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CHINA'S CIVILIZATION

And

The Spirit of Indian and Chinese Cultures

By
Tan Yun-Shan



The Sino-Indian Cultural Society
In India

Sino-Indian Cultural Society

OBJECT

“To investigate the learning of India and China, to help in the interchange of their cultures, to cultivate friendship between their peoples, and lastly to work for universal peace and human fraternity.”

PROGRAMME

“To organise Indian cultural delegations to go to China and Chinese cultural delegations to come to India for research work.”

“To organise lecturing delegations to deliver lectures on Indian and Chinese cultures in both countries.”

“To introduce and recommend Indian students to study in China and Chinese students to study in India.”

“To establish Chinese institutions in India and Indian institutions in China for students and scholars.”

“To publish books and magazines embodying the results of such investigation and researches into Indian and Chinese learning and to propagate the spirit and merit of their cultures.”

OBSERVANCE

“The activities of the Society shall be kept strictly non-political.”

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I

CHINA'S CIVILIZATION

I

CHINA'S CIVILIZATION

I. OLDEST CIVILIZATION

China's civilization is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, in the world. The Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Hindu and the Chinese are generally known as the world's four oldest civilizations. But the Egyptians and Babylonians are to-day mere historical memories, while the Hindus and the Chinese still attract the world's attention. Western scholars often make the grave mistake of looking upon the Egyptian and Babylonian civilizations as the only two oldest in point of time. This mistake is occasioned by their almost complete ignorance of Chinese history and lack of understanding of Chinese culture. I venture to say that the Chinese civilization is even older than the Egyptian and Babylonian civilizations.

II. SEVEN STAGES AND PERIODS

The whole process of the development and evolution of China's civilization, from the very beginning up to the present, can be roughly divided into seven stages and periods:—

1. Initiation and Invention—from times immemorial and date uncertain.
2. Establishment and Completion—from Huang-Ti, the Yellow Emperor, to Tang-Yao and Yu-Shun, *i.e.*, 2697—2206 B.C.
3. Evolution and Expansion—during San-Tai, the “Three Periods,” namely, the Hsia, Shang and Chou, *i.e.*, 2206—255 B.C.
4. Contact with India—during the Chin Dynasty, the Han Dynasty and the Tang Dynasty, *i.e.*, 256 B.C.—960 A.D.
5. Renaissance—during the Sung, Yuan and Ming Dynasties, *i.e.*, 960—1643 A.D.
6. Contact with Europe—during Chin Dynasty, *i.e.*, 1643—1911 A.D.
7. New Renaissance—from the establishment of the Republic up to now and hereafter, *i.e.*, 1911— ?.

Tradition speaks of Pan-Ku as the originator of Chinese civilization. The name of Pan-Ku is very similar to the Indian mystic god Brahma. He it was, who created the universe and ruled

the world—he was blessed with seven hands and eight feet. Next to Pan-Ku, comes San-Huang or the three mythical Emperors, namely, *Tien-Huang* or the Emperor of Heaven, *Ti-Huang* or the Emperor of Earth, and *Jen-Huang* or the Emperor of Man. San-Huang was followed by Shih-Chi or the ten Epochs. There are books dealing with these periods and giving to each a very long time. But the recorded facts are a little too remote to be reliable.

III. INITIATION AND INVENTION

The growth of human civilization has a long and definite course. Man first solved the problem of housing and food, then clothing and the making of household implements. Astronomy, the system of determining seasons and times, medicine and communications come next, then follow script and written literature. Then he develops social etiquette, music and Government, and lastly come ethics, morality, religion and philosophy. According to old Chinese historical records, it was You-Tsao, who first invented houses to teach the people to live safely; it was Sui-Jen who invented fire by drilling wood to teach the people to cook. These discoveries took place much more than ten thousand years ago. Then came Fu-Hsi, who taught the people to catch fish with nets, animals with snares, and he also taught them to sing to the accompaniment of guitars. He again laid down the formal rules of the wedding ceremony; this is the inauguration of social marriage in human society. He moreover created the Eight Diagrams which were the origin of the written characters; and found the way to measure time, which is the prelude to the almanac. Then came Shen-Nung who invented spades and ploughs, and taught the people to cultivate corn. He also established a kind of market and taught the people to exchange their products; experimented with curative qualities of various plants roots and leaves and thus laid the foundations of the science of medicine; and reformed the system of calendar. It is to be remembered that all these took place about ten thousand years ago. Since then many great sages, one after another, have laid the world under a great debt of gratitude by their inventions and discoveries.

IV. ESTABLISHMENT AND COMPLETION

China's chronicle proper starts in the year 2697 B.C. when Huang-Ti, the Yellow Emperor, begun to rule and unite the country, and made China a great Empire. Huang-Ti ruled the country for a

full hundred years (2697–2598 B.C.) and is looked upon by the Chinese people as the creator of the Chinese nation. Even to-day the Chinese people consider themselves as descended from the Yellow Emperor and the first year of his reign became the beginning of the historical era. But we remember him to-day most for some of the vitally important inventions connected with civilized life. Amongst his numerous useful inventions, mention should be made of, (1) cap and dress, (2) vehicle and boat, (3) mortar and pestle, (4) bow and arrow, (5) compass, (6) coins and (7) coffin. Apart from his direct personal inventions he had referred and improved upon many of the things already in current use. Astronomy and the system of determining the seasons, studies of the solar system, are only a few of the fields he had enriched with his genius.

Two centuries after the reign of Huang-Ti came the two most illustrious Emperors in Chinese history, namely, Tang-Yao and Yu-Shun. Like the Yellow Emperor, Yao also ruled for a full hundred years (2357–2258 B.C.), when he abdicated of his own accord and passed on the throne to Shun. Shun ruled for forty-eight years (2255–2208 B.C.) and in his turn, abdicated, after assigning the throne to Yu. The virtue and ability of these Emperors were “as bright as the sun and the moon.” They ruled their empire entirely by the influence of their sublime personality and left their throne to successors who were as good and competent as themselves. Confucius and Mencius regarded these two Emperors as model rulers and their reign as exhibiting the ideal form of Government. The period of their reigns is known as the period of “Shan-Yang,” voluntary abdication, which is a most glorious epoch of China’s history.

At that time all the essential factors which go to the making of civilized existence, had been established, developed and completed in Chinese society and they created the very strong and stable foundation of China’s civilization. Later developments and evolutions only added glories and splendours to this foundation.

A written language, old historical records and other books are the most important characteristics of a civilization. The Chinese script was invented by Fu-Hsi as mentioned above and completed by the Yellow Emperor. According to tradition, Tsang-Chi, the Yellow Emperor’s minister of History, created the script under Imperial direction. As a matter of fact, the script was not created by him or in his name—he merely rearranged and classified it. China

has her written historical records from the time the script was created. There is no written language in the world to-day as old as the Chinese. In the reign of the Yellow Emperor, there were two Ministers of History—the one who stood to the left of the throne wrote down the speeches which were made by the Emperor himself, as well as by his ministers and the petitioners; and the one who stood to the right chronicled the events which happened during the time. Unfortunately these records have mostly perished, mainly due to the notorious Chin-Shi-Huang who seems to have taken a special pleasure in the burning of books. There are, of course, other contributory causes during this long course of time. We only know of the titles of the books, but in most of the cases, the books themselves have vanished. Many old books, however, still remain such as “Yi-Chin” or “The Canons of Changes,” a book beginning with the Eight Diagrams of Fu-Hsi. Shu-Chin or “The Canons of Books,” beginning with Chapters of Tang-Yao and Yu-Shun which were written between the years 2357—2206 B.C. There are no books in the world, perhaps excepting the “Vedas,” as old as these ones. Apart from these books, there are numerous folk-songs of very ancient times recorded in some other books. Here I may quote a folk-song of the age of Tang-Yao, about 2300—2200 B.C. and a song composed by Yu-Shun about the same period:

- (1) “I rise when the sun rises
And rest when the sun sets;
I dig a well to drink
And plough the land for food.
The power of Ti, let it be,
But what has it got to do with me?”
- (2) “Oh Luck Cloud, spread
Your splendour, over and over;
Oh, Sun and Moon, brighten and beautify
The days for ever and ever.”

V. EVOLUTION AND EXPANSION

As early as in the time of “San Tai” or the “Three Periods,” namely, the Hsia, Shang and Chou, *i.e.*, 2206—225 B.C., China’s civilization reached the zenith of its development. The Great Yu, first Emperor of the Hsia period, saved the country from disastrous floods by opening up the mouths of the nine major rivers and leading

the flow of the water to the sea. He then divided the country into nine divisions and collected metals all over the country and melted them and cast them into nine big cauldrons and set each of them in each of the nine divisions as the National valuables. The rare beauty of the brazen works of the Shang period arouses the enthusiasm of Westerners even to-day. The jade palace of the kings of the same period left many vivid records in different Chinese books, which would be no less precious and beautiful than the jade throne of the Moghul kings of India, if it only could have survived for the long time of about forty centuries.

The Chou period is a golden era of Chinese history. When we read the Chou-Li, a book of the records of the Chou Official Rites and Government System, we cannot but admire the ability and the spirit of our ancestors. Improvement was made in remarkable manner in all branches of civilization and culture. The period is specially remarkable for its numerous saints and savants. We have only to remember that the great Confucius and Leo-Tzu belong to this era, as well as Mencius, Mo-Tzu, Chuang-Tzu, Yang-Tzu and Hsün-Tzu. There flourished no fewer than ten different schools of Philosophy. It was a period of free thinking and learning—a real efflorescence of Chinese culture and civilization. It corresponds in India to the time from the Epic Period to King Asoka.

Two other great social movements characterise the Chou period—the development of Feudalism and the initiation of the Ching-Tien system. The Feudal system was inaugurated during the rule of the Yellow Emperor; there was a slow development under the Hsia and Shang periods and it was during the Chou period that it was given its final shape. The country was divided into the Chows or Presidencies, each Chow subdivided into a number of Pangs or Feudal states. There were five classes of Feudal states according to size—namely: first, Kung or Dukedom, with an area of 500 square Lis; second, Hou or Marquisate, with 400 square Lis; third, Po or Earldom, with 300 square Lis; fourth, Tzu or (Viscounty) Viscountdom, with 200 square Lis; and fifth, Nan or Barony, with 100 square Lis. All the five groups were collectively called “Chu-Hou” or Feudal Princes. The region under the direct control of the Central Government was called “Huang-Chi” or the Imperial Domain. Every year, the Feudal Princes had to send a detailed report of the administration of their states to the Central Government, which arranged for a close inspection

of the territory every three years. Chinese Feudalism, unlike foreign system, was fundamentally democratic.

The Ching-Tien system is the land policy of the Chou period. All land belong to the nation and was equally divided among the people. Each square Li was subdivided into nine divisions of a hundred Mous each ; of this total 900 Mous, 800 parts were distributed to 8 families for their private use and the centrally situated 100 Mous were reserved as public property, to be cultivated by the neighbouring farmers in turn. The yield of the public land was contributed to the Government for defraying the state expenses. The people had to pay a greater attention to the cultivation of the public land than to their private holdings. It is, in fact, a system of Communism, but unlike in Western countries, it did not call for any bloodshed for its inauguration.

The modern world is proud of its science, but China is the land of its origin. Early in this period of San-Tai, we find the studies of Lu-Yi or Six Arts and Lu-Kung or Six Works. The names of the Six Works are : Tu-Kung or Architecture, Chin-Kung or Metallurgy, Shih-Kung or Masonry, Mu-Kung or Carpentry, Shou-Kung or Zoology and Tsao-Kung or Botany. The names of the Six Arts are : Li or Etiquette, Yo or Music, Sheh or Archery, Yu or Coachmanship, Shu or Writing and Su or Mathematics. There are various divisions in each of these arts : 5 in Etiquette, Archery and Coachmanship, 6 in Music and Writing and 9 in Mathematics. Elaborate studies into political theory and organization were made as well as in the military science and tactics in warfare. All these above studies were logically and systematically classified. This, I contend, is the real beginning of modern science. China also takes the credit for four of the most significant inventions of Science—the compass, paper, printing and gunpowder. They are really the harbingers of the age of science.

VI. CONTACT WITH INDIA

Chinese civilization from its very inception up to the period of Chin, Han and Tang Dynasties had grown up, progressed and developed in complete independence. In other words, it had been altogether an indigenous product of her own soil. It did neither borrow nor imitate. It had only given plenteous education, instruction and intellectual nourishment to numerous peoples who lived round

the country of China, but received nothing from them. Those barbarous neighbours very often attacked and invaded China at different times but had all been assimilated and absorbed by the vast and deep sea of China's civilization. China's politics from very ancient times had been, as mentioned in the ancient classics, "to endear all the masses of all peoples as children, to welcome all classes of all kinds of artisans, to treat kindly all the people who came to the country from far away, and to cherish kindly all the princes of other states." How did China practically treat the outsiders who came to the country? As one of the ancient classics says: "to escort them on their departure and welcome them on their coming; to commend the good among them and show compassion to the incompetent—this is the way to treat people who came to the country from far away." How did China actually cherish the princes of other states? The same classic says: "to restore families whose line of succession have been broken, to revive states that have been extinguished; to reduce to order the states that are in confusion, to support those which are in peril; and to have fixed times for receiving them as well as sending envoys to them, and to give more to and receive less from them: this is the way to cherish the princes of other states." But those uncivilized neighbouring peoples could rarely know how to reciprocate such kindness of China. They, especially those who lived in the extreme north, often came simply to rob and pillage the country. This, later on, made the First Emperor of the Chin Dynasty (246–207 B.C.) build the world famous Great Wall to ward them off. This "Great Wall of Ten Thousand Lis" had long long been the greatest engineering feat of the world and regarded by all the peoples as one of the world's rare wonders.

During the period of Chin, Han and Taung Dynasties (255 B.C.—960 A.D.), China came in contact with India, and China's civilization and culture had been greatly influenced by Indian culture and civilization. Old Chinese books, such as "Chou-Shu-Chi-Yi," "Lie-Sien-Chuan," "Shi-Lao-Chi," "Tsi-Lu," "Chin-Lu" and "Fu-Tsu-Tung-Chi" mentioned that Indian monks came to China as early as even before the Chin Dynasty. But these are only accidental references, not any adequate account. Actual historical facts of the contact between India and China are available only after the influx of Buddhism into China. The formal date for the first introduction of Buddhism into China is generally recognised to be the Yun-Ping

tenth year of Min-Ti of the Han Dynasty (67 A.D.) when the Emperor himself accorded Buddhism his royal welcome to the Capital Lo-Yang. After this, numerous Chinese monks and scholars came to India for studying and Indian sages and missionaries went to China for preaching. The most famous among the Chinese who came to India were Fa-Shien, Hsuan-Tsang and I-Tsing. Among the Indians who went to China, Kasyapa-Matanga, Kumarjiva and Gunaratna were the most famous. Kasyapa-Matanga was the first Indian Missionary to have preached in China and to have formally introduced the great religion of Lord Buddha. Kumarjiva and Gunaratna were the two greatest Indian translators of Buddhist scriptures from Sanskrit into Chinese. The former translated 94 books, consisting of 425 Fascicles; the latter 64 books, consisting of 278 Fascicles. Fa-Shien was the first Chinese who came to India for studying and returned to China after having achieved great success. Hsuan-Tsang and I-Tsing were the two greatest of the Chinese translators of Buddhist Tripitaka. Hsuan-Tsang brought from India to China 520 bundles of 657 books and translated 73 of them, consisting of 1,330 Fascicles. I-Tsing brought to China from India nearly 400 books and translated 56 of them, consisting of about 230 Fascicles. These are not only some of the most splendid and glorious achievements of Chinese culture, but also magnificent feats in the history of world civilization. It is these sages and scholars, both Indian and Chinese, who, through their stupendous work and labour, created such great, wonderful and intimate cultural friendship between these two great countries, India and China.

The influence of Indian culture on the Chinese civilization, since this first contact, was very intimate, almost inexpressible in words. Buddhism became much more than a second national religion. It became the most influential religion of the country and occupied the first seat of honour. Take for example, Confucius and Lao-Tzu, the two greatest sages of China. The common people knew Lord Buddha much more than they knew Confucius and Lao-Tzu. Even to-day if one goes to China, one can see Buddhist temples, monasteries and pagodas everywhere; but temples of Confucius and Lao-Tzu may only be found in district cities, provincial capitals and big towns. Besides this, Chinese philosophy, art, literature, music, dance, architecture, etc., all had been influenced to a very considerable extent by Indian civilization. From the point of view of philosophy, the

thoughts of Confucianists and Taoists had been closely intermingled with Indian thoughts since the end of the Han Dynasty. From the point of view of literature, the prose and records of philosophical discourses had a striking tint and flavour of Indian literature in form and in quality since the Tang Dynasty. Even the system of the Chinese written language was affected by this Indian influence: a certain Buddhist named Shou-Wen of the Tang Dynasty formulated thirty-six alphabets purely on the basis of Sanskrit and then created a revolution in the pronunciation, sounds, and rhymes of Chinese words. And artistically China learnt from India several methods, such as the building of pagodas, the making of statues, the practice of fresco, etc. As for the translations into Chinese of Indian classical works, they may be regarded as a rare wonder in the world history of civilization, both as regards their quality and quantity.

During this period, China's own literature, painting, and architecture had also reached the zenith of beauty, greatness and perfection. The descriptions in records of the "O-Fang Palace" of the Chin Dynasty and the "Wei-Yang Palace" of the Han Dynasty are beyond our imagination. It was said that when the "O-Fang Palace" was burnt, the fire lasted for full three months. The painting and literature—especially poetry of the Tang Dynasty are really wonderful products of China's civilization. The long celebrated Saint-Painter Wu Tao-Tzu and the famous Poet-Painter Won Mo-Chi belonged to this Dynasty. The few masterpieces that they left to the world to-day are really rarities. The famous Poet-Fairy Li Po and the well-known Poet-sage Tu Fu also belonged to this Dynasty. Besides these, there were numerous other poets and great writers such as Han Yu and Liu Tsung-Yuan. Lately, little more than two hundred years ago (1707 A.D.), Emperor Kang Hsi of the Chin Dynasty had collected and edited all poems of the Tang Dynasty in one book called "Chuan Tang Shih" or "Complete Collection of Tang Poetry" which contains more than 48,000 poems of more than 4,200 poets, and was bound into 900 volumes.

VII. RENAISSANCE

To the common mind, the Universe seems to be a great mystery. When there is good, there is evil; there is growth, there is decay; there is wax, there is wane; there is light, there is darkness. But to an enlightened mind, this is no mystery at all. This is the natural

law of the phenomena of the world. This is the Relativity of the Universe. When things get into one extreme, they are sure to get a reversal. Therefore, all the civilization of the world must have their vicissitudes, and they evolve in rotatory motions, not in straight ways.

During the last period, China's civilization, on the one hand, reached a considerable degree of perfection in many ways, but, on the other, there was an apparent decline in Chinese culture. There were two prevailing schools of thoughts with two different tendencies towards human life and society. As there were no proper names for them, we may call one of them the Profligats; and the other, Pedants. The former school took the ideas of the Taoists and the Buddhists but misunderstood both. They had a strange pessimism but were not real pessimists. They disliked the world but indulged in a profligate life. They had no idea of either renunciation or asceticism. Their acts were somewhat like the Lokayatikas or Carvakas of India but were different in principle. The latter school were similar to the European Classics. Their prime task and interest was to masticate the letters and to ruminate on the words of the classics. They did not take the trouble to ponder much over the real meaning and true significance of the classics, therefore could not grasp the lofty ideas and sublime teachings of their ancient saints and sages. Such kind of profligacy and pedantry naturally could not last long and spread far. Then came the reaction, the first renaissance in China's civilization.

The renaissance was more spiritual than material and more philosophical than political. The movement of the renaissance was called "Li-Hsia" or Rationalism. This movement of Chinese culture and civilization begun in the Sung Dynasty and ended in the Ming Dynasty (960-1643 A.D.). During this long period of nearly 700 years, there lived about one thousand famous scholars who participated in the movement and were called Rationalists. But the most important were only eight in number. They were: (1) Chou Tun-Yi, (2) Shao Yung, (3) Chang Tsai, (4) Chen Hao, (5) Chen Yi, (6) Chu Hsi, (7) Lu Chiu Yuang and (8) Wang Yang-Min. Chou Tun-Yi was the Founder Master of Chinese Rationalism as Nanak of Indian Sikhism. Wang Yang-Min was the last Master of Chinese Rationalism like Guru Govind of Sikhism in India. Chou Tun-Yi left us two very important works which contain all his ideas and philosophy: one is

called "Tai Chi Tu Hsuo" or The Diagram of the Great Absolute and Its Explanation, another is called "Tung Hsu" or The General Book. The former was his interpretation to the metaphysical truth of the Universe; the latter was his explanation of the philosophy of Human Life. According to him the origin of the Universe derives from "Wu Chi" or the Unknown Absolute to "Tai Chi" or the Great Absolute. When the "Tai-Chi" moves, it produces "Yang" or the Masculine, *i.e.*, the positive force; when the "Tai Chi" reposes, it produces "Yin" or the Feminine, *i.e.*, the negative force. These two forces when join together, produce the five elements—"Chin" the metal, "Wu," the wood, "Shui," the water, "Ho," the fire, and "Tu," the earth. These five elements again, when joined, produce the whole cosmos. Human life is but a part and parcel of this cosmos. Therefore a man should not only live in harmony with Nature but also mingle his life with it. This philosophy of Chou Tun-Yi was entirely based on the "Canons of Changes" and the teachings of the ancient Chinese sages. But he explained it more properly and systematically. Wang Yang-Min's principal theories are: (1) all human intuition and instincts are good, and (2) knowledge and action are one and the same thing. He said: "Knowledge is the beginning of action; action is the completion of knowledge. Without action there is no knowledge; without knowledge there is no action." His main idea was to bring knowledge and action together, and to put all teachings into practice and all philosophies into daily life. He might be called the great Yogi of China.

From very ancient times the Chinese saints and sages laid much more stress on ethics than on metaphysics. It was said that Confucius very seldom discussed the Nature and the Universe with his disciples. Therefore metaphysics have not very properly developed until the Rationalists of this period. But the Rationalists had not only deeply fathomed into the mystery of the Universe and profoundly pondered over the philosophy of human life but also revived and realised all the teachings of their ancient saints and sages and put them into practice. Therefore most of them were great personalities not merely great scholars and philosophers. This period is also famous for porcelain wares and brass works.

VIII. CONTACT WITH EUROPE

The world famous Italian traveller Marco Polo came to China as early as the beginning of the 13th century. He stayed there for

more than twenty years and became a high officer of the Yuan Dynasty. Another famous Italian Missionary Matteo Ricci came to China in 1580 during the Ming Dynasty and built the first Catholic Church in China in the then capital Peking, now Peking. He, together with his disciple Hsu Kwang-Chi, a very famous Chinese scholar and high officer, had also written and translated some books into Chinese on Astronomy and Mathematics. This may be considered to be the beginning of the introduction of European learning into China. But China did not feel the contact with Europe until the Manchu or Ching Dynasty. It was during the Ching Dynasty that China felt the real contact with European people and civilization.

China's contact with Europe had not been so happy as her relation with India. When China and India met, they met each other with love and respect. They exchanged their greetings and gifts, just as noble friends. Their people never harboured in their mind any insincerity or unfriendliness towards one another. They had not the least idea of advantage and disadvantage. Their motives and actions, their words and deeds were purely and emphatically cultural and religious. When the Europeans came to China, they were first preaching, then trading, and lastly exploiting. In other words, they came first with their Gospel, then with their merchandises, and then with their warships and guns. This brought about a series of wars against the country. Owing to the corruption, inability and decay of the later rulers of the Manchu Dynasty, China suffered many defeats. The results of these defeats were that China had to sign several unequal treaties, to pay heavy indemnities, to cede several territories, to open many trading ports with concessions and extra-territorial rights and to lose all her tributary states. Consequently, China became a secondary colony as the Late Dr. Sun Yat-Sen put it. Fortunately, very fortunately, all this injustice has gone for ever now and a new equal and honourable relationship between China and the Western countries has already begun.

The Chinese people were formerly proud of their own civilization and respected it very highly. Since the close contact with Europe, the stable foundations of their civilization came to be rudely shaken. Their attitude towards foreign countries had also completely changed. They inclined to imitate and accept foreign ideas more readily than ever before. They tried first to imitate the European steamers and machine guns, then to learn European politics and economics, and

then to adapt European thoughts and principles. But all these resulted in nothing hopeful. Then came the New Renaissance.

IX. NEW RENAISSANCE

The New Renaissance started along with the Great Revolution by the late Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, the Father of the Chinese Republic. It is still in progress under the guidance and leadership of a supreme personality, the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek. After a long period of chaos and miseries, China's civilization has now again found her own way. This New Renaissance has now been embodied in a new movement called the New Life Movement which was started on the 19th February, 1934, by the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-Shek.

The object of this movement is to take Chinese philosophy and ethics as the foundations of China's culture and civilisation and then to assimilate the western scientific spirit in order to formulate a new mode of life for the Chinese people. For, China has a long history of several thousand years and her numberless sages during these ages have dealt with the problem of human life and have left a vast amount of experience as a legacy to the Chinese people, which presents an essential aspect of the eternal truth. At the same time, China has been suffering from decay, dissipation and indifference through a long period of her history. Therefore the right way was to assert the old principles and to rectify the present disorder and defects through the ancient wisdom at the same time to keep a broad mind and accept from others whatever is palatable and healthy by adapting it to the present circumstances in China. Thus, the Chinese people could be made happy and given a new and fresh life founded on reason. This new life would give them the right place in the modern world and prepare the way for a glorious future.

The heroism, the diamond determination and the noble spirit and manner of the Chinese people manifested in the war against the wanton aggressors is but one result of this New Renaissance. This effort of the Chinese people in due course will not only forge a new civilisation for China alone but in co-operation with other peoples will create a new civilization for the whole world.

Santiniketan,
July, 1943.

TAN YUN-SHAN

II

THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN AND CHINESE CULTURES

II

THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN AND CHINESE CULTURES

My dear friends,

First of all I must express my heartiest and sincerest thanks to you for the great honour which you have done me in inviting me to participate in and preside over this auspicious and solemn function, the Bihar Cultural Conference, that is being held under the auspices of the Bihar Provincial Hindi Literature Association. I am quite conscious of the fact that by doing me this honour you have thought not only of my humble self but of the ancient country to which I belong, the country, the culture and civilization of which are immensely similar to those of yours, and the religious and cultural relationships of which with India, have been incomparably great and intimate for the last twenty centuries. I must therefore take this opportunity to convey also the deep gratitude, the best wishes and warmest greetings of my country and my people to you and through you to the whole of India.

I can hardly tell you in the superficial words of language how happy I feel, having this rare opportunity of meeting you all here to-day. Perhaps you do not know that I have made this great country of yours my second Motherland, and my second home is at Santiniketan. I claim myself to be at least half-Indian, and my friends and colleagues at Santiniketan also regard me to be so. Therefore I am really one of you and belong to you all. Wherever and whenever I meet people of this country, I always feel just as I meet my brethren of my own country. So you can imagine what my sentiment is here at this moment. Of course, after all, I am also a pilgrim to this world-respected ancient country, India, in general and to this world-honoured sacred province, Bihar, in particular. It was in this sacred province, the Magadha Kingdom of olden India and the Middle one of the Five Celestial Regions according to Chinese records, that Lord Buddha preached most of his noble teachings, I mean Buddhist religion. And Buddhism first flourished in this holy province of Bihar and continued to flourish for more than a thousand years and from this province it spread over the whole country of India, then northwards

across the mighty Himalayas to China, and from China to Korea, Japan, etc.; and southwards across the seas to Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Malaya, etc. This province therefore is indeed the Holy and Religious Motherland to all the Buddhists of the world. As I have just said that my second home is at Santiniketan, being a Buddhist I must add here that my religious home is in this province, the Sacred Bihar.

The only thing that I always regret very much and very deeply is that although I have stayed in this country for more than ten years, I have not yet been able to speak your language freely. I feel indeed shameful when I am reminded by myself of the fact that in olden days those Chinese pilgrims, monks and scholars, such as Fa-Shien, Hsuan-Tsang, Yi-Tsing, etc., who came to India and those Indian missionaries such as Kasyapa-Matanga, Kumarjiva, Gunaratna, etc., who went to China, all of them could speak, read and write perfectly the languages of both the countries. Kumarjiva's translations from Sanskrit into Chinese were really marvellous and matchless and Hsuan-Tsang's Sanskrit knowledge could even defeat the Indian Pandits of his time. From this you can know how much and how deep is my regret for my inability to speak your language.

But why have I been so hopeless? Let me confess before you. It was not because that I had no love for learning the language; but because; first, I am a bad linguist, secondly, I have been for the last ten years extremely engaged in initiating, organising and managing the Sino-Indian Cultural Society and the Visva-Bharati Cheena-Bhavana as well as in teaching and administrative works, and thirdly, as English is being very widely used in this country, I have also taken the advantage of this current speech. However, I am still staying in this country, perhaps shall stay in this country for ever till the end of my life. And I will certainly try to make up this regrettable shortcoming of mine. I have been much encouraged by the blessing of Mahatma Gandhi who wrote me with his own hand some time ago, saying: "You must learn Hindustani, you have been long enough in India. May I write to you henceforth in Hindustani, since I cannot write in Chinese?" By the way, I may also tell you that to redeem my shortcoming, I have put two of my children in the school at Santiniketan to study Bengali instead of learning Chinese. I most sincerely wish and hope that in the very near future, not only I myself will be able to talk with you in Hindustani, but all Chinese scholars who

come to India will also speak the same which is the *Lingua Franca* or *Rashtrabhasa* not only of this province, but of most of the provinces of this country, and which later on, I pray, will be the *Rashtrabhasa* of the whole of India. And on the other side, scholars of this country who go to China will also speak Chinese there. Then contacts and communications between our two countries, India and China, will be carried on only in Chinese and Indian languages, and not in any other foreign language.

When my friend Mr. Madhavan came to Santiniketan with your message inviting me to preside over this meeting, I was rather hesitant to accept your kind invitation. For since my return from Chungking where I had spent, on a visit, two months and a week of very strenuous time I have been extremely tired and busy with my works in the *Cheena-Bhavana*. I could hardly go out anywhere and make any other appointments. But the call is so pleasing, the beckon is so sweet and the attraction is so strong from the religious home, that I could not but forget my fatigue, hold up my work and submit to it. Hence I am here with you to-day. Only I have again to confess before you that before my coming here I could not have the time and leisure sufficient to prepare a proper or decent address which you might expect from me. However, as this is a cultural conference, I may just take this opportunity to say a few words about the spirit of Indian and Chinese cultures.

As I have already said at the beginning, the culture and civilization of China are very similar to the culture and civilization of India. But what are the similarities between these two cultures and civilizations and what are the characteristics of these two cultures and civilizations? These are rather big questions which cannot be dealt with in a very small scope of a short address and within a very short time. Nevertheless I shall only pick up and deal with a few important points of the spirit of Indian and Chinese cultures.

The Indian culture has such a long and splendid history that one can hardly make a general survey or summary or analysis of it. However, being a Buddhist scholar and speaking at the Buddhist religious home, I would like to regard Buddhism as the representative of Indian culture, and the spirit of Buddhism as the spirit of India. But Buddhism again is a deep and vast sea of religion. It is also very difficult to outline the idea of Buddhism. However, according to my humble knowledge, the essential teachings and spirit of Buddhism

can be summed up and contracted to the famous and well-known "Three Blessing Learnings," in Chinese called "San Hsio," and "Four All-embracing Virtues" in Chinese called "Szu Sheh."

What are the "Three Blessing Learnings"? They are: (1) Learning by the commandments or prohibitions, that is Vinaya; (2) Learning by concentration and meditation, that is Dhyana; and (3) Learning by philosophy, that is Jnana. What are the "Four All-embracing Virtues?" They are: (1) Dana, namely to give what others like in order to lead them to love and receive the truth; (2) Priyavacana, namely affectionate speech with the same purpose; (2) Arthacarya, namely conduct profitable to others; and (4) Samanarathata, namely co-operation with the adaptation of oneself to others in order to lead them into the truth. All these Three Blessing Learnings and Four All-embracing Virtues are, I suppose, not only very well known to you but are also daily practised by all of you. They need therefore, no more detailed explanation and time also does not permit me to do so.

The Chinese cultural history is as long and splendid as that of India. It is also very difficult to summarise it in a very short speech. As I have just considered Buddhism as a representative of Indian culture and the spirit of Buddhism as the spirit of India, I would like to consider Confucianism as the representative of Chinese culture and the spirit of Confucianism as the spirit of China. But again Confucianism is also an unfathomable, boundless ocean of ethical philosophy. However, we can also have some general idea of the essential teachings and spirit of Confucianism from one of the most important Chinese Classics called "Ta Hsio" or the book of "Great Learning."

What are the essential teachings and spirit of the book of "Great Learning?" In this most important book of Chinese Classics, the great Chinese sage and saint, Confucius, taught us Eight Stages of the great way of learning, working and living. What are these Eight Stages? They are: (1) Ke Wu, or investigation of things; (2) Chih Chih, or attainment of knowledge; (3) Cheng Yi, or sincerity of thought; (4) Chen Hsin, or purification of heart; (5) Hsiu Sheng, or cultivation of person; (6) Chi Chia, or regularity of family; (7) Chih Kuo, or order of state; (8) Pin Tien Hsia, or harmonization of the world. All these Eight Stages perhaps need some explanation, but time does not permit me to do so here.

From what I have just said above, we can see not only the spirit of Indian and Chinese cultures but also the similarities of them. Both the great sages the Lord Buddha of India and the saint Confucius of China taught us first to cultivate our own personality and then to do service to others, from the family to the state and from the state to the whole world. The "Three Blessing Learnings" of Lord Buddha are equal to the first five of the "Eight Stages of the Great Way" of Confucius. The last three of the "Eight Stages of the Great Way" of Confucius are equally good as the "Four All-embracing Virtues" of Lord Buddha. For, humanity is the life of a harmonious collectivity, not the life of exclusive individuality. The ultimate aim of humanity must be to achieve the well-being of all mankind; neither the individual, nor the race, nor the state is to be the end of life. Therefore Confucius said to his disciples on one occasion: "A man of virtue, while wishing to establish himself, wishes to establish others; and while wishing to expand himself, wishes to expand others too." Lord Buddha said very often to his disciples exactly the same: "To enlighten oneself and enlighten others; to benefit oneself and benefit others."

Besides, Confucius set up the "Wu Chang" or Five Ethical laws: first "Jen" or benevolence; second, "Yi" or uprightness; third, "Li" or propriety; fourth, "Chih" or wisdom; fifth, "Hsin" or faithfulness. Lord Buddha and Mahavira Jaina both preached five ascetic rules or "Pancha Silani"; those of Buddha are: first, "Abstaining from Killing"; second, "Abstaining from Stealing"; third, "Abstaining from Adultery"; fourth, "Abstaining from Lying"; fifth, "Abstaining from Drinking"; and those of Jaina are: first "Speak the Truth"; second, "live a pure, poor life"; third, "Abstain from Killing"; fourth, "Abstain from Stealing"; fifth, "Observe Chastity." Principles of such a moral nature are too copious to be enumerated in detail.

Moreover, the elementary spirit of the Chinese national character is "benevolent love" and "polite deference" which may be represented by the word "Jen" or perfect virtue. The essential spirit of Indian national character is "mercy" and "peace," which may be represented by the word "Ahimsa." These four terms, "benevolent love" and "polite deference," "mercy" and "peace" though different in form, are yet fundamentally the same in sense. The life of the Chinese adheres to the "Golden Mean," so their attitude

towards Nature is a process of harmonization. The life of the Indians lays stress upon "Continence," so their attitude towards Nature is a process of assimilation. The Chinese have a custom of worship of their ancestors, and love of their kinsmen, so that the system of large families is able to exist generation after generation. And this is the case with the Indian people too. The Indians have the inclination to stick to their native land, honour their teachers and respect their elders. And this is the case with the Chinese people too. In social intercourse, the Chinese emphasize "Justice" and "Uprightness"; despise "advantage" and "Disadvantage." And so do the Indian people. In relationships between man and woman, the Indians observe "Chastity" and prize "Modesty." And so do the Chinese people. And so on and so forth.

My dear friends, I think, I have spoken enough and have taken much of your time. I must halt here. Now the most disastrous tragedy of the World War II has been over. People are talking of World Peace and U.N.O., etc. But according to my humble opinion, until and unless the human conscience be awakened and the human soul be enlightened, there can hardly be any true peace in the world. This awakening of human conscience and enlightenment of human soul must come forth from the cultivation of the Spirit of Indian and Chinese cultures. Therefore, we two peoples Indian and Chinese will have a very great role to play for the real peace of the world, the present as well as the future, just as we did in the past.

My dear friends, with these few words, I wish you all good health, prosperity and success. Thanking you all once again.

TAN YUN-SHAN

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