in Anhwei and Shantung, 1853–1868, and the Muslim rebellions in the southwest, 1855–1873, and northwestern provinces, 1862–1877); so too a gradual improvement in local administration, and steps taken to rehabilitate the economy along more or less traditional lines—the encouragement of agriculture, land reclamation and development, irrigation, flood control, tax reform, etc. The genuine effectiveness of such time-honored measures can be appreciated in terms of their contribution to the traditional agrarian economy (upon which, obviously, so many millions of Chinese depended for their daily life), even if such methods fell far short of meeting the economic challenge of the West.

To conservative Confucianists there was reassurance in all this, not only that age-old methods and institutions seemed to stand the test of these times, but that men of ability and character had appeared who could make them effective. It was leadership, rather than the techniques or institutions themselves, in which the Confucianist placed hope. It was the "gentleman," pursuing virtue and learning rather than power and profit, who would save China. From such a point of view no more basic or radical a change could take place than that which transformed the people inwardly and united them in support of worthy rulers. To talk of drastic changes in social or political institutions was almost unthinkable, and certainly uncalled for.

On this fundamental point there was virtually unanimous agreement, even among those who felt that the danger from the West prompted fundamental re-examination and reform. They might believe it necessary to adopt Western guns and ships—even to master the languages, the knowledge, the techniques required for the production and use of these weapons—but such measures would be indispensably linked to a regeneration of the national life, a reassertion of traditional values in government, a renewed concern for the livelihood of the people, and a kind of moral rearmament based on self-cultivation and tightened social discipline. A re-examination in these terms tended, therefore, to focus on two types of weakness: military inferiority to the West, which called for the employment of new methods, and moral inadequacy with respect to traditional ideals, which called for self-criticism and an intensified effort to uphold old standards.

SELF-STRENGTHENING AND THE THEME OF UTILITY

Reform along these lines was most strikingly exemplified in the so-called "Self-strengthening" movement. Its immediate objective was a build-up in military power; its ultimate aim was to preserve and strengthen the traditional way of life. In the following selections are presented the views of men prominently identified as exponents of reform on this basis: namely, that the adoption of Western arms could be justified on grounds of utility and practicality, as a means of defending China and preserving Chinese civilization.

FENG KUEI-FEN

On the Manufacture of Foreign Weapons

Feng Kuei-fen (1809–1874), a classicist, teacher and official, came to recognize the need for modernization and the importance of scientific studies when forced to take refuge in Shanghai from the Taipings and brought into contact with Westerners defending the city. Later as an adviser to some of the leading statesmen of his time, Feng demonstrated an acute grasp of both state and foreign affairs. His essays advocating a wide variety of reforms were highly regarded by some leaders and became increasingly influential toward the end of the century. It was at his suggestion that a school of Western languages and sciences was established in Shanghai in 1863.

Feng had few illusions regarding the ease with which China might undertake reform. He appreciated the difficulty of adopting weapons which presupposed a considerable scientific knowledge and technological development. Even more he recognized the disturbing fact that Western superiority lay not in arms alone but also in leadership. In his eyes, however, the qualities of character and mind displayed by Westerners were simply those long recognized as essential to leadership within the Chinese tradition. The foreigners' example might be edifying, and indeed a reproach to the deplorable state of Chinese public life, but it was not a lesson in the sense that China had anything new to learn from the West. The lesson was simply that she had more to make of her own learning.

Such is the two-pronged attack by Feng on Chinese complacency, as expressed in these excerpts from his book of essays, *Protests from the Study of Chiao-pin* (1861). Note again that when a Confucian reformer seeks to make

changes, he must come to grips with the civil service system, which has so pervasive an influence on the Chinese mentality.

[From *Chiao-pin lu k'ang-i, Chih yang-ch'i i,* pp. 58b–63a]

According to a general geography compiled by an Englishman, the territory of China is eight times that of Russia, ten times that of the United States, one hundred times that of France, and two hundred times that of Great Britain. . . . Yet we are shamefully humiliated by the four nations, not because our climate, soil, or resources are inferior to theirs, but because our people are inferior. . . . Now, our inferiority is not something allotted us by Heaven, but is rather due to ourselves. If it were allotted us by Heaven, it would be a shame but not something we could do anything about. Since the inferiority is due to ourselves, it is a still greater shame, but something we can do something about. And if we feel ashamed, there is nothing better than self-strengthening. . . .

Why are the Western nations small and yet strong? Why are we large and yet weak? We must search for the means to become their equal, and that depends solely upon human effort. With regard to the present situation, several observations may be made: in not wasting human talents, we are inferior to the barbarians; in not wasting natural resources, we are inferior to the barbarians; in allowing no barrier to come between the ruler and the people, we are inferior to the barbarians; and in the matching of words with deeds, we are also inferior to the barbarians. The remedy for these four points is to seek the causes in ourselves. They can be changed at once if only the emperor would set us in the right direction. There is no need to learn from the barbarians in these matters. [58b–59a]

We have only one thing to learn from the barbarians, and that is strong ships and effective guns. . . . Funds should be allotted to establish a shipyard and arsenal in each trading port. A few barbarians should be employed, and Chinese who are good in using their minds should be selected to receive instruction so that in turn they may teach many craftsmen. When a piece of work is finished and is as good as that made by the barbarians, the makers should be rewarded with an official *chü-jen* degree, and be permitted to participate in the metropolitan examinations on the same basis as other scholars. Those whose products are of superior quality should be rewarded with the *chin-shih* degree [ordinarily conferred in the metropolitan examinations], and be permitted to participate in the palace examinations like others. The workers should be paid double so that they will not quit their jobs.

Our nation's emphasis on civil service examinations has sunk deep into people's minds for a long time. Intelligent and brilliant scholars have exhausted their time and energy in such useless things as the stereotyped examination essays, examination papers, and formal calligraphy. . . . We should now order one-half of them to apply themselves to the manufacturing of instruments and weapons and to the promotion of physical studies. . . . The intelligence and ingenuity of the Chinese are certainly superior to those of the various barbarians; it is only that hitherto we have not made use of them. When the government above takes delight in something, the people below will pursue it further: their response will be like an echo carried by the wind. There ought to be some people of extraordinary intelligence who can have new ideas and improve on Western methods. At first they may take the foreigners as their teachers and models; then they may come to the same level and be their equals; finally they may move ahead and surpass them. Herein lies the way to self-strengthening. [60a–61a]

It may be argued: "Kuan Chung repeled the barbarians and Confucius acclaimed his virtue; the state of Chu adopted barbarian ways and [Confucius in] the *Spring and Autumn Annals* condemned them. Is not what you are proposing contrary to the Way of the sages?" No, it is not. When we speak of repeling the barbarians, we must have the actual means to repel them, and not just empty bravado. If we live in the present day and speak of repeling the barbarians, we should ask with what instruments we are to repel them. . . . [The answer is that] we should use the instruments of the barbarians, but not adopt the ways of the barbarians. We should use them so that we can repel them.

Some have asked why we should not just purchase the ships and man them with [foreign] hirelings, but the answer is that this will not do. If we can manufacture, repair, and use them, then they are our weapons. If we cannot manufacture, repair, or use them, then they are still the weapons of others. . . . In the end the way to avoid trouble is to manufacture, repair, and use weapons by ourselves. Only thus can we pacify the empire; only thus can we become the leading power in the world;

only thus can we restore our original strength, redeem ourselves from former humiliations, and maintain the integrity of our vast territory so as to remain the greatest country on earth. [61a–62b]

On the Adoption of Western Learning

[From *Chiao-pin lu k'ang-i, Ts'ai hsi-hsüeh i,* pp. 67b–70]

Western books on mathematics, mechanics, optics, light, and chemistry contain the best principles of the natural sciences. In the books on geography, the mountains, rivers, strategic points, customs, and native products of the hundred countries are fully listed. Most of this information is beyond the reach of the Chinese people. . . .

If we wish to use Western knowledge, we should establish official translation bureaus in Canton and Shanghai. Brilliant students not over fifteen years of age should be selected from those areas to live and study in these schools on double allowances. Westerners should be appointed to teach them the spoken and written languages of the various nations, and famous Chinese teachers should be engaged to teach them classics, history, and other subjects. At the same time they should learn mathematics. (Note: All Western knowledge is derived from mathematics. . . . If we wish to adopt Western knowledge, it is but natural that we should learn mathematics). . . . China has many brilliant people. There must be some who can learn from the barbarians and surpass them. [67b–68a]

It is from learning that the principles of government are derived. In discussing good government, the great historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien said (following Hsün Tzu): "Take the latter-day kings as your models." This was because they were nearer in time; their customs had changed from the past and were more similar to the present; and their ideas were not so lofty as to be impracticable. It is my opinion that today we should also take the foreign nations as our examples. They live at the same time and in the same world with us; they have attained prosperity and power by their own efforts. Is it not fully clear that they are similar to us and that their methods can easily be put into practice? If we let Chinese ethics and Confucian teachings serve as the foundation, and let them be supplemented by the methods used by the various nations for the attainment of prosperity and power, would it not be the best of all solutions?

Moreover, during the past twenty years since the opening of trade, a great number of foreign chiefs have learned our written and spoken language, and the best of them can even read our classics and histories. They are generally able to speak on our dynastic regulations and civil administration, on our geography and the condition of our people. On the other hand, our officers from the governors down are completely ignorant of foreign countries. In comparison, should we not feel ashamed? The Chinese officers have to rely upon stupid and preposterous interpreters as their eyes and ears. The mildness or severity of the original statement, its sense of urgency or lack of insistence, may be lost through their tortuous interpretations. Thus frequently a small grudge may develop into a grave hostility. At present the most important political problem of the empire is to control the barbarians, yet the pivotal function is entrusted to such people. No wonder that we understand neither the foreigners nor ourselves, and cannot distinguish fact from untruth. Whether in peace negotiations or in deliberating for war, we are unable to grasp the essentials. This is indeed the underlying trouble of our nation. [69a–70a]

TSENG KUO-FAN AND LI HUNG-CHANG

On Sending Young Men Abroad to Study

Tseng Kuo-fan (1811–1872) and his protege Li Hung-chang (1823–1901) were, in the practical sphere, the outstanding exponents of "self-strengthening" during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Acclaimed as the conqueror of the Taipings, and long viceroy in Central China, Tseng was also admired as a scholar in the classical tradition and as a Confucian "gentleman" who exemplified the traditional virtues in government: industry, frugality, honesty and integrity in office, and loyalty to the dynasty. He was the type of "superior man" whose learning and personal character inspired the devotion of his subordinates and gave Confucianists a confidence that such personal qualities could meet the challenge of the times. Intellectually an eclectic, Tseng minimized doctrinal differences and sought agreement on the ethical bases of action. His support of certain types of modernization for purposes of national defense also reflected a readiness to make compromises for the achievement of practical ends.

In this letter, submitted to the Tsungli Yamen, which handled foreign

affairs, in March, 1871, Tseng and Li emphasize not only China's practical need to learn from the West but also the pre-eminent practicality of the Westerners. They are convinced that Western methods can only be mastered through prolonged and intensive study abroad, and propose sending a select group of young men for this purpose. In Japan at this time, the top leaders were themselves visiting the West and preparing to re-educate a whole nation. The aims of Tseng and Li are much more circumscribed—to train an elite corps with a combination of classical Chinese and Western studies, carefully directed and controlled in the interests of the state. Yet even so modest a proposal met with strong opposition at court before it was put into effect in 1872.

[From *Li Wen-chung kung ch'üan-chi, I shu han-kao,* 1:19b–21b]

Last autumn when I [Tseng] was at Tientsin, Governor Ting Jih-ch'ang frequently came to discuss with me proposals for the selection of intelligent youths to be sent to the schools of various Western countries to study military administration, shipping administration, infantry tactics, mathematics, manufacturing, and other subjects. We estimated that after more than ten years their training would have been completed, and they could return to China so that other Chinese might learn thoroughly the superior techniques of the Westerners. Thus we could gradually plan for self-strengthening. . . . After Mr. Pin Ch'un and two other gentlemen, Chih-kang and Sun Chia-ku, had traveled in various countries at imperial command, they saw the essential aspects of conditions overseas, and they found that cartography, mathematics, astronomy, navigation, shipbuilding, and manufacturing are all closely related to military defense. It is the practice of foreign nations that those who have studied abroad and have learned some superior techniques are immediately invited upon their return by academic institutions to teach the various subjects and to develop their fields. Military administration and shipping are considered as important as the learning that deals with the mind and body, and nature and destiny of man. Now that the eyes of the people have been opened, if China wishes to adopt Western ideas and excel in Western methods, we should immediately select intelligent boys and send them to study in foreign countries. . . .

Some may say: "Arsenals have been established in Tientsin, Shanghai and Foochow for shipbuilding and the manufacturing of guns and ammunition. The T'ung-wen College [for foreign languages] has been established in Peking for Manchu and Chinese youths to study under

Western instructors. A language school has also been opened in Shanghai for the training of young students. It seems, therefore, that a beginning has been made in China and that there is no need for studying overseas." These critics, however, do not know that to establish arsenals for manufacturing and to open schools for instruction is just the beginning of our effort to rise again. To go to distant lands for study, to gather ideas for more advantageous use, can produce far-reaching and great results. Westerners seek knowledge for practical use. Whether they be scholars, artisans, or soldiers, they all go to school to study and understand the principles, to practice on the machines, and to participate personally in the work. They all exert themselves to the utmost of their ingenuity, and learn from one another, in the hope that there will be monthly progress and yearly improvement. If we Chinese wish to adopt their superior techniques and suddenly try to buy all their machines, not only will our resources be insufficient to do so, but we will be unable to master the fundamental principles or to understand the complicated details of the techniques, unless we have actually seen and practiced with them for a long time. . . .

We have heard that youths of Fukien, Kwangtung, and Ningpo also occasionally have gone abroad to study, but they merely attempted to gain a superficial knowledge of foreign written and spoken languages in order to do business with the foreigners for the purpose of making a living. In our plan, we must be doubly careful at the beginning of selection. The students who are to be taken to foreign countries will all be under the control of the commissioners. Specializing in different fields, they will earnestly seek for mastery of their subjects. There will be interpreters, and instructors to teach them Chinese literature from time to time, so that they will learn the great principles for the establishment of character, in the hope of becoming men with abilities of use to us.

HSÜEH FU-CH'ENG

On Reform

A one-time secretary and adviser to both Tseng Kuo-Fan and Li Hung-chang, Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng (1838–1894) achieved no high rank or position in the bureaucracy (not having competed in the examinations for the higher civil service degrees). He did, however, become an influential advocate of reform through the circulation of his essays and memorials in official circles, and, be-

sides assisting in the negotiation of the Chefoo Convention (1876), helped to draft plans for a new Chinese navy.

This excerpt is taken from Hsüeh's *Suggestions on Foreign Affairs* (*Ch'ou-yang ch'u-i*), which was submitted to Li in 1879 and forwarded by him to the Tsungli Yamen. Hsüeh argues for reform on the ground that change is inevitable and nothing new to Chinese history. But if he is tempted to accept the idea of progress as a law of history, there is no indication of it here. Rather his premise is the thoroughly traditional one of cyclical or pulsatory change at calculable intervals, which may be for good or ill but in any case must be coped with, as indeed even the sage-kings had to cope with it. A great change in circumstances, therefore, calls for a great change in methods (*fa,* which can also be understood as "laws" or "institutions").

Hsüeh nevertheless contends that changes in method do not mean abandonment of the "immutable" Way of the sages. Indeed it is the use of new methods which will preserve that Way inviolate. Thus a dichotomy is established between ends and means. Here the means Hsüeh has in mind adopting is "the study of machines and mathematics." Consequently the dichotomy is between the Way and "instruments" (*fa* in the sense of methods). How far he would go toward changing *fa* in the sense of basic institutions is left unclear. Where general concepts are used so equivocally—where inevitable change can be understood to imply desired reforms, and methods can mean anything from "instruments" to "institutions"—there is much room for ambiguity and often more scope for rhetoric than logic.

[From *Ch'ou-yang ch'u-i,* in *Yung-an ch'üan chi,* ts'e 12, 46b–49a]

It is the way of Heaven that within several hundred years there are small changes and within several thousand years great changes. . . . In several thousand years [under the early sage-kings] there was change from a primitive world to a civilized world. From the age of the sage-kings through the Three Dynasties there was most truly peace and order. Then the First Emperor of the Ch'in swallowed up the feudal states, abolished the feudal lords, broke up the well-fields, and destroyed the laws of the early kings. Thus it was two thousand years from the time of [the sage-kings] Yao and Shun that the feudal world was changed into a world of [centrally administered] prefectures and districts. . . . As we come down to the present, the European states suddenly rise up and assert themselves overseas because of their knowledge of machinery and mathematics. . . . In ninety thousand *li* around the globe there is no place where they do not send their envoys and establish trade relations. Confronted with this situation, even Yao and Shun would not have been able to close the doors and rule the empire in isolation. And

this likewise is now two thousand years from the time of Ch'in and Han. Thus there has been a change from a world in which the Chinese and barbarians were isolated from each other into a world in which China and foreign countries are in close contact. . . . When change in the world is small, the laws governing the world will accordingly undergo small change; when change in the world is great, the laws will accordingly undergo great change. [46b]

Sometimes in the succession of one sage to another there cannot but be changes in the outward forms of government. Sometimes when a sage has to deal with the world, sooner or later there must be changes made. Thus only a sage can pattern himself after another sage, and only a sage can change the laws of another sage. The reason for his making changes is not that he likes change, but that he is obliged to do so by the circumstances of the time. Now there is rapid change in the world. It is my opinion that with regard to the immutable Way we should change the present so as to restore the past [the Way of the sages]; but with regard to changeable laws, we should change the past system to meet present needs. Alas! If we do not examine the differences between the two situations, past and present, and think in terms of practicability, how can we remedy the defects? [47a]

Western nations rely on intelligence and energy to compete with one another. To come abreast of them, China should plan to promote commerce and open mines; unless we change, the Westerners will be rich and we poor. We should excel in technology and the manufacture of machinery; unless we change, they will be skillful and we clumsy. Steamships, trains, and the telegraph should be adopted; unless we change, the Westerners will be quick and we slow. The advantages and disadvantages of treaties, the competence and incompetence of envoys, and the improvement of military organization and strategy should be discussed. Unless we change, the Westerners will cooperate with each other and we shall stand isolated; they will be strong and we shall be weak. [47b]

Some may ask: "If such a great nation as China imitates the Westerners, would it not be using barbarian ways to change China?" Not so. For while in clothing, language, and customs China is different from foreign countries, the utilization of the forces of nature for the benefit of the people is the same in China as in foreign countries. The Western

people happen to be the first in adopting this new way of life, but how can we say that they alone should monopolize the secrets of nature? And how do we know that a few decades or a hundred years later China may not surpass them? . . . Now if we really take over the Westerners' knowledge of machinery and mathematics in order to protect the Way of our sage-kings Yao and Shun, Yü and T'ang, Wen and Wu, and the Duke of Chou and Confucius, and so make the Westerners not dare to despise China, I know that if they were alive today, the sages would engage themselves in the same tasks, and their Way would also be gradually spread to the eight bounds of the earth. That is what we call using the ways of China to change the barbarians.

Some may also say: "In making changes one should aim to surpass others and not pursue them. Now the Western methods are superior, and we imitate them; if we follow others helplessly, by what means then are we to surpass them?" This, too, is not so. If we wish to surpass others, it is necessary to know all their methods before we can change; but after we have changed, we may be able to surpass them. We cannot expect to surpass others merely by sitting upright in a dignified attitude. Now if seeing that others are ahead of us we contemptuously say that we do not care to follow them, the result is that we will not be able to move even a small step. Moreover, they have concentrated the ability and energy of several million people, have spent millions of dollars, and have gone through prolonged years and generations before they acquired their knowledge. If we want to excel them in one morning, is it really possible or is it not impossible? A large river may begin with the overflow from small bogs, and a great mound may be built up from overturned baskets of soil. Buddhism came from India and yet it flourished in the East. Mathematics began in China,[1] and yet it has reached its highest development in Western countries. If we compare the ability and wisdom of the Chinese with those of the Westerners, there is no reason to think that we should be unable to surpass them. It all depends on how we exert ourselves.

Alas! There are endless changes in the world, and so there are endless variations in the sages' way of meeting these changes. To be born in the present age but to hold fast to ancient methods, is to be like one who in the age of Shen Nung [when people had learned how to cook] still

[1] A widely held view of which Juan Yüan was a leading exponent. See p. 617.

ate raw meat and drank blood, or like one who lived in the age of the Yellow Emperor [when weapons were available] and yet, in resisting the violence of Ch'ih-yu, struggled against him with bare hands. Such a one would say: "I am following the methods of the ancient sages." But it is hardly possible that he should not become exhausted and fall. Moreover, the laws [or methods] which ought to be changed today can still [in their new form] embody the essence of the laws of the ancient sages. [48a–49a]

WANG T'AO

On Reform

Wang T'ao (1828–1897) represents a new type of reformer on the Chinese scene. In contrast to the great reformers of the past (e.g., Wang Mang, Wang An-shih) who were scholar-officials, and in contrast also to his contemporaries, Feng Kuei-fen and Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng, who wrote as officials and worked closely with statesmen like Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang, Wang T'ao was an independent scholar and journalist. Sometimes, indeed, he is called "the father of Chinese journalism." His work was done mainly in the ports of Hongkong and Shanghai, under foreign protection and in close touch with foreigners. For years he assisted the eminent British sinologue, James Legge, in his translations from the Chinese classics, and with Legge's help visited England and Western Europe, observing and writing on developments there. Later, too, Wang visited Japan, where he was well-received as a scholar and reformer. When finally he settled down to a career as journalist, he did so as a man with foreign contacts, a wide knowledge of the outside world, and a freedom to express himself unknown in the past—when not only the right to criticize but even the means (a public press) and the audience (an influential public opinion) were lacking.

The following is taken from an essay of Wang's written about 1870, which anticipates some of Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng's basic points but carries them even further. There is the argument from cyclical change to the need for adapting to the current situation. There is the assertion that Confucius himself would have advocated change under such circumstances. There is the distinction between the Way of the sages, which must be preserved, and the instruments (weapons, methods) of the West which should be adopted for its defense. At the same time, Wang insists that change must go deeper and further than mere imitation of the West in externals, and suggests, however vaguely, that a thorough renovation of society is necessary. Though his specific recommendations here relate primarily to education, eventually he advocated basic governmental change as well. Consequently the ambiguity in Wang's use of the

term *pien-fa* for "reform" is even more pronounced than in Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng's essay. Though he speaks of adopting from the West only "instruments," he intends that change should extend not only to technology ("methods") but to *fa* in the sense of "basic institutions." Wang therefore presages, intellectually, the transition from reformism conceived in terms of immediate utility to a more radical view of institutional change.

The following excerpt is preceded by a discussion of previous changes in Chinese history which we have already seen echoed by Hsüeh. Here, however, Wang is consciously re-examining Chinese history to refute the assertion of "Western scholars that China has gone unchanged for 5,000 years." Contending in effect, that China's stagnation was a comparatively recent development, he then goes on to deal with the present situation.

[From *Pien-fa* in *T'ao-yüan wen-lu wai-pien,* 1:11a–15b]

I know that within a hundred years China will adopt all Western methods and excel in them. For though both are vessels, a sailboat differs in speed from a steamship; though both are vehicles, a horse-drawn carriage cannot cover the same distance as a locomotive train. Among weapons, the power of the bow and arrow, sword and spear, cannot be compared with that of firearms; and of firearms, the old types do not have the same effect as the new. Although it be the same piece of work, there is a difference in the ease with which it can be done by machine and by human labor. When new methods do not exist, people will not think of changes; but when there are new instruments, to copy them is certainly possible. Even if the Westerners should give no guidance, the Chinese must surely exert themselves to the utmost of their ingenuity and resources on these things.

However, they are all instruments; they are not the Way, and they cannot be called the basis for governing the state and pacifying the world. The Way of Confucius is the Way of Man. As long as humankind exists, the Way will remain unchanged. The three moral obligations and the five human relations began with the birth of the human race. When a man fulfills his duty as man, he need have no regrets in life. On this is based the teaching of the sages. [1:11a]

I have said before that after a few hundred years the Way will achieve a grand unity. As Heaven has unified the south, north, east, and west under one sky, it will harmonize the various teachings of the world and bring them back to the same source. . . .

Alas! People all understand the past, but they are ignorant of the future.

Only scholars whose thoughts run deep and far can grasp the trends. As the mind of Heaven changes above, so do human affairs below. Heaven opens the minds of the Westerners and bestows upon them intelligence and wisdom. Their techniques and skills develop without bound. They sail eastward and gather in China. This constitutes an unprecedented situation in history, and a tremendous change in the world. The foreign nations come from afar with their superior techniques, contemptuous of us in our deficiencies. They show off their prowess and indulge in insults and oppression; they also fight among themselves. Under these circumstances, how can we not think of making changes? Thus what makes it most difficult for us not to change is the mind of Heaven, and what compels us unavoidably to change is the doings of men. [1:11b–12a]

If China does not make any change at this time, how can she be on a par with the great nations of Europe, and compare with them in power and strength? Nevertheless, the path of reform is beset with difficulties. What the Western countries have today are regarded as of no worth by those who arrogantly refuse to pay attention. Their argument is that we should use our own laws to govern the empire, for that is the Way of our sages. They do not know that the Way of the sages is valued only because it can make proper accommodations according to the times. If Confucius lived today, we may be certain that he would not cling to antiquity and oppose making changes. . . .

But how is this to be done? First, the method of recruiting civil servants should be changed. The examination essays, coming down to the present, have gone from bad to worse and should be discarded. And yet we are still using them to select civil servants. . . .

Second, the method of training soldiers should be changed. Now our army units and naval forces have only names registered on books, but no actual persons enrolled. The authorities consider our troops unreliable, and so they recruit militia who, however, can be assembled but cannot be disbanded. . . . The arms of the Manchu banners and the ships of the naval forces should all be changed. . . . If they continue to hold on to their old ways and make no plans for change, it may be called "using untrained people to fight,"[2] which is no different from driving them to their deaths. . . .

[2] *Mencius,* IV B, 8.

Thirdly, the empty show of our schools should be changed. Now district directors of schools are installed, one person for a small town and two for a large city. It is a sheer waste of government funds, for they have nothing to do. The type of man in such posts is usually degenerate, incompetent, senile, and with little sense of shame. [1:13a–14a]

Fourthly, the complex and multifarious laws and regulations should be changed. . . . The government should reduce the mass of regulations and cut down on the number of directives; it should be sincere and fair and treat the people with frankness and justice. . . .

After the above four changes have been made, Western methods could be used together with others. But the most important point is that the government above should exercise its power to change customs and mores, while the people below should be gradually absorbed into the new environment and adjusted to it without their knowing it. This reform should extend to all things—from trunk to branch, from inside to outside, from great to small—and not merely to Western methods. [1:14b]

Formerly we thought that the foundation of our wealth and strength would be established if only Western methods were stressed, and that the result would be achieved immediately. . . . Now in various coastal provinces there have been established special arsenals to make guns and ships. Young boys have been selected and sent to study abroad. Seen from outside, the effort is really great and impressive. Unfortunately, we are merely copying the superficialities of the Western methods, getting only the name but very little substance. The ships which were formerly built at Foochow were entirely based on the older methods of Western countries, not worth the faint praise of those who know about such things. . . .

The advantage of guns lies in the techniques of discharging them; that of ships in the ability to navigate them. The weapons we use in battle must be effective, but the handling of effective weapons depends upon people. . . . Yet those regarded as able men have not necessarily been able, and those regarded as competent have not necessarily been competent. They are merely mediocrities who accomplish something through the aid of others. Therefore, the urgent task of our nation today lies primarily in the governance of the people, and next in the training of soldiers. And in these two the essential point is to gather men of abilities. Indeed, superficial imitation in concrete things is not so good as arousing intellectual curiosity. The forges and hammers of the factories cannot be compared with the apparatus of people's minds. [1:15a–b]

INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

When we attempt to assess the aims and accomplishments of Chinese reformers in the 1870s and '80s, the comparison to Meiji Japan is almost inevitable. In aims there is a strong general resemblance between the two; in the scope and effectiveness of their reforms a striking difference. Where the Chinese self-strengtheners sought to preserve the Confucian Way through the adoption of Western techniques, Japanese modernizers talked of combining "Eastern ethics and Western science" or spoke of preserving their distinctive "national polity" (*kokutai*) in the midst of an intense program of modernization. Yet, given this general similarity of aims, the process of change in Japan went further and faster than in China, and to a very different result. In the one case there was rapid industrialization, political centralization, educational reform, and social change—all of these involving a much fuller participation of the Japanese people in the national effort and contributing to a degree of unity and strength unprecedented in Japanese history. In China, by the 1890s, it was evident that the self-strengtheners had not only failed to achieve such an effective national unity and concerted action, but had perhaps only contributed further to the processes of disintegration which typically marked the last years of a great dynasty.

The reasons for this obvious difference are complex and profound, and it is not our purpose to examine them here. One relevant observation may be made, however, in distinguishing the Chinese problem from the Japanese. It is the far greater challenge to reform presented by a vast, sprawling China, whose ostensible political unity was perhaps more of a liability than an asset—whose imperial structure, with its centralized administration, bureaucratic organization and procedures, unwieldiness and inflexibility, proved more intractable to reformers in China than did the comparatively decentralized and less stable feudal structure of Japan to the leaders of the Meiji Restoration.

If to Wang T'ao a great nemesis of reform lay in the "multiplicity of governmental regulations and endless number of directives," his com-

plaint represented not only the traditional protest of the Confucian reformer, but a direct recognition that bureaucratic red tape and centralized control left little room for even piecemeal reform. If, in his mind too, the most important thing was for the court to exercise its power and authority in the direction of reform, this came from a realization that, lacking such leadership from above, little initiative could be taken below.

Under these circumstances, reformers might prescribe change for the empire as a whole, but the individual self-strengtheners in positions of limited authority could hardly plan for a truly national program of reform. Within their own spheres of jurisdiction or influence they might inaugurate projects for the modernizing of their personal armies, the manufacturing of arms, the building of ships, the promoting of business, the opening of schools for technical and language training, as well as for the improvement of the more traditional functions of government in China; yet the tendency was for even these worthwhile ventures to take on a strongly bureaucratic character—to become part of an official subempire—without, however, enjoying any of the benefits of centralized planning or coordination. The net result is typified by the utter failure of Li Hung-chang's new army and navy, owing to "squeeze," corruption and inefficiency in the supply system, when put to the test by the Japanese in the war of 1894–95. It was this failure that led directly to demands for more drastic change.

K'ANG YU-WEI AND THE REFORM MOVEMENT

China's humiliating defeat in the Sino-Japanese War and the seeming danger of her imminent partition by the foreign powers would have been cause enough for an outcry of alarm and protest. To these were added a growing sense of dissatisfaction and frustration among the younger generation of students, who by now had been exposed to reformist writings and had their eyes opened to the outside world. This group was by no means large. The educated class had always constituted a small minority of Chinese, and those affected by new ideas represented a still smaller fraction. Thus, rather than their numbers, it was their role as recruits or members of the bureaucratic elite, which gave them influence. Significantly, among the leaders of the reform group were several from the Kwangtung region, where, like Hung Hsiu-ch'üan before them and Sun Yat-sen after, they were stimulated by close contact with the West in Hongkong and Canton. Increasingly, toward the end of the century, these young men were being challenged and inspired by the brilliant journalism of a writer like Wang T'ao. Youthful impressions, once wholly formed by the Confucian Classics and native tradition, were now being formed also by the translations of men like Yen Fu (1853–1921), who made available in Chinese the works of Thomas Huxley, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and Adam Smith.

More even than by such ideas as evolution, progress, and liberty—radically new though these were and certain to stir intellectual ferment—this generation was disturbed, and profoundly so, just by the shock of events. Not only the handful of active reformers, but officialdom generally, found its pride and self-confidence shaken. This loss of poise and self-assurance may have helped to provide the rare, if momentary, opportunity which innovators seized upon in the famous Hundred Days of Reform in 1898. Yet it also created a deeply felt need among educated Chinese somehow to be reassured that China's cultural identity would not be wholly lost amid these changes—a need which the reformers themselves felt more acutely even than those who opposed them.

K'ang Yu-wei (1858–1927), the dominant figure of the Reform Movement, was born near Canton into a world of crisis. The Taiping Rebellion raised up by K'ang's fellow provincial was still agonizing the empire from within, while from without the British and French, who had moved again into Canton only the year before, were pressing a campaign that would lead to the occupation of Peking itself in 1860.

As the scion of a distinguished gentry-official family, K'ang was provided with an education along traditional lines, but at the age of fifteen he made known his distaste for the business of mastering the "eight-legged essay" so indispensable to success in the civil service examinations. Two years later he was reading about Western geography and in time became a voracious reader of Chinese books on the history and geography of the West. Probably the chief influence on K'ang in these early years was exerted by a teacher of the old school, who aroused in him a passion for classical scholarship and a sense of complete dedication to the Confucian

ideals of personal virtue and service to society. An episode recounted in K'ang's *Autobiographical Chronology* shows, nevertheless, that his independence and iconoclasm were already quite marked:

My Master praised highly the writings of Han Yü and so I read and studied the collected works of Han [Yü] and Liu [Tsung-yüan], emulating him in this as well. By this time I had read the books of the philosophers and had learned the [various] methods of [seeking] the Way. Thus I presented myself in person before the Master and said to him that Han Yü's methods of [seeking] the Way were shallow, and that in searching for concrete substance in the writings of all the great names in scholarship down through the Sung, Ming, and the present dynasty, [I had found that] they were all empty and lacking in substance. I ventured to say that when one spoke of the Way, it should be like Chuang Tzu or Hsün Tzu; when one spoke of governing, it should be like Kuan Tzu or Han Fei Tzu; while as regards medicine, the *Su-wen* would constitute a separate subject. But as to Han Yü, he was no more than a literary craftsman skilled in the undulation of broad and sweeping cadences which, while they appealed to the ear, had nothing to do with the Way. Thus his *Yüan-tao* was extremely superficial. . . . The Master, who was usually correct and stern, in this case laughingly chided me for being wrong-headed. From the time he had first seen me he had often cautioned me about my undue feelings of superiority, and after this I was [more] humble, but nevertheless my fellow-students came to be shocked at my intractability.

With the arrival of autumn and winter, I had learned in their broad outlines the general meaning of the important books in the four divisions [of literature]. My intelligence and comprehension became confused, for every day I was buried amid piles of old papers, and I developed a revulsion for them. Then one day I had a new idea. I thought: scholars engaged in textual research, such as Tai Chen, filled their homes with the books that they had written, but in the end what was the use of all this? Thus I gave it up and in my own heart I fancied seeking a place where I might pacify my mind and determine my destiny. Suddenly I abandoned my studies, discarded my books, shut my door, withdrew from my friends, and sat in contemplation, nurturing my mind. My schoolmates thought me very queer, for there had been no one who had done this, inasmuch as the Master upheld the individual's actual practice [of the Confucian virtues] and detested the study of Ch'an [Buddhism]. While I was sitting in contemplation, all of a sudden I perceived that Heaven, earth, and the myriad things were all of one substance with myself, and in a great release of enlightenment I beheld myself a sage and laughed for joy; then suddenly I thought of the sufferings and hardships of all living beings, and I wept in melancholy; abruptly I thought: why should I be studying here and neglecting my parent? and that I should pack up immediately and go back to the thatched hut over my grandfather's grave. The students, observing that I sang and wept for no apparent reason, believed that I had gone mad and was diseased in mind.[3]

This experience of K'ang's was not unusual in the Chinese intellectual tradition. Neo-Confucianists like Wang Yang-ming before him had suddenly found themselves suffocated and overburdened by the kind of exhaustive scholarship Chu Hsi had seemed to encourage—scholarship which often exhausted one's mind and spirit before one began to exhaust the sources. What is significant here for our understanding of K'ang is, first, the evidence of an early tendency toward syncretism, stronger certainly than his sense of orthodoxy; and second, the conception of himself as somehow set apart from the rest of men and, indeed, above them. The impulse toward quietism and mysticism, on the other hand, proved a passing one. After a few months in lonely isolation and meditation, K'ang's sense of a special destiny to save mankind through active involvement in the affairs of the world took command of him. Subsequent visits to Hongkong and Shanghai impressed him with the orderliness and prosperity of Western civilization. Intensifying his pursuit of Western learning, he also became involved in efforts toward practical reform, like his movement to abolish foot-binding. Meanwhile the young reformer had by no means abandoned classical Confucian studies, but had begun to identify himself with the so-called "New Text School" of textual criticism. The purpose of this, for K'ang, was not so much to determine by critical methods what must have been the original teaching of Confucius, but, whether consciously or not, to justify his new view of the sage as essentially a reformer and to discredit all else that passed for Confucianism.

By the mid-1880s K'ang, still only twenty-seven, had already formulated in his mind the ideas which became the basis of his two most famous works, the *Grand Unity* (*Ta t'ung shu*) and *Confucius As a Reformer* (*K'ung Tzu kai-chih k'ao*). By 1887 he had succeeded, after an earlier failure, in winning the second degree in the civil service examinations, and by 1895, the highest regular (*chin-shih*) degree. He had also begun to attract talented students, who helped in the revising and publishing of his works and later in the organizing of reformist societies which spread his ideas and made him the center of violent controversy. Japan, whose defeat of China created an atmosphere of crisis and imminent catastrophe in the late '90s, now became K'ang's model of reform. He urged the court

[3] *K'ang Nan-hai tzu-pien nien-p'u,* IV, 113–14, as translated by Richard Howard.

to follow the example of Meiji Japan and openly advocated a basic change from absolute monarchy to constitutional rule. Finally an opportunity to put his ideas into effect came when the Kuang-hsü emperor asked him to take charge of the government in June, 1898.

During K'ang's few months of tenure a stream of edicts issued forth from the court, aimed at transforming China into a modern state. The old bureaucracy was to be thoroughly revamped. Education and recruitment would be based on Western studies as well as Chinese; bureaucratic functions would be reorganized to serve modern needs. There would be a public school system and a public press. These, together with popularly elected local assemblies, would prepare the people to take part in eventual parliamentary government. In the economic sphere, too, K'ang had ambitious plans. Bureaus were set up to promote commerce, industry, modern banking, mining, and agricultural development. Lastly, and most importantly, K'ang attempted to reorganize and strengthen the armed forces. Here, however, he ran into serious difficulty trying to bring under central control armies which for decades had been virtually autonomous units loyal to their own commanders.

Had he not failed in this last respect, K'ang might have survived the bitter opposition which his reforms provoked from the entrenched bureaucracy. It was perhaps characteristic of his dogged adherence to principle, if not indeed of a self-righteous and egocentric character, that K'ang reckoned little with such hostility and even less with the surprise and bewilderment felt by many who were simply unaccustomed to rapid change and unable to cope with his radically new ideas. Before many of his plans could take effect, a coup d'etat restored the conservative empress dowager to active control of affairs and drove K'ang's group from power. Some died as martyrs to the cause of reform; others, like K'ang, escaped to become exiles.

Until the dynasty itself collapsed, K'ang continued to write and raise funds overseas in behalf of the movement. After the Revolution of 1911, however, K'ang's "cause" became more and more of a personal one. In a little more than a decade the trend of events and ideas had left him behind. As a constitutional monarchist who still protested his loyalty to the Manchu dynasty, K'ang was now swimming against a strong Republican tide; as a reformer who had always insisted on his fidelity to Confucius, he found himself suddenly surrounded by progressives—a generation that

no longer needed to be won over to reform and could not now be won back to Confucius.

The significance of K'ang Yu-wei as a thinker lies in his attempt to provide a Confucian justification for basic institutional reforms. The so-called self-strengtheners had urged reform on the grounds of immediate utility, thinking that Western weapons and techniques could be adopted without proceeding further to any basic changes in Chinese government and society. They spoke of preserving the Confucian Way (Tao) through the use of Western "instruments" (*ch'i*) or "methods" (*fa*). Yet, as men like Wang T'ao came to appreciate, Western power and prosperity rested on something more than technology. To bring China abreast of the modern world, therefore, more radical changes would be needed. Thus reform began to take on a new meaning for them. Change would now extend to *fa* in the sense of institutions as well as *fa* in the sense of methods.

It was here that real trouble arose. According to a hallowed principle of Chinese dynastic rule, the life of a dynasty was bound up with its adherence to the constitution laid down by its founding father (the first emperor). Tampering with its institutions might bring the dynasty down, and supporters of the Manchus could be counted on to resist any such changes. For those more concerned over the Chinese way of life than the fate of the Manchus the problem was even more acute. How far could one go in changing basic institutions while still keeping the Way intact? Would not Confucianism be reduced to a mere set of pious platitudes once its social integument had been destroyed?

K'ang's resolution of this dilemma was a bold one. Rather than permit the sphere occupied by the Confucian Way in Chinese life to be further narrowed and displaced by Western "methods," he would redefine the Way and enlarge its scope so as virtually to include the latter. Instead of making more room for Western institutions alongside Confucianism, he would make room for them inside. This he did by exploiting to the fullest two ideas already put forth by Wang T'ao. The first of these was that the Way of the sages was precisely to meet change with change; Confucius himself had done so, and if alive today would do so again. K'ang provided this theory with an elaborate scriptural justification through his studies of the so-called "forged classics" and his sensational *Confucius As a Reformer*. In terms of its historical influence this was undoubtedly K'ang's

main contribution—though not an original one—to the thinking of his times.

Implicit in his notion of reform, however, was a still more momentous idea, since it ran more directly counter to the age-old Confucian view of history and tradition: the idea of progress. It was one thing to assert that the Confucian sage, when faced by one of those cyclically-recurring cycles of degeneration spoken of by Mencius or the *Book of Changes,* took appropriate steps to reform the times, reassert the Way, and restore the institutions of the sage-kings. It was quite another to offer, in place of a return to the Golden Age, a utopia beckoning in the future.

Here again the idea was, among Chinese, originally Wang T'ao's. He had glimpsed a future stage in which the Way would make all things one, a natural result of the process going on around him by which the different nations in the world and their respective ways of life were being brought together by technological progress. He had even referred to it in terms taken from the Confucian *Book of Rites* as the age of Grand Unity or of the Great Commonwealth (*Ta t'ung*). What the *Book of Rites* had spoken of as a golden age at the dawn of history, however, Wang T'ao saw as a vision of the future. And K'ang Yu-wei, in his *Grand Unity,* made this vision the center of his whole world-view. Henceforth, "reform" would never again mean what it had in the past, an adaptation of laws and methods to cyclical change. It was now a wholesale launching of China into the modern world and, beyond that, into a glorious future.

Feng Kuei-fen and Hsüeh Fu-ch'eng, in their writings on reform, had shown deference to China's age-old pretensions to cultural superiority by reassuring their readers that she need not merely follow along behind the Western powers but could overtake and surpass them. K'ang, in the *Grand Unity,* took the lead for China himself by pointing the way into the One World of the future. If China suffered humiliation now for her backwardness, looking ahead, he would be satisfied with nothing less for her than the ultimate in progress. In his world of the future there were to be no national and provincial barriers. Government would virtually cease to exist except in local units fixed arbitrarily on the basis of square degrees of longitude and latitude. Within these units life would be completely communal and completely egalitarian. All distinctions of race, class, clan, and family would also disappear, since they could no longer serve any valid social function. And in place of the differentiated loyalties which had bound men to their particular social group there would be only an undifferentiated feeling of human-kindness or love, which he identified with the Confucian virtue of humanity (*jen*).

Those who recall the layout of Mencius' well-fields, of which K'ang's square degrees of longitude and latitude are so reminiscent; or the neat symmetrical organization of society, set forth so early in the *Rites of Chou* and so late in the plans of the Taiping rebels; or the Chinese fondness for political geometry, reflected even in the plan of capital cities like Ch'ang-an and Peking, will recognize in K'ang's grand design, as even in the communes of Red China later, a quality by no means foreign to native tradition.

If in this respect, then, K'ang's vision of the future still strongly reflects the past, what can be said of his Confucianism? Does it too hold to tradition? Was K'ang either a staunch defender or a creative interpreter of Confucianism? The obvious grounds for placing him still within the Confucian tradition are his emphasis upon the cardinal virtue of *jen* and his efforts to preserve Confucianism as the national religion of the Chinese—as something completely inseparable from the Chinese way of life. Against this, most obviously, is his positive rejection of the Confucian family system along with other "divisive" elements in society.

Whatever abuses may have appeared in the family system, however, as it was formulated and practiced down through the centuries, it would still seem difficult to disassociate Confucius completely from it or to preserve Confucianism entirely without it. Without the family virtues and obligations, certainly, the concept of *jen* loses much of its tangible significance, and approaches more nearly—if it does not exactly coincide with—Mo Tzu's principle of undifferentiated universal love. Since Mo Tzu's social ideals resemble K'ang's so closely, the comparison is all the more pointed.

Furthermore, in K'ang's attempt to preserve Confucianism as a kind of national religion, there is something foreign to the spirit of Confucianism itself. The sage's teaching had been offered, and been accepted, as something universal. Its humanistic values were rooted in the nature of man and human society generally. K'ang's defense of it now as the basis of Chinese civilization and as the focus of a new nationalism, while testifying no doubt to his realization that China must have something comparable to the Christianity of the West or the Shinto cult in Japan, nevertheless sacrifices the substance of tradition for the trappings of nationalism. Henceforth Confucianism is to be valued, not on its own terms, but for its Chineseness.

What remains as unquestionably Confucian is K'ang's own sense of dedication to the service of society, his aim of "putting the world in order." Yet even this is not exclusively a Confucian concern (certainly Mo Tzu shared it), nor does his favorite expression for it, "saving the world," hark back only to the sage—there are overtones here, too, of the Buddhist saviors (*bodhisattvas*) and Jesus Christ.

In the light of history K'ang and the reform movement may well appear as the great turning point between old and new in Chinese thought. Confucianism, in his hands, was being launched on a perilous journey, in the course of which much baggage might have to be jettisoned if anything at all was to survive. Confucian traditionalists saw the dangers perhaps better than K'ang. Dropping him as pilot, however, was not the same thing as steering a safe course homeward. The storm now drove all before it, and there was no turning back.

K'ANG YU-WEI

Confucius As a Reformer

K'ang's *K'ung Tzu kai-chih k'ao* (lit., Study of Confucius' Reforms) was started in 1886 and finally published in 1897. It constitutes an extended analysis of the innovations which K'ang believed to have been advocated by Confucius. The following are taken from section introductions which present his general argumentation. As K'ang's subheadings indicate, they purport to show that Confucius' greatness derives from his having written the Six Classics to promote reform in his own time.

[From *K'ung Tzu kai-chih k'ao,* 9:1a; 10:1a-b]

HOW CONFUCIUS FOUNDED HIS TEACHING IN ORDER TO REFORM INSTITUTIONS

Every founder of doctrine in the world reformed institutions and established laws. This is true with Chinese philosophers in ancient times. Chinese principles and institutions were all laid down by Confucius. His disciples received his teachings and transmitted them so that they were carried out in the country and used to change the old customs. [9:1a]

THE SIX CLASSICS ALL WRITTEN BY CONFUCIUS TO REFORM INSTITUTIONS

Confucius was the founder of a doctrine. He was a godlike sage-king. He complements Heaven and earth and nurtures the myriad things. All men, things, and principles are embraced in the Great Way of Confucius. He is, therefore, the most accomplished and perfect sage since the history of mankind. And yet, concerning the Great Way of Confucius, one would search in vain for a single word [under the master's own name]. There are only the *Analects,* which was a record of the master's sayings taken down by his disciples, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals,* which was a kind of old-fashioned gazette copied from ancient documents relative to public events and ceremonies. As to the *Books of Odes, History, Rites, Music,* and *Changes,* they are regarded as the ancient records of Fu Hsi, the Hsia and Shang dynasties, King Wen and the Duke of Chou; thus they have nothing to do with Confucius. If this were true, Confucius would have been merely a wise scholar of later times, no better than Cheng K'ang-ch'eng [127–200] or Chu Hsi [1130–1200, who wrote commentaries on the Confucian classics]. How, then, could he have been called the only model of the human race and the perfect sage of all generations? . . . Before the Han dynasty it was known to all that Confucius was the founder of the doctrine and the reformer of institutions, and that he was the godlike sage-king. . . . Wherein lies the reason for this? It lies in the fact that scholars knew the Six Classics were written by Confucius. This was the opinion of all before the Han dynasty. Only when a scholar recognizes that the Six Classics were written by Confucius can he understand why Confucius was the great sage, the founder of the doctrine, and the model for all ages; and why he alone was called the supreme master. [10:1a-b]

The Three Ages

K'ang's theory of progress is set forth in terms of the Three Ages, a concept of the New Text School for which he derived classical sanction from the Kung-yang commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals,* the Li yün section of the *Book of Rites,* and commentaries by the Han scholars Tung Chung-shu and Ho Hsiu. Here we see the ancient cyclical view of history adapted to the modern evolutionary view.

[From *Lun yü chu,* 2:11a–12b]

The meaning of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* consists in the evolution of the Three Ages: the Age of Disorder, the Age of Order, and the Age of Great Peace. . . . The Way of Confucius embraces the evolution of the Three Sequences and the Three Ages. The Three Sequences were

used to illustrate the Three Ages, which could be extended to a hundred generations. The eras of Hsia, Shang, and Chou represent the succession of the Three Sequences, each with its modifications and accretions. By observing the changes in these three eras one can know the changes in a hundred generations to come. For as customs are handed down among the people later kings cannot but follow the practices of the preceding dynasty; yet since defects develop and have to be removed, each new dynasty must make modifications and additions to create a new system. The course of humanity progresses according to a fixed sequence. From the clans come tribes, which in time are transformed into nations. And from nations the Grand Unity comes about. Similarly, from the individual man the rule of tribal chieftains gradually becomes established, from which the relationship between ruler and subject is gradually defined. Autocracy gradually leads to constitutionalism, and constitutionalism gradually leads to republicanism. Likewise, from the individual man the relationship between husband and wife gradually comes into being, and from this the relationship between father and son is defined. This relationship of father and son leads to the loving care of the entire race, which in turn leads gradually to the Grand Unity, in which there is a reversion to individuality.

Thus there is an evolution from Disorder to Order, and from Order to Great Peace. Evolution proceeds gradually and changes have their origins. This is true with all nations. By observing the child, one can know the adult and old man; by observing the sprout, one can know the tree when it grows big and finally reaches the sky. Thus, by observing the modifications and additions of the three successive eras of Hsia, Shang, and Chou, one can by extension know the changes in a hundred generations to come.

When Confucius prepared the *Spring and Autumn Annals,* he extended it to embrace the Three Ages. Thus, during the Age of Disorder he considers his own state as the center, treating all other Chinese feudal states as on the outside. In the Age of Order he considers China as the center, while treating the outlying barbarian tribes as on the outside. And in the Age of Great Peace he considers everything, far or near, large or small, as if it were one. In doing this he is applying the principle of evolution.

Confucius was born in the Age of Disorder. Now that communications extend through the great earth and changes have taken place in Europe

and America, the world is evolving toward the Age of Order. There will be a day when everything throughout the earth, large or small, far or near, will be like one. There will be no longer any nations, no more racial distinctions, and customs will be everywhere the same. With this uniformity will come the Age of Great Peace. Confucius knew all this in advance.

[From *Chung-yung chu,* 36b]

The methods and institutions of Confucius aim at meeting with the particular times. If, in the Age of Disorder, before the advent of civilization, one were to put into effect the institutions of Great Peace, this would certainly result in great harm. But if, in the Age of Order, one were to continue to cling to the institutions of the Age of Disorder, this too would result in great harm. The present time, for example, is the Age of Order. It is therefore necessary to propagate the doctrines of self-rule and independence, and to discuss publicly the matter of constitutional government. If the laws are not reformed, great disorder will result. . . .

The Need for Reforming Institutions

This memorial to the throne, submitted January 29, 1898, and entitled "Comprehensive Consideration of the Whole Situation," gives the arguments by which K'ang attempted to persuade the Kuang-hsü emperor to inaugurate reforms, which he did a few months later. Note K'ang's equivocal approach to the question of "ancestral institutions."

[From *Ying-ch'ao t'ung-ch'ou ch'üan-chü che,* in *Wu-hsü tsou-kao,* 1b–3b]

A survey of all states in the world will show that those states which undertook reforms became strong while those states which clung to the past perished. The consequences of clinging to the past and the effects of opening up new ways are thus obvious. If Your Majesty, with your discerning brilliance, observes the trends in other countries, you will see that if we can change, we can preserve ourselves; but if we cannot change, we shall perish. Indeed, if we can make a complete change, we shall become strong, but if we only make limited changes, we shall still perish. If Your Majesty and his ministers investigate the source of the disease, you will know that this is the right prescription.

Our present trouble lies in our clinging to old institutions without knowing how to change. In an age of competition between states, to put

into effect methods appropriate to an era of universal unification and laissez-faire is like wearing heavy furs in summer or riding a high carriage across a river. This can only result in having a fever or getting oneself drowned. . . .

It is a principle of things that the new is strong but the old weak; that new things are fresh but old things rotten; that new things are active but old things static. If the institutions are old, defects will develop. Therefore there are no institutions that should remain unchanged for a hundred years. Moreover, our present institutions are but unworthy vestiges of the Han, T'ang, Yüan, and Ming dynasties; they are not even the institutions of the [Manchu] ancestors. In fact, they are the products of the fancy writing and corrupt dealing of the petty officials rather than the original ideas of the ancestors. To say that they are the ancestral institutions is an insult to the ancestors. Furthermore, institutions are for the purpose of preserving one's territories. Now that the ancestral territory cannot be preserved, what good is it to maintain the ancestral institutions? . . .

Although there is a desire to reform, yet if the national policy is not fixed and public opinion not united, it will be impossible for us to give up the old and adopt the new. The national policy is to the state just as the rudder is to the boat or the pointer is to the compass. It determines the direction of the state and shapes the public opinion of the country. [1b–2b]

Nowadays the court has been undertaking some reforms, but the action of the emperor is obstructed by the ministers, and the recommendations of the able scholars are attacked by old-fashioned bureaucrats. If the charge is not "using barbarian ways to change China," then it is "upsetting the ancestral institutions." Rumors and scandals are rampant, and people fight each other like fire and water. A reform in this way is as ineffective as attempting a forward march by walking backward. It will inevitably result in failure. Your Majesty knows that under the present circumstances reforms are imperative and old institutions must be abolished. I beg Your Majesty to make up your mind and to decide on the national policy. After the fundamental policy is determined, the methods of implementation must vary according to what is primary and what is secondary, what is important and what is insignificant, what is strong and what is weak, what is urgent and what can wait. . . . If anything goes wrong, no success can be achieved.

After studying ancient and modern institutions, Chinese and foreign, I have found that the institutions of the sage-kings and Three Dynasties [of Hsia, Shang, and Chou] were excellent, but that ancient times were different from today. I hope Your Majesty will daily read Mencius and follow his example of loving the people. The development of the Han, T'ang, Sung, and Ming dynasties may be learned, but it should be remembered that the age of universal unification is different from that of sovereign nations. I wish Your Majesty would study *Kuan Tzu*[4] and follow his idea of managing the country. As to the republican governments of the United States and France and the constitutional governments of Britain and Germany, these countries are far away and their customs are different from ours. Their changes occurred a long time ago and can no longer all be traced. Consequently I beg Your Majesty to adopt the purpose of Peter the Great of Russia as our purpose and to take the Meiji Reform of Japan as the model for our reform. The time and place of Japan's reform are not remote and her religion and customs are somewhat similar to ours. Her success is manifest; her example can be easily followed. [3a–b]

CONSERVATIVE REACTIONS

The great momentum attained by the reform movement after the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 also provoked strong conservative reactions. A stormy debate ensued in which the reformers were charged with subverting the established order and destroying Chinese culture. In Hunan province, where reformers like T'an Ssu-t'ung had organized an academy for the spreading of their ideas, the reaction was particularly forceful. Eminent scholars such as Wang Hsien-ch'ien (1842–1918), outstanding classicist and compiler of the monumental *Tung hua lu* (*Imperial Documents of the Ch'ing Dynasty*), and Yeh Te-hui (1864–1927), famous bibliophile, rallied to the defense of Chinese traditions and Confucianism. In Peking powerful figures led by Jung Lu (1836–1903) fought the reformers with logic and invective until, with the help of the empress dowager they succeeded in bringing the reform movement of 1898 to an abrupt end. Still another brand of opposition was encountered in the great

[4] Early book on political and economic institutions which foreshadows Legalist doctrines.