

# Introduction

During the past decade there has been a marked increase in the number of educational institutions in this country which have introduced courses dealing with Asia, courses which are becoming recognized as an essential part of a liberal education program. This recognition comes as a result of a combination of circumstances, the most basic and incontrovertible of which are the revolutionary technical innovations which have shattered geographic distance, the determination of Asians to be heard and to be accepted as important participants in world affairs, and the realization of Americans of the interrelatedness of problems of people in different corners of the globe. Just as an earthquake in Chile sends tidal waves crashing on the shores of Hawaii and California and inundates fishing villages in Japan, so the social tremors in remote parts of Asia are capable of sending impulses of incalculable force to all parts of the world. There is need for study of the causes, effects, and methods of control of such social forces.

There is also growing awareness of the rich contributions which Asian cultures can make to the West, not only in material resources, but especially in art, philosophy, and literature. For centuries Asian intellectuals have concerned themselves with philosophic problems dealing with the meaning of human existence, the nature of reality, and the essence of aesthetic experience. Study of their points of view surely offers a new vitality to Western thought which has been so much dominated by rationalism, scientism, and materialism. Already there are innumerable examples of how the Oriental way of life has influenced Western modes in tangible and intangible forms.

Indeed it may well be that, just as the past century has been described by Western writers as the period of "Asian Awakening," the second half of the twentieth century will be referred to by future historians as the period of "Western Awakening to Asia." This is suggested in the first paper in this volume, "The Renaissance of Asia," by the versatile British humorist and social observer, C. Northcote Parkinson. His provocative comments on the pendulum course of cultural history between the Eastern and Western civiliza-

tions are backed by years of experience in both worlds. The author of the popular social "law" which bears his name is Raffles Professor of History at the University of Malaya.

Other papers in this volume are concerned with the description and the consequences of the contact, if not fusion, of the cultures of the Orient and the West. Introduction of new ideological concepts, different systems of social organization, and mechanical innovations have shaken the traditional ways of life in Asia and have released new energies of revolutionary potency. The process of change resulting from such contact is a significant subject for scholarly research.

Two historians, Brijen K. Gupta of Southern Illinois University and Nathan Talbott of Iowa State Teachers College, present studies from the tradition-steeped, complex civilizations of India and China. Professor Gupta gives an explanation of the eventual failure of the Indian society in Bengal to respond positively to the challenge of British penetration in the period 1650-1756. Of particular interest is his account of British and Indian estimates of each other and of the methods used by the British to secure trading privileges in India. Professor Talbott's essay on T'an Ssu-t'ung is a study of one intellectual's effort to incorporate Western scientific notions into his essentially humanistic, metaphysical scheme of philosophy. T'an Ssu-t'ung was among the few Chinese who, near the close of the nineteenth century, sensed the fundamental nature of the crisis facing Confucian society. Though his attempt at philosophic synthesis had little impact on the course of events, his willingness to die in 1898 in the cause of reform greatly inspired the revolutionary movement which followed.

Field studies of the effects of economic innovations on the social structure in two relatively simple rural communities are described by anthropologists Charles Kaut of Southern Illinois University and R. E. Downs of the University of Illinois. While Professor Kaut's investigations were focussed on a village in central Luzon and that of Professor Downs on a settlement in Malaya, their analyses and conclusions are striking in their similarities.

The problems of labor productivity in Asia's two most industrially conscious nations are the subjects of the papers by economists Martin Bronfenbrenner of the University of Minnesota and Yuan-li Wu of Marquette University. Professor Bronfenbrenner examines

Japan's productivity campaign, which aims at increasing output per man-hour of labor, and its possible effect on employment and wages in both the pre-capitalist and the capitalist sectors of the Japanese economy. Professor Wu's analysis of Chinese Communist production claims is directed toward determining the causes for production increases in particular Chinese industries. He seeks to reveal what part of the increase is due to added man-hours of labor, what part is attributable to new capital investment, and what part is the result of better labor organization and technical operation. His conclusions suggest that other capital-short Asian countries might well increase their productivity by better utilization of the equipment they already possess.

Mr. Robert S. Goralski, staff member of the Voice of America, discusses the revolution in mass communication in Asia in recent years and the role which radio broadcasting now plays in promoting national development in various Asian countries. His description of VOA programming and his analysis of the radio audience in Asia directs attention to an important new factor in national and international politics.

The studies in this volume are the outgrowth of the Eighth Conference on Asian Affairs which met at the University of Illinois, October 23-24, 1959. A selection of papers from that Conference is presented with the objectives of disseminating the findings of contemporary scholars and of encouraging further solid research on an area of the world which will grow in prominence in the years to come.

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