists of our Renaissance. Like them, Tai Chen preached a return to nature. He said that one never achieves reason by ridding oneself of emotions (*ts'ing*), of desires (*yu*), of the instincts which play the part within us of *k'i*, of nature. "Moral duty is identified with nature." We have his celebrated maxim, "Duty is the highest rule of nature; it consists precisely of fulfilling nature."

Let us look at Michelet: the Renaissance, according to him, was "a great duel... between Greek and Roman antiquity on the one hand and Biblical antiquity on the other... with nature as the umpire. *Follow nature*, this dictum of the Stoics was the end of antiquity; *return to nature*, this is the message which the Renaissance addressed to us."<sup>6</sup>

With Tai Chen, philological criticism turned into philosophy and all of tradition was brought into doubt, orthodoxy was undermined. As in Europe, so in China philology, that is, scientific criticism applied to the study of traditional texts, unsettled ideas and fanned them into a new blaze. Furthermore, Tai Chen had a clear awareness of the connection and the conflict between philology and philosophy. It is said that on his deathbed he was still shifting from one to another of these two poles of his thought and his work. His last words are supposed to have been the following: "I no longer have any recollection of the books I have read during my life. Now I finally know that [only] the study of great principles serves to nourish the spirit."<sup>7</sup> I use the expression "great

<sup>6</sup> J. Michelet, *Histoire de France* (ed. Le Vasseur), 1869, IX, p. 396. All citations from Tai Chen are taken from the *Mong-tse tsu-yi chou-chen*. On the relationship between the thought of Tai Chen and that of Yen Yuan, cf. Hou Che, "The Philosophy of Tai Chen" (*Tai Tong-yuan ti cho-hui*, Shanghai, 1927, pp. 22-24). The *Mong-tse tsu-yi chou-chen* has been translated into Japanese by Yasuda Jiro (*Shinagaku*, 1948, X, pp. 747-780).

<sup>7</sup> Cited by one of the disciples of Tai Chen, Hsiao Hsiun (1763-1820), like him a philologist and philosopher. Cf. Liang J'i-ch'ao, "Biography of Chen" (*Tai Tong-yuan hsi-en-cheng chuan*) in *Yin-ping che wen-tsi*, 1925, LXV, p. 11. What Tai Chen meant by this word has been discussed by Hsiao Hsiun, *ibid.*, and also by Wang Wen-Kang (1733-1818) in a "Discussion of the *li*, against Tai Chen" (*Li-chou po Tai Chen tso*, in *Fu ch'ou chai wen-tse*, VII). Wang Wen-kang also differentiated between the *yi-li* and the critical study of texts (*k'ao-ching*), that is to say, philology. Compare these words spoken shortly before his death by Saint Thomas



principles” to translate the word *yi-li*, whose exact meaning has been very much discussed in this connection since the period of Tai Chen, but it is evidently a question of the *letter* of texts versus their *sense* or their ideas. In short, it is the relationship of philosophy to philology.

The ideas of Tai Chen were barely understood in his own time; they gained him the reproaches of the custodians of official orthodoxy. One of the open minds who appreciated him, not however without some qualifications, was his younger contemporary, Chang Hui-ch'en (1736-1801), who was also wavering—but in his case, with regard to historiography—between analytic philology and synthesis. Here is what he said about the work of Tai Chen, which he knew well:<sup>8</sup> “In all his work Tai showed a wide knowledge of science and textual exegesis. He knew how to probe the whys and wherefores of the terminology and the objects [of antiquity] as well as its institutions; this was his particular manner of shedding light on the Way [that is to say, to philosophize]... One is too apt now to appreciate only the erudition and the textual criticism. People have made the mistake of seeing Tai's knowledge in his philological works alone and of losing sight of his philosophic dissertations, those entitled ‘On human nature’ [*Luan-hsin*], ‘On the good’ [*Yuan-chan*], and others. Like the sunrise the morning, they illuminated the relationship between Heaven and Man, Rationality [*li*] and Nature [*k'i*]...” Finding himself misunderstood, added Chang Hui-ch'en, Tai Chen ended up by taking refuge in an attitude of eccentricity, following this reasoning: “My studies of semantics and phonetics, of astronomy and geography play the part in my work of a coolie who carries the sedan-chair; my [philosophic] studies on the Way [*tao*] are like the great person carried in the chair. Therefore, when people call me an intelligent man, they are really only referring to the coolie.”

One could not define more wittily the transition from philological criticism to philosophic criticism which occurred in China under the Ch'ing. The analogy with our Humanists of the

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Aquinas: “I have finished writing; God has revealed to me such splendors that everything I have written and taught seems to me to be nothing” (cited by J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, Paris, 1958, IV, p. 90).

<sup>8</sup> “Postscript to an Essay on Chou I and Lu Kiou-yuan” (*Chou chou Lu p'ien hui*) in *Chang che i'chou* (ed. *Wu-hing*), 1922, II, p. 20 b.

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Renaissance, Erasmus, Guillaume Budé, etc., is evident: philologists themselves, their erudite works on Greek and Latin secular texts (what were called "Humanist letters") led imperceptibly to the criticism of the sources of Christianity's sacred tradition and to the discussion of this tradition. This is not to say that this discussion made them lose their faith in Christianity; Lucien Febvre has shown this clearly in his book on *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (1942). It was only in the 19th century that the criticism of Biblical texts brought about a loss of faith in a philologist-philosopher like Ernest Renan (1823-1892). And the same thing was true of Chinese critics under the Ch'ing. Tai Chen and Chang Hui-ch'en remained devout Confucianists and would have been horrified had anyone suspected them of scepticism and heresy, they who wanted only to strengthen tradition by purifying it in a return to sources. The movement launched by the "school of the Han" remained more or less unknown in official and well-informed circles until the time of the great contemporary emancipation when China anxiously drew out of obscurity her nonconformist, marginal, "oblique" (*p'ien*, antonym of the word "straight," *cheng*, which signifies "orthodoxy") masters. They were praised to the skies and glorified as precursors of the new times. The bicentenary of the birth of Tai Chen was celebrated with great pomp in 1924 in Peking in the meetingplace of the association of his native province by all the representatives of modernism, Liang J'i-ch'ao, Hou Che, Ts'ien Huan-t'ang, Chou I-tsou, and others.

In effect, this school of criticism, of which Tai Chen and his contemporaries were the major figures, continued throughout the whole 19th century, and Chinese Sinology descended from it without a break. With the great scholars of the Chu-kiang in the 19th century, Yu Yui (1821-1907), Suan I-chang (1848-1918), Chan Pin-lin (1868-1936), critical erudition, which until then had been brought to bear only upon the holy texts of Confucianism, widened its sights to those of other schools of antiquity, relegated to the sidelines by Confucianism since the time of the Han. The philosophers who preceded the Ch'in and the Han, the school of the legalists (*fa-kia*), Mo-tsu, Chuang-tsu, the dialecticians (*pien-chu*), and even the Buddhist scholasticism of India (the *abhidharma* which Chou I had left completely untouched),

were revived in critical editions and commentaries which used the methods of the school of the Han. The greatest names of Chinese Sinology at the start of the 20th century, Wang Kuo-wei (1877-1927) and his relative-by-marriage, Lo Chen-yu (1866-1940), the archaeologist who was a corresponding member of the French Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, as well as others, carried on this tradition. They found themselves on a footing of equality with European scientific methodology when our Sinology, with such men as Chavannes, Pelliot, and Maspero, made contact with Chinese erudition and offered its own contributions. However, such masters as Lo Chen-yu, Wang Kuo-wei, and Chan Pin-lin drew completely upon Chinese traditions. Without doubt they were imbued with Western modernism via translations and Japanese studies, but it is worth noting that the work of one of their contemporaries like Liang J'i-ch'ao (1873-1929), a Cantonese who in fact had traveled in Europe (where about 1918 I happened to be his interpreter) and knew many foreigners, is far from possessing the same scientific value. It is true that Wang Kuo-wei had begun as a philosopher and that in his youth he had studied Kant, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. It was only at the age of thirty that he decided to change direction, saying with regard to this that "there were things in philosophy that he loved but could not believe and other things that he could believe but not love."<sup>9</sup> This epigram contains within it the old conflict between philosophy and philology which had bothered Tai Chen so much and which reappeared in the mind of this modern Chinese. Is it certain, however, that without this initial contact with the thought of the West, Wang Kuo-wei would have become the exacting and rigorous scholar whose methods made him the most erudite Chinese of his time? And even this would not have been enough if he had not inherited from the school of Chu-kiang, and through it, from the entire school of the Ch'ing, a critical sense which is not to be achieved in one day.

Therefore, it seems that the greatest scholars of modern China at the dawn of the contemporary period owed nothing *directly* to Western influences. Does this mean that there is nothing owing

<sup>9</sup> "Autobiography at thirty years of age" (*San-che tse-Siu*), cited by Hsiang Wei-k'iao in his "History of Chinese Philosophy in the last three Centuries" (*Chung-kuo chin san-pai nien cho-hui che*), Shanghai, 1932, pp. 154-155.

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to Western impetus in the origins of the Han school and the entire movement of criticism whose history I have just traced briefly? This is the question which I raised at the beginning of the article and to which I would like to return after trying, perhaps at too great length, to make the argument clearer from the Chinese side.

It is a question of determining if the originators of this movement were influenced by the Jesuit missionaries who, beginning in the last part of the 16th century, were the first European intellectuals that China was to encounter. This is the question; it has been raised; and it has received conflicting answers. The principal supporter for the European origin of this school of criticism is Father Henri Bernard-Maître, a specialist in the history of the first Jesuit missions in China who now lives in France but who lived for a long time in China where he expounded his ideas in a long series of publications. Here, for example, is what he wrote in an article published in Shanghai in 1946 which is in reality a summary of *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*:<sup>10</sup> "The true origins of modern China should not be fixed at the traditional date of the literary revolution of 1917 nor even at the abortive attempt of 1898, nor at the tentative tries of the 19th century, but much earlier, before the Ch'ing, at the end of the Ming and at the start of the 17th century. It remains to be shown how the current of ideas which began at the time of the European Renaissance continued underground, so to speak, to return to the surface with the reformers of our time." Father Bernard-Maître affirmed elsewhere<sup>11</sup> that the influence of the missionaries on Chinese scholars at the end of the Ming period was not only of a scientific nature (mathematics, astronomy, geography, etc.), but that it touched upon ideas and determined the entire evolution of thought under the Ch'ing. According to him, Father Matteo Ricci contributed to the undermining of the scholasticism of the Sung by dissociating from Confucianism the

<sup>10</sup> "Les trois derniers siècles de l'Empire Chinois d'après les biographes des personnages célèbres," *Bulletin de l'Université L'Aurore*, Shanghai, III, vii, 2, p. 325.

<sup>11</sup> "Christian Humanism during the Late Ming Dynasty," *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, Shanghai, 1938, VIII, 3, p. 260 seq. See also, "Whence the Philosophic Movement at the Close of the Ming," *Bulletin of the Catholic University of Peking*, 1931, VIII, pp. 67-73.

Buddhist elements which had slipped into the exegesis of Chou I and by insisting on the need to return to sources. He wrote that one can "without exaggeration" find in the discourses and writings of Ricci between 1595 and 1598 "at least one of the sources" of the principles of exegesis which were later to affect the school of the Han.<sup>12</sup> The documents which he cites in support of this thesis are far from being convincing, and indeed Father Bernard-Maître claims too much. In addition, his theory has against it the nearly unanimous sentiments of Chinese scholars. Hou Che is formally in opposition. Fong Yiu-lan, in the old edition of his *History of Chinese Philosophy*,<sup>13</sup> let it be understood that Western influence began only at the end of the Ch'ing. For his part, Liang J'i-ch'ao thought that by opening up to the Chinese a world of new ideas and bringing to them, with Euclid's *Elements of Geometry*, a method of logic superior to all that was then known in China (Indian logic, well-known in China under the T'ang, had fallen into almost complete neglect), the Jesuits of the first period may have played some part in the liberation of traditional orthodoxy and in the initiation of the movement of criticism. But he added that the missionaries had no *direct* part in the successive waves of renewal of Chinese thought, rather that on the contrary they had placed obstacles in their path.<sup>14</sup> It goes without saying that Communist historians also tend to minimize the effect of the Jesuits in the development of scientific thought in China.<sup>15</sup>

Let us look first at the case of Matteo Ricci (1525-1610). This Italian of genius, this strong intellect nurtured by the Counter-Reformation ideas promulgated by the Council of Trent (1545-1563), which reflected in a negative way, one might say, the ideas of the Protestant Reformation, was the first to put European

<sup>12</sup> *Le Père Ricci et la société chinoise de son temps*, Tientsin, 1938, II, p. 301: "The promulgators of the literary Renaissance in modern China are connected, via the most original scholars of the Manchu dynasty and by those at the end of the Ming, with the group of literary figures strongly influenced by Father Ricci."

<sup>13</sup> *Chung-kuo cho-hui che*, 1934, p. 1011; trans. Bodde, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, 1953, II, pp. 673-674. The Marxist revision of this final part of Fong Yiu-lan's work has not yet appeared.

<sup>14</sup> *Ts'ing-tai hui-chu kai-luan*, p. 168.

<sup>15</sup> Hu Wai-lu, "Historical Studies" (*Li-che yen-kiao*), 1959, X, p. 55 seq.; "General History of Chinese Thought" (*Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang t'ong che*), 1960, IV B, p. 1189 seq.

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thought in touch with that of China. Every Western Sinologist should recognize his forebear in him. In order to preach Christianity in China he adopted a stratagem which makes one think of the Buddhist *upāya* or of the *ko-yi* behavior of the first Chinese Buddhists. This consisted of presenting Christianity as a religion related to Confucianism, or rather to a primitive Confucianism which he wanted to restore to its original purity, pruning it of the Buddhist elements which, according to Ricci, had been introduced by the “neo-Confucianism” of the Sung. He asserted that he had rediscovered the true sense of the canonic books (*ching*) which lay beneath the misleading interpretations of the usual exegesis and that this sense could be reconciled with Christian doctrine. He was not the first to adopt this approach. As we know, Saint Francis Xavier, one of the first followers of Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, had established a mission in Japan before dying at the gates of China in 1552. However, since it was Buddhism which was flourishing in Japan, when Father Ricci arrived in China thirty years later in 1582, he at first believed that he should present himself as a Buddhist, for he saw China through the colored glasses of Japan.<sup>16</sup> He shaved his head, put on a monk’s robe, and in the first catechism in the Chinese language, drawn up in 1581 by one of Ricci’s companions, Father Michele Ruggieri, and printed at Chao-l’ing in 1584 (*Si-chou kuo cheng kiao che lou*), he wrote that the Christians were Buddhist priests (*Seng*) come from India (*T’ien chou kuo*), where the Pope lived. From this period comes

<sup>16</sup> The Chinese confusion of Europeans and Indians indeed precedes Ricci. The term “men of the Western ocean” (*Si-yang jen*), applied to the Portuguese, is in itself witness to this, for the “Western ocean” (*Si-yang*) expressly meant the seas that washed the shores of Southern India. The term “Franks”, which was also applied, was also ambiguous, for the transcription *Fu-lang* could be taken to mean “People of Buddha.” Beginning with the arrival of the Portuguese mission of Thomé Pires at Canton, the Chinese took the Portuguese for Buddhists, received them in a Buddhist establishment, and treated as “Buddhist books” the Christian books that they read in prison. Ricci himself, in the projected letter in Chinese that he wrote for Pope Sixtus the Fifth, destined for the Ming emperor, presented Rome as the capital of India, *T’ien chou*. The Pope is designated there as the “great Bonze” (*ta-seng*) or as the “chief of the bonzes” (*tu-seng*). Cf. H. Bernard-Maitre, “Fo-lang-kis de Malacca,” in *Aux portes de la Chine*, Tientsin, 1933; P. Pelliot, *T’oung Pao*, 1947, XXXVIII, pp. 113 and 205; M. d’Elia, *Fonti Ricciane*, Rome, 1942, I, p. 181, no. 5; reproduction of the letter in Saeki Yoshiro, “Investigations into Christianity in China” (*Shina Kirisutokyo no kenkyu*), Tokyo, 1944, III, p. 150.

the name for God which has remained in use among Chinese Catholics, *T'ien-chou*, the Lord of Heaven, a translation of the Sanskrit *Devendra* which in Buddhism indicates the sovereign of the celestial gods of Indian mythology. Ricci lived in the Buddhist monasteries in Kuang-tong during the first thirteen years of his apostolate, especially at Chao-cheou where the most popular of the Chinese preachers of Buddhism, Hui-neng, the sixth patriarch of the school of the Dhyâna (Ricci described in his memoirs the mummy preserved in the "Tempio di Nanhoa," *Nan-hua ssu*), had made himself famous under the T'ang. But it did not take long for Ricci, who was a discerning observer, to note that in the China of the Ming, it was not Buddhism but Confucianism which enjoyed the favor of the controlling elite whose support he wanted more than the adherence of the masses. Thus, as one of Ricci's companions, Father Alessandro Valignano, wrote as early as 1583, in Japan "the Buddhist priests are of the first rank," while in China "they are cudgelled at every step." Consequently, at the time of his departure in 1595 for Northern China where he hoped to win the good will of the imperial Court, we see Father Ricci changing his Buddhist robes for the silk robe of the scholar (*jou*), letting his hair and his beard grow, and calling himself "predicatore letterato" (*tao-jen*) instead of "osciano" (*ho-chang*, Buddhist monk). From then on, Buddhism was the "sect of idols" according to him. To treat Buddhists as idolaters was indeed something, especially when done by a 16th century Italian. Undoubtedly Ricci remembered Marco Polo, who must have borrowed this epithet from the Moslems with whom he associated in Mongol China. In addition, Buddhism was a compromising rival for Christianity, as dangerous as it was close. Ricci took over all the prejudices against it of his Confucianist friends. At the same time, he was able to use this stand against Buddhism as a counterweight to his enthusiasm for Confucianism, which in a short time had shocked many European Christians.

His tactics were followed by his major Chinese disciple, Su Kuang-k'i (1562-1633)—his name is borne by the mission at Zikawi, near Shanghai. He summed them up in four words: *ch'u-fu pu-ju*, Christianity "excludes Buddhism and completes Confucianism." This is the maxim attributed to Su Kuang-k'i by



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Father Trigault at the beginning of the 17th century.<sup>17</sup> The following variant appears in a preface drawn up by Su Kuang-k'i himself in 1612:<sup>18</sup> *pu-ju yi-fo*, Christianity intends to "complete Confucianism and replace Buddhism." Another follower of Ricci, the scholar Fong Ying-ching, used a more subtle formulation in the preface that he wrote for a Chinese work of the master (*T'ien-chu che-yi*): "To redress the [Buddhist] Occident by the [Christian] Occident, to redress [Buddhist] China by [Confucianist and Christianized] China [*i Si chen Si, i Chang cheng chang*]." What did Ricci himself mean by these maxims? "He took great care," he declared in his memoirs, written in the third person, "to use to our advantage [*tirare alla nostra opinione*] the leading figure of the Sect of Scholars, Confucius, by interpreting in our favor certain ambiguous writings which he had left: by means of which our people gained most strongly the good graces of the Scholars who did not worship idols [*con che guadagnorno i Nostri molta gratia con i Letterati che non adorano gli idoli*]." <sup>19</sup> And elsewhere: "The Law of the Scholars does not endorse idols but reveres only Heaven and Earth or the King or Heaven... However, the belief most commonly followed *now*, which seems to me to have been borrowed from the Sect of the Idols [that is, the Buddhists] *for the last five hundred years* [since the Sung], is that the world is made up of a single substance [pantheist heresy], and that the creator of the world forms, with Heaven and Earth, with men and animals, with trees, plants and the four elements, a continuous body of which they are the limbs [this is the Chinese maxim *wan-wu i-t'i*]. It is from this oneness of substances [in Buddhist terminology *samatâ*] that they derive the obligation of charity which we owe to one another [*maitrî, karunâ*] and the possibility that all men have of resembling God, being formed of the same substance as He [*buddhatâ*]. This is

<sup>17</sup> N. Trigault, *Histoire de l'expédition chrétienne au royaume de la Chine*, French translation by D. F. de Riquebourg-Trigault, Lyon, 1616, pp. 419-420. This passage does not seem to be in the original Italian of Ricci, and so must be by Trigault.

<sup>18</sup> Preface to a work on hydraulics by Father S. de Ursis (*T'ai-si chui-fa*, Peking, 1612).

<sup>19</sup> M. Ricci, *Storia dell'introduzione del cristianesimo in Cina* (1608-1610), ed. d'Elia, *Fonti Ricciane*, Rome, 1949, II, p. 296. It is this which present-day missionaries call the process of "accommodation" of Ricci (J. Bettray, *Die Akkommodationsmethode des P. Matteo Ricci S.I. in China*, Rome, 1955).



what we try to refute, not only through the use of reason but also by invoking the authority of their ancients who, most clearly, have an entirely different doctrine.”<sup>20</sup> This “belief most commonly followed” is naturally that of the school of the Sung, or that of Wang Yang-ming, which Ricci more or less correctly summarized, a dogma, as he said, borrowed from the “Sect of the Idols,” that is to say, the Buddhists, or to be more accurate, from the pantheism of certain, especially Chinese, sects of the Buddhist Great Vehicle. As to the “authority of their ancients,” Ricci was referring to the Confucianist classics (*ching*) in which he claimed to have rediscovered the “natural philosophy,” the “lights of reason,” and the “King of Heaven” akin to the Christian God.

A Buddhist scholar from Han-chou, Yu ch’uan-i, from whom we have some letters addressed to Ricci,<sup>21</sup> urged him to read the Buddhist Scriptures, assuring him that he would find in them more analogies with Christianity than in all that he might have read of the Six Classics, the Philosophers, and the Historians. If Ricci had followed this advice and had become reconciled to Buddhism instead of anathematizing it, Christianity might have succeeded better in China than it did in the long run. Ricci would not have written or allowed Fong Ying-ching, the author of the preface to his major Chinese work, the *T’ien-chu che-yi* (*De Deo vera ratio*, 1603),<sup>22</sup> to write that the Buddha had stolen from Christians his doctrine of Paradise and Hell, from Pythagoras his doctrine of transmigration, and from the Taoists the glorification of the life of reflection (*tze-mi*); he would not have written that when the Ming emperor of the Han had a revelation of a new religion in the West in the course of a dream, what was intended

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, I, 1942, pp. 115-116. See also Ricci’s letter (in Latin, 1604) on the *Taikieo* (*t’ai-ki*) in *Fonti Ricciane*, II, p. 297, note: “This doctrine of the *Taikieo* is new, being known only for five hundred years. And in certain respects, if one examines it closely, it is opposed to the ancient Chinese sages who had a direct sense of God...”

<sup>21</sup> In the collection *Tien-hui i-tu*, Peking, 1609.

<sup>22</sup> Or *De Deo verax disputatio*, etc. Published at Nanking, 1603; at Kuang-tonh, towards 1605 (for exportation to Japan); at Hang-chou, 1607, etc.; French translation in the 18th century, with the title “Entretiens d’un Lettré chinois et d’un Docteur européen sur la vraie idée de Dieu,” in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des Missions étrangères* (edition of Lyon, 1819, v. XIV, pp. 66-248); Japanese paraphrase in Saeki Yoshiro, *Shina Kirisutokyo no kenyu*, III, pp. 217-320.

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was Christianity and that it was only by mistake that his envoys stopped in India, from which they brought back the Buddhist books, instead of pushing on as far as the Occident (*T'ai-su*), which was a calamity for Chinese culture. He would not have claimed in another of his Chinese works (*Chi-jen chuan*, 1608) that Confucianism in its origins had indeed known the idea of Paradise and Hell and that, if we now have no direct examples of this, it is because the books were burnt by the first emperor of the Chin! Such tales could only hurt Ricci, even among the Confucianists. Towards the end of the 18th century, the bibliographers of Ch'ien-lung, who represented the eminent Chinese intelligentsia of the period, were not taken in by Ricci's stratagems. Here is how they adjudged his theories in their article (*t'i-yas*) on the *T'ien-chu che-yi*:<sup>23</sup> "Aware that Confucianism is unassailable, the author establishes an arbitrary connection (*fu-huei*) between his 'God' (*T'ien-chou*) and the supreme Sovereign of the Six Classics. At the same time, he particularly attacks Buddhism, over which he wishes to prevail. But in fact, his doctrine of Paradise and Hell hardly differ from the doctrine of the *samsâra*, and his basic principles are simply those of Buddhism with some trifling modifications." And in their article on another Chinese work of Ricci, a collection of 25 short essays on Christian morality (*Yu-che-wu yen*, 1604), the same critics give Ricci tit for tat, maintaining that the Christians owe their clearest doctrines to the Buddhists: "Their guiding ideas are in large part stolen from Buddhism, but the literary style is still weaker [than that of the Buddhist texts]. In fact, in the West the only religion is Buddhism. The Europeans have borrowed its ideas, modifying them to their advantage (*pien-huan*), but without great success in diverging from them. When they subsequently penetrated into China, the Christians began to know the Confucianist books, from which they borrowed in order to embellish their theories. And so, little by little, they fell into excesses so extravagant that they are incomprehensible; they ended up by believing themselves superior to our Three Doctrines [Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism]!"

Here we find, used against Ricci, the well-known technique common to all religions when they want to defend themselves

<sup>23</sup> *Ssu-k'u ts'uan-chu tsung-mu*, CXXV, 33.

against a rival—it consists of annexing the rival by claiming that it is only a disguised offshoot. The most typical example is that of the “conversion of the Barbarians by Lao-tze,” from which the Taoists claimed to date the origins of Buddhism. As far as Christianity is concerned, the idea that it was only a disguised form of Buddhism must have had wide circulation in China because one finds it, for example, in a work on Macao written about the middle of the 18th century by two officials who had served in Macao (*Ngao-men ki-liu*, 1751). It says that the Western world must originally have been Buddhist and that its doctrine of Paradise and Hell was stolen from Buddhism. The idea appears as late as the 19th century in authors like Wei Yuan in his *Hai-kuo t'u-che* and Wang T'ao (who collaborated with James Legge on his English translations of the Classics) in his *Ko-kuo kiao-men chuo*.<sup>24</sup>

The most extreme Chinese reaction to Ricci's tactics was that of a certain Wang K'i-yuan, a historian of the imperial academy (*han-lin chien-t'ao*), and a native of Kwang-si, in a very rare pamphlet rediscovered by C'en Chou-i, who described it in 1936 in the *Bulletin of the Academia Sinica*.<sup>25</sup> The pamphlet is dated 1623, thirteen years after the death of Ricci, whose Chinese writings had evidently been read by the author. His reaction was also to want to restore Confucianism to its original form, like Ricci. But Ricci's ideas were used against him by this convert in reverse. Wang K'i-yuan began by consecrating himself to the worship of the supreme God of the ancient texts, *Chang-ti*, the Sovereign on high. In fact, he offered up prayers to him, but these were to implore the god's help in the struggle to the death that he had sworn to conduct against the Christians. In his eyes, in effect, the Christians were more formidable adversaries for Confucianists than the Buddhists who, he said, place the Buddha below *Chang-ti* but do not go so far as to identify the Buddha with *Chang-ti*. The Christians on the other hand did not hesitate to monopolize the ancient Chinese divinity, claiming that he was no other than their “God” (*T'ien chou*). “It is usurpation!” exclaimed Wang K'i-yuan. “They begin by attacking Buddhism. Then they attack

<sup>24</sup> Cf. J.J.L. Duyvendak, *T'oung Pao*, 1950, XXXIX, p. 194; P.A. Cohen, *China and Christianity*, Cambridge, Mass., 1963, p. 30.

<sup>25</sup> Academia Sinica, *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Sinology*, VI, 2.

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Taoism. Then they attack late Confucianism [meaning the school of the Sung, that of Chou I]. If they have not yet attacked Confucius himself, it is because they wish to be on good terms with the influential elite in order to spread their propaganda in China. They keep their hand covered; they wait; they do not show themselves. How much more dangerous they are than the Buddhists whose position is easy to understand, while these Christians are difficult to fathom! Let the people be warned to stay on guard against them!"

It was not only in China that Ricci's methods raised protests. It also happened in Japan where they were violently attacked by followers of the school of Chou I such as Hayashi Razan (1583-1657) who had become the counselor of the Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu, and above all, but for diametrically opposed reasons, they were opposed by Ricci's very colleagues in the Jesuit mission. Following his death in 1610, his successor as Superior General of the mission was Father Niccolò Longobardo (1559-1654),<sup>26</sup> a Sicilian Jesuit, who attacked Ricci's ideas in a treatise entitled *Sur quelques points de la religion des Chinois*, written about 1625. In it Longobardo maintained that in China the "commentaries" (the exegesis of the Sung) were far from being contrary to the canonic "texts" as Ricci had claimed, and that these "texts" were no more "spiritualistic" than the "commentaries." The latter taught the axiom "vuen-vuelety" (*wan-wu i-t'i*) which meant that "all things are of one substance," which is, according to Longobardo, a Buddhist and Tao doctrine, but one adopted by Confucianist scholars "from the first to the last, ancient or modern." This substance, Longobardo added, is also called *li*, or "the universal substance of all things." It is of a material nature and cannot be reconciled with Christian spirituality—it is not at all a "spiritual substance." Contrary to what Ricci had said, Confucianism is thus essentially pantheist and atheist, and Christians should tolerate neither its ideas nor its rites.<sup>27</sup>

The whole of the Quarrel of the Chinese Rites, the intense controversy which stirred up France and Europe (and China) for nearly a century was in its origins the dispute at the beginning

<sup>26</sup> Rather than Longobardi (cf. *Fonti Ricciane*, I, p. 385, no. 5).

<sup>27</sup> It is curious to find the same debate going on today among Chinese Marxists about the "materialist" or "idealist" nature of the *li*.

of the 17th century which divided Ricci and Longobardo. Longobardo's treatise was burned by the Jesuits, but a Spanish version of it was printed at Madrid in 1676 by the Dominicans, who were savagely opposed to the beliefs of Ricci. It remained more or less secret, and it was only in 1701, when the Quarrel of the Rites began to be in full swing in Paris, that the Longobardo treatise was printed in French through the auspices of the Seminary for Foreign Missions in Paris, itself also opposed to the Jesuits. A copy was sent to Leibnitz (1646-1716), one of the greatest European philosophers of the period, by a French friend, M. de Rémond. Leibnitz annotated it copiously,<sup>28</sup> and he was much occupied with it during the last two years of his life, 1715 and 1716. In his "Lettre à M. de Rémond" (1716), one of his last works, we have one of the most profound effects of Chinese philosophy to be produced in Europe until the present day.

We know how Leibnitz, this great encyclopedic brain, interested himself in China and about the hopes that he, a German and a Protestant, based on the French Jesuits for the establishment of the Christian religion on a universal (or as we say nowadays, an ecumenical) basis.<sup>29</sup> Much struck by the information, which was also contradictory, that he found in Ricci and Longobardo on the Chinese problem of the "texts" and the "commentaries," or as Leibnitz called them, the "ancients" and the "glossers," he dreamed of a sort of Chinese Reformation which would restore the original meaning of the sacred texts of Confucianism in the same way that in Europe the Protestant Reformation had aimed at recovering the authentic Christianity of its origins, freed from the traditions of the Church and the distortions of Scholasticism. When it came to details, Leibnitz did not understand much about Chinese philosophy and its history. He was too poorly informed. He attributed to pre-Buddhist antiquity the metaphysical beliefs which are really those of Buddhism and the school of the Sung. However, he understood the ideas with an intuition sharpened by his experience with Neo-Platonism and ancient patristics. He showed himself very superior in this respect, in his "Lettre à

<sup>28</sup> Longobardo's treatise, annotated by Leibnitz, is included in his works, along with the "Lettre à M. de Rémond" (ed. Kortholt, Leipzig, 1735, v. II; ed. Dutens, Geneva, 1763, v. IV, 1).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. J. Baruzi, *Leibniz et l'organisation religieuse de la terre*, Paris, 1907.

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M. de Rémond," to his Cartesian contemporary Malebranche (1638-1715), who some years earlier, in 1708, had published an *Entretien d'un philosophe chrétien et d'un philosophe chinois sur l'existence et la nature de Dieu*, also inspired by Longobardo's *Traité*, but actually only a diatribe against the pantheism of Spinoza (1632-1677).<sup>30</sup> Right in our own day we can find scholars ready to allege—rather speciously one must say—that Spinoza was inspired by Chinese philosophy.<sup>31</sup>

Spinoza, Leibnitz, Malebranche: the major names of European philosophy in the 17th century figure with regard to China. In the 18th century, with Montesquieu, Voltaire, and those who are known as the "philosophes," it was no longer Chinese philosophy properly speaking which interested Europe. It was the political and economic theories of China, its religions, its arts, its customs. And yet the influence of China made itself felt in Europe, even in the field of ideas, in its most explosive aspects. We can find historians ready to believe that China was one of the basic sources for what is called the "Philosophy of the Enlightenment," which prepared the field for the French Revolution. I shall mention only my colleague Étiemble, professor of comparative literature at the University of Paris, who for three years (1956-1959) gave a course on "L'Orient philosophique au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle."<sup>32</sup> One might also maintain that modern economic theory was created in the 18th century by theoreticians like François Quesnay and Adam Smith, who were inspired by Chinese ideas. People have shown or tried to show that the British Civil Service was organized on the model of Chinese administration.<sup>33</sup> There has even been an attempt to find Chinese influences in the origins of the artistic Renaissance in Italy, as I have noted above. In short, it seems that the role of liaison between Europe and China played by Jesuit missionaries was no less important for Europe than it

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Pang Ching-jen, *L'idée de Dieu chez Malebranche et l'idée de Li chez Tchou Hi*, Paris, 1942.

<sup>31</sup> L.A. Maverick, "A possible Source of Spinoza's Doctrine," *Revue de littérature comparée*, 1939, pp. 417-428.

<sup>32</sup> 3 fascicules, Paris, 1957-1959. See also by the same author, "Les concepts de *li* et de *k'i* dans la pensée européenne au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle" (*Mélanges A. Koyré*, Paris, 1965), and *Les Jésuites en Chine: la Querelle des Rites*, Paris, 1966.

<sup>33</sup> Ssu-yu Teng, "Chinese Influence on the Western Examination System," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 1943, VII.

was for China, and that the revelation of China had consequences no less notable in Europe than the revelation of Europe had in China.

Nevertheless, at least in the area of philosophy, on both sides, in China as in Europe, whatever influence there may have been was felt in an *indirect* way, so it seems to me. What the Jesuits brought to Europe from China was the awareness of a civilization which was very different but not inferior, and this contributed to the overturning of traditional ideas and to the new appreciation of the relativity of the European and Christian tradition. The movement of criticism which made its appearance in Europe had started in the 16th century with the discovery of new lands by the explorers and with the resurrection of pre-Christian antiquity by the Humanists. The exposure to China could not but accelerate the movement.

As for China, I think that it was above all the revelation of European sciences which affected the real intellectual elites, the original thinkers who were at the head of the critical movement at the end of the Ming and especially under the Ch'ing, the only living and fertile intellectual movement of the period. I do not see that there were any direct contacts between these thinkers and the Jesuit missionaries. I have probed on that score into the biographies of the most important figures of the criticism movement in the Ch'ing period, but I have found nothing clear. It is true that in the 18th century, when the "school of the Han" was developing, Christianity was banned in China. But even at the end of the Ming period, the Chinese scholars who were converted or who were interested in Christianity were officials, persons of note, sometimes artists, rather than true scholars. The original thinkers, those who worked on the borders of the world of officialdom, those whom the Chinese term "obliques," seem to have remained outside these contacts—but not inaccessible to the influence of European sciences. Imagine the astonishment that must have been raised in China by Ricci's world map,<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> See most recently M. d'Elia, "Recent Discoveries and New Studies (1938-1960) on the World Map in Chinese of Father Matteo Ricci," *Monumenta Serica*, 1961, XX. We presently know of three copies of the oldest preserved edition of this world map (1602), one at the Vatican Library, and two in Japan, of which one is at Sendai (Municipal Library of Miyagi) and the other at the Library of the University of Kyoto. The latter was bought in 1903, four years after the



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which overturned every cosmographical idea, or by the theories of Kepler and Tycho Brahé on the nature of the universe, even if the Copernican heliocentrism of Galileo, condemned by the church in 1633 and forbidden to be taught by the missionaries in China, arrived there only in the 19th century.<sup>35</sup> Such jolts must have shaken the entire fabric of tradition. There is one striking fact, underlined not long ago by V.K. Ting (1867-1936),<sup>36</sup> who directed the geological service in China and who was one of the leaders of contemporary Chinese science: nearly all the learned men of the Han school were versed in the sciences to some extent. Mathematics, geometry, astronomy, mechanics, phonetics—they cultivated all of these disciplines, which the works translated or written in Chinese by the Jesuits had revived, at the same time that they occupied themselves with philology, which was their real specialty.

In the period of Ch'ien-lung, a particularly vivid example of this is Tai Chen (1724-1777) who, like Pascal, had begun with the sciences, before becoming one of the great philologists of his time and developing out of his philological criticism an entire new philosophy. His first work at the age of twenty was a study of ancient Chinese calculating instruments (*ch'ou-Suan, ts'u-suan*, 1744), perhaps inspired (but it is not certain) by the recent introduction in China of the rules for calculating of John Napier (1550-1617), the Scotch mathematician who invented logarithms, which had been brought to China in the middle of the 17th century. A little later, when he was twenty-six years old (1750), Tai Chen had as his teacher Chiang Yang (1681-1762), a scholar as well-known as an astronomer and mathematician acquainted with Western theories as he was as a specialist in historic phonology and philological exegesis. Perhaps it was through him that Tai Chen knew the principle of the Archimedean screw, about

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foundation of this library by a certain Hagihara Zembei for the price of 20 yen! It is reproduced in the large collection of plates of Father d'Elia, *Il Mappamondo cinese del P. Matteo Ricci*, Vatican City, 1938.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. M. d'Elia, *Galileo in Cina*, Rome, 1947, and the summary by J. J. L. Duyvendak, *T'oung Pao*, 1948, XXXVIII, pp. 321-329; J. Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, 1959, III, pp. 444-447.

<sup>36</sup> "How China acquired her Civilization," in *Symposium on Chinese Culture*, Shanghai, 1931.



which he wrote a pamphlet.<sup>37</sup> Still later, towards the end of his life, Tai Chen attempted to review the whole history of Chinese mathematics by bringing to light ancient mathematical treatises which had been forgotten and which he republished in a collection of rare texts (*Wu-ying tien tse chen-p'an ts'ong-chou*), a deed reminiscent of the resurrection of the scientific texts of antiquity by the scholars of our Renaissance. The comment made about his work a quarter of a century later, about 1800, by Chuan Yuan, in his "Biographies of Mathematicians" (*Ch'ou-jen chuan*, chap. XLIV, makes us suppose that Tai Chen wanted in this way to show that Chinese mathematics had nothing to be ashamed of in the face of Western mathematics: "From the arrival in China of Matteo Ricci, the Occidentals followed closely on one another's heels... Astronomy and mathematics had then, since the Ming, fallen into a state of decay in China... and these people could not but believe themselves to be superior to us in these sciences... But beginning with Tai Chen such [ancient] books of mathematics as the *Wu-ts'ao* and the *Suan-tse* were brought to light again. It was enough to look at all the books of astronomy and mathematics which had been handed down for two thousand years in China to see that our Chinese methods are superior to those of the West, whether in finesse or in profundity. It is because the Westerners [at the end of the Ming and the beginning of the Ch'ing] had not read our ancient books [later brought to light by Tai Chen] that they wrongly imagined their methods to be superior to ours." But shall we take a look at the opinion of Tai Chen himself on the religious thought and the non-scientific doctrines of these Westerners whose sciences attracted him? All we need do is look at the great bibliography of Ch'ien-lung (*Ssu-k'u ts'uan-chu ts'ung-mu*, chap. CVI) which appeared at the end of the 18th century and whose editor-in-chief, Ki-yun, was a friend of Tai Chen. The entries in this bibliography are anonymous, but there is good reason to believe that Tai Chen was the author of certain ones which have to do with the astronomical and mathematical works published in Chinese by the Jesuits.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Cf. J. Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, II and IV (index).

<sup>38</sup> Tuan Yu-ts'ai (1735-1815), who had known Tai Chen very well, wrote a biography of him arranged by years (*nien-p'u*), which is attached to his edition of the works of Tai Chen (*Tai Tung-yuan tse*). In this biography (ed. *Kuo-hui ki-pen*

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This is what he said about a “Compendium of Astronomy” (*T’ien-wen liu*) published in Chinese at the beginning of the 17th century (1615) by a Portuguese missionary, Father Emmanuel Diaz: “This book contains a preface by the author in which he goes beyond his field of competence and waxes eloquent on the merits of ‘God’ [*T’ien chou*] and on the possibility, for those who believe in Him, of ascending to the ‘twelfth heaven,’ the immovable sphere where the saints dwell and where we find ‘Paradise’ [*t’ien-t’ang*]. These are nothing more than fables good for taking in fools. The author claims to make use of his astronomical calculations, which, for their part, are perfectly verifiable, in order to prove that the ‘Paradise’ of ‘God’ is also verifiable. Such procedures are but the height of trickery and of mystification. Nonetheless, it is true that in the field of astronomy his methods are better than our ancient ones.”

At the moment in which Tai Chen was writing these lines, Christianity was officially banned in China, and it goes without saying that in collaborating on an official publication like the Ch’ien-lung bibliography Tai Chen was obliged to speak against this religion. However, it is clear from many other passages of the same type that, if Tai Chen had an appreciation of European sciences, he remained absolutely closed to everything from the West which was not pure science. It is no less disputable that the exposure to Western sciences must have played a decisive role in the intellectual formation of a man like Tai Chen. The habits of precision and of precise reasoning that he formed in studying these sciences show themselves not only in his philological works but in his philosophical ideas as well, and even in his style. The traces of this influence are evident everywhere in his work,

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*ts’ung-chu*, p. 105), he began with the books of astronomy and mathematics which Tai Chen had revised (*kiao*) for the Ch’ien-lung collection, the *Ssu-k’u ts’uan-chu*. At the end of the biography Tuan Yu-ts’ai gave a number of quotations from Tai Chen (notably on the *Chou-pei suan-ching*, a mathematical classic) which are to be found, more or less modified but recognizable, both in the anonymous entries in the Ch’ien-lung bibliography (*Ssu-k’u ts’uan-chu ts’ung-mu*) and in the editions of texts in the collection *Wu-ying tien tse-chen-p’an ts’ong-chou*; the latter are by Tai Chen. The attribution to Tai Chen of the Ch’ien-lung bibliographical entry on Father Diaz’s “Compendium of Astronomy” is all the more probable in that Tai Chen had himself written a “Sequel to the Compendium of Astronomy” (*Siu T’ien-wen liu*), of which only the preface, to be found in his collected works (*Tai Tung-yuan tse*, V, pp. 87-88), has remained.

despite his ignorance of the general ideas and premises which underlay these sciences.

It seems to me that it is in this sense that one may perhaps speak of a Western influence on the thought of the Ch'ing, an indirect, unacknowledged, indeed unconscious (or repressed into the subconscious) influence, but one as deep as it was imperceptible and slow. Nothing is more elusive to trace than this sort of influence (we might remember that of India on Plotinus, undeniable but indefinable), and without doubt we should take into account other factors, other currents, of which I shall mention only the following. Why did the reaction against the Chou I system of exegesis also show up in Japan in the "school of ancient studies" (*Kogaku-la*, or better still, in the "return to antiquity," *fukkogaku-la*) begun at Kyoto by Ito Jinsai (1627-1705), thus as early as the period of Ku Yen-wu (1613-1682), much earlier than the development in China of the school of the Han, properly speaking? Why does the textual criticism of the Chinese Classics seem to have been anticipated in Japan? Ito Jinsai was well-known in Korea but hardly at all in China. However, at Edo he had a disciple in the person of Ogiu Sorai (1666-1728), who himself had a disciple named Yamanoi Tei. In 1726, shortly before his death, he finished a monumental critical exegesis of the Seven Classics of Confucianism (*I ching*, *Chu ching*, *Che ching*, *Tso-chuan*, *Li ki*, *Luan-yu*, *Hsiao ching*) and of Mencius.<sup>39</sup> This work, which included no less than some two hundred volumes, was completed by a younger brother of Ogiu Sorai and was printed in 1731 through the auspices of the Shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune. It was then sent to China on the orders of the Shogun, who was interested in Chinese literature and in the cultural relations between the two countries. This Japanese book aroused wide interest in China and seems to have contributed to the development of textual criticism in the Han school in the period of Ch'ien-lung, so much so that it led to an encomium in the Ch'ien-lung bibliography,<sup>40</sup> in which the compilers did not even note that the author was Japanese. Chuan Yuan had it reprinted

<sup>39</sup> Entitled *Shichikei Moschi kobun*. It is reproduced in the collection *Ts'ung-chu tse-ch'eng*, Shanghai, 1935, fasc. 115-124, from an edition published by the son of Chuan Yuan in 1842.

<sup>40</sup> *Ssu-k'ü ts'uan-chu ts'ung-mu*, XXXIII.

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in China in 1797 and used it to document his vast collection of critical notes on the Thirteen Classics (*Chi-san ching kiao-k'an che*, 1806). In the middle of the 19th century, Liao Pao-nan (1791-1855) used the interpretations of Ito Jinsai in his commentary on the *Luan-yu*, and the great critic Yu Yui (1821-1907) still knew and appreciated the work of Ogiu Sorai, especially his commentary on the *Luan-yu*.<sup>41</sup> I am lacking in the competence to judge the range and significance of these Sino-Japanese contacts—were they mutual influences? the common effect of the impact of the West? or simple coincidences of the sort constantly found in world history?

Tai Chen died in 1777. Still more time was needed before Western philosophy properly speaking, at least in certain forms,<sup>42</sup> was to gain the attention of the Chinese elites and before it finished, with Marxism, by conquering China (if indeed it has conquered). An analogous phenomenon, taking into account the differences, occurred at the time of the introduction into China of another foreign culture, Indian Buddhism. It required a good two centuries, beginning at the end of the Han, before Buddhism truly

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Kano Naoki, "Collection of Sinological Articles" (*Shinagaku bunso*, Kyoto, 1927), pp. 178-209; R. A. Miller, "Some Japanese Influences on Chinese Classical Scholarship of the Ch'ing Period," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1952, LXXII, pp. 56-57; K. Yoshikawa, *Japan Quarterly*, 1961, VII, 2, pp. 164-165, and the introduction to his Japanese translation of the *Luan-yu*, Tokyo, 1965, pp. vii-x. It is true that what particularly seems to have interested Chinese scholars, more perhaps than the critical method, were the ancient variants of the texts of the Confucianist classics which had been preserved in Japan. A Japanese friend has reminded me how fitting it is to take into account Japan, where the Buddhists played such an important part in cultural history—Buddhists like the master of Dhyâna, Muchaku Dochu (1653-1745), who is later than Ito Jinsai (1627-1705), his co-citizen of Kyoto, but a contemporary of Ogiu Sorai (1666-1728); his works on the Chinese texts of the school of Dhyâna (*Zen*) show an extraordinary sureness of method and of critical acuity. Similarly, we know that initially in Europe textual criticism was practiced most rigorously by monks such as the Benedictines or the Bollandists. On this aspect of the work of Muchaku Dochu, see recently the study by Yanagida Seizan in "Studies in Zen Buddhism" (*Zengaku kenkyu*), Kyoto, February 1966, no. 55, pp. 14-36, where, nonetheless, no direct contact is shown between the Buddhist master and those of the Confucianist school.

<sup>42</sup> Except for scientific aspects of the Jesuit message which had an impact, before and up to Marxism, China knew little more of our thought than its more or less modern aspects (philosophy of the Enlightenment, evolution, pragmatism), which contributed to giving it a biased and incomplete idea of our philosophy. Cf. *Aspects de la Chine*, Paris, 1959, II, pp. 308-316.

penetrated into the philosophic tradition of China.<sup>43</sup> As my much lamented friend, Lin Li-kuang, said, the Chinese are slow, so slow that they might seem to be benumbed. But when they have understood an idea, they end up by developing all its consequences.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, on both sides, the first philosophic contacts between China and Europe were only a set of maladroit feelers, in appearance superficial, but they were to have profound consequences and effects. They have enriched two civilizations at the opposite ends of the earth, which are now called upon to give an accounting of themselves.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. P. Demiéville, "La pénétration du bouddhisme dans la tradition philosophique chinoise," *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale*, Neuchâtel, Unesco, 1956, III, 1. In a lecture given in 1924, Liang J'i-ch'ao remarked that the introduction of the sciences into China by the Jesuits drew the attention of the scholars almost in the same way that the introduction of Buddhism had once done (*Chinese Social and Political Science Review*, 1924, VIII, 3, p. 38).

<sup>44</sup> Lin Li-kuang, *L'Aide-mémoire de la Vraie Loi (Saddharma-smrtyupats'hâna-sûtra*, Paris, 1949), Introduction, p. xiii.