

**WHITE ASH AND BLACK COAL:
THE PERCEPTION OF RACE
IN MODERN CHINA
(1793-1949)**

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PhD in Modern Chinese History



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ABSTRACT

Race relations have often been considered a major problem of modern societies. In history, however, research on race relations and racial theories has been almost exclusively centred upon the Western-related facets of the problem: it is assumed that racism can only be a white phenomenon under which other people, lumped together under the heading "coloured", had to suffer. The narrow focus of such historical research, which can be explained by the vivid sense of guilt of modern Western society and by a still dominant feeling of eurocentrism, has distorted our comprehension of racial matters in non-Western countries. In China, the notion of "race" appeared at the end of the nineteenth century and was considered a vital problem by most intellectuals. Though the importance of such concern has been recognized by several historians, it has been hastily ascribed to either Chinese "xenophobia", a concept rarely defined, or to the effects of "social Darwinism", an equally vague term. The first chapter of this thesis presents the historical background of Chinese racial theories. It introduces a broad spectrum of material pertaining to the traditional attitudes toward skin colour, the social perception of physical differences, the concept of the "barbarians", environmental determinism, and geographical

notions. It also reviews the main ethnocentric theories, including anti-Buddhism of the fourth and fifth centuries, Song loyalism and anti-Manchu thought. The second chapter covers the period ranging from 1793 to the Sino-Japanese War of 1895. It briefly analyzes the formation and composition of racial stereotypes, which arose as a result of ethnic contacts in the ports open to foreigners. The next chapter discusses the reformers' perception of race (1895-1902). It focuses mainly on the works of Liang Qichao, Tang Caichang and Kang Youwei, but also considers other writers who were preoccupied with the idea of race. Chapter four is constructed around the idea of race as nation, which appeared in China around 1902. It studies the conceptual link between racial theories and the emergence of the nation-state concept. Chapter five is centred on the perception of race as species: how did the Chinese explain the origin of their own "race"; how was the idea of racial evolution handled; how were foreign races treated in anthropological works; how were racial differences explained? The last chapter covers the same period as chapter five (1915-1949), but is devoted exclusively to eugenics, the pseudo-science of race improvement. The popularity of eugenics in the 1930s reflected anxiety about the nation's racial health: intellectuals were tormented by the idea of racial degeneration in the face of foreign aggression. An epilogue briefly discusses the perception of race after 1949.

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"Do you know the story about the origin of the world's human races? This is a version unique to us Hakka people. Before, when there was no trace of man on earth, Tai Baixian decided to create mankind. He used clay, just like we make pottery or porcelain, and after having molded it into a human figure, he entered it into the kiln to bake.

The first one baked for too long, and was badly burnt: he was all black! This was not so good, and Tai Baixian threw him away, putting forth all his strength, throwing him really far. He threw him to Africa, hence afterwards all the people in Africa were black.

As a result of the first failure, the second one was baked more carefully. He was allowed to bake only for a little while and taken out of the kiln. Look: too white! This wasn't too good either, and Tai Baixian again threw him away. This time, he threw him a little closer. He threw him to Europe, hence afterwards all the people in Europe were white.

Experience now allowed the third one to be baked to perfection: not too long, not too short. Pretty good! Neither black nor white, but all yellow. Tai Baixian was very satisfied, and put him on the ground. Hence afterwards all the people in Asia were yellow."

Taiwan Kejia suwenxue (Folk literature of the Hakka in Taiwan), retold by Zhou Qinghua, Taipei: Dongfang wenhua shuju, 1971, pp. 149-150.

INTRODUCTION

1

"We are shamefully humiliated by the four [Western] nations, not because our climate, soil, or products are inferior, but actually because our people are inferior (...). Our inferiority is not due to nature, it is inferiority due to ourselves. If it were inborn, it would be a shame, but a shame we could not do anything about. Since the inferiority is due to ourselves, it is still a greater shame, but a shame we can do something about."¹

Feng Guifen (1809-1874) proposed the adoption of Western military technology as a means of defending China and strengthening the traditional Chinese civilization against the West. Though Feng's recognition of Western military superiority was quite outstanding for his days, his distinction between innate (*tianfu*) inferiority and acquired (*renzi*) inferiority was rather traditional. Hong Liangji (1746-1809), for instance, had underlined that the inborn nature of living organisms had a bigger impact upon their longevity than their environment:

"The longevity of a man is determined by his innate weakness or strength... Let us examine the leaves of a flower. When the leaf is on the tree, it will drop sooner or later. Some leaves

¹ Feng Guifen, "Zhi yangqi yi" (Views concerning the manufacture of foreign instruments) in *Jiaobinlu kangyi* (Protests from the Jiaobin studio), Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1971, pp. 58b-59a.

will go beyond their time and fall later. If irrigated properly, it will be like the [artificial] conservation of man. But whether a leaf will fall sooner or later is like the innate weakness or strength of man. All the leaves cannot but fall. Whatever their innate strength or weakness, all will equally end... Nor is there any eternity for man. The destiny of man can be long or short, and this will depend upon his innate weakness or strength."²

By distinguishing between nature and nurture in their discussion of the Middle Kingdom's shortcomings, Feng Guifen and other proponents of reform could maintain intact a vital part of the traditional Chinese world view: the unshakable belief in Chinese superiority over anything foreign. If Feng conceded that China was inferior to the West with respect to scientific knowledge and technological development, it was only to reassert the innate superiority of Chinese tradition: "The intelligence and resourcefulness of China are certainly superior to those of the various barbarians."³

Consistent failure to strengthen the country in the face of foreign encroachments, however, led some Chinese intellectuals to question the presumed inherent superiority of their people. From the end of the nineteenth century onwards, an increasing number of scholars became concerned with the comparative biological foundations of Chinese and Westerners: "race" made its appearance on the intellectual scene. This thesis is

² Hong Liangji, "Yaoshoupian" (On longevity) in *Hong Bei Jiang shiwen ji* (Literary works of Hong Liangji), Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1964, p. 37.

³ Feng Guifen, *Jiaobinlu*, p. 61a.

about racial perceptions in modern China.

2

Race relations are considered a major problem of modern Western societies. As a consequence, precious little attention has been paid to how non-Western people perceive Westerners.⁴

Research on race relations and racial theories has focused almost exclusively upon the Western aspects of the problem: it assumes that "racism" can only be a "white" phenomenon under which other people, lumped together under the heading "coloured", had to suffer. The narrow focus of such historical research, which can be explained by the vivid sense of guilt of modern Western society and by a still dominant feeling of eurocentrism, has distorted our comprehension of racial matters in non-Western countries.

⁴ Some notable exceptions include J. Blackburn, *The white men. The first response of aboriginal peoples to the white man*, London: Orbis, 1979; G. Jahoda, *White man. A study of the attitudes of Africans to Europeans in Ghana before independence*, London: Oxford University Press, 1961, an anthropological inquiry based on interviews; V. Görög, "L'origine de l'inégalité des races. Etude de trente-sept contes africains" in *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 8 (1968), pp. 290-309, and *Noirs et blancs: leur image dans la littérature orale africaine*, Paris: SELAF, 1976, based on the textual analysis of 161 documents of oral literature. Outside Africa, see for instance S. Hugh-Jones, "Waribi and the white man: history and myth in northwest Amazonia" in E. Tonkin, M. McDonald and M. Chapman, eds., *History and ethnicity*, London: Routledge, 1989, pp. 53-70.

In China, concern about the biological aspects of mankind appeared at the end of the 19th century. Though the importance of such concern has been recognized by some historians,⁵ it has been hastily ascribed to either Chinese "ethnocentrism", a term rarely defined, or to "social Darwinism", an equally vague concept.⁶ For Mary Rankin, who studied a group of early Chinese revolutionaries, the "revolutionaries wedded traditional xenophobia and Sinocentrism to their new concepts of nationalism and Darwinian struggle."⁷ Robert Scalapino, who is startled by some of the openly racist doctrines promulgated by Chinese intellectuals, uncovers the roots of such theories: they are the product of an interaction between the "traditional forces of xenophobia" and ideas

⁵ C.W. Cassinelli, a non-sinologist, is one of the few authors who has fully recognized the impact of the idea of race in modern China. See his insistence on the Chinese "racial consciousness" in his *Total revolution: a comparative study of Germany under Hitler, the Soviet Union under Stalin and China under Mao*, Santa Barbara: Clio Books, 1976, pp. 158-159, 182, 201, 236-237.

⁶ See for instance J.R. Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983. In a review of Pusey's study, William Haas has cautiously suggested that "Charles Darwin" and "social Darwinism" are perhaps historiographic categories not fully suited to Chinese intellectual history; see W. Haas, review of J.R. Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* in *Journal of the History of Biology* 17 (1984), pp. 435-436.

⁷ M.B. Rankin, *Early Chinese revolutionaries. Radical intellectuals in Shanghai and Chekiang, 1902-1911*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 26.

extracted from "Darwinist writings".⁸

Western sinology has not only considerably understated the significance of the idea of race in China, it has also attempted to dismiss it. Michael Gasster, for instance, believes that the Chinese "swallowed them [foreign ideas] with insufficient rumination", as a result of which "some intellectual indigestion resulted".⁹ Chinese scholars are pictured as gluttonous adolescents, uncritically ingesting foreign ideas, occasionally burping a racial slur. Such explanations proceed from a paternalistic point of view, and are predicated on the belief that people from another culture cannot be equally endowed with independent judgement.

Most Chinese historians, except some isolated cases,¹⁰ have either ignored the issue or simply denied that there has ever been anything even vaguely resembling racial thinking in China. Official propaganda in mainland China has fostered the idea that only Westerners can possibly indulge in racism, as the Chinese are the leaders of the victimised coloured people in their

⁸ R.A. Scalapino, "Prelude to Marxism: The Chinese student movement in Japan, 1900-1910" in A. Feuerwerker et al. ed., *Approaches to modern Chinese history*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967, p. 197.

⁹ M. Gasster, "The republican revolutionary movement", in D. Twitchett and J.K. Fairbank, eds., *Cambridge history of China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, vol. 11, part 2, p. 494.

¹⁰ Bo Yang, "Zhongzu qishi" (Racial discrimination) in *Choulou de Zhongguoren* (The ugly Chinese), Taipei: Linbai chubanshe, 1985, pp. 212-214.

historical struggle against white "imperialism" (that the idea of "white imperialism" is racial in essence, as it ascribes a biological foundation to a historical phenomenon, seems to be irrelevant). Concern with racism was such that until the beginning of the last decade, retroactive censure would purge pre-liberation texts from racist allusions before republication.¹¹

The taboo surrounding Chinese racial thinking, however, is not confined to communist China only. David Ho, to take but one example, felt compelled to deliver an entire article attacking a team of Western sociologists who had done research in Hong Kong. One result of the team's investigation had been their discovery of uncomfortably high social and racial distance attitudes.¹² Ho has recently reiterated his attack against Agassi and Jarvie in an article on interethnic relations. David Ho quotes the infamous team of researchers: "This ideology [of ethnocentrism] is overtly racist: to be born Chinese is the greatest privilege... On the other hand to be born a European is to be born a foreign devil", and carries on with a trivial discussion

¹¹ Martin Bernal has pointed at one example of such re-editing, interpreting it as a sign of the "decline in the respectability of "racial" theories during the twentieth century"; see M. Bernal, *Chinese socialism to 1907*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976, p. 71, n. 62. I am indebted to Professor T.H. Barrett for having drawn my attention to this footnote, which actually became the starting point of this thesis.

¹² D.Y.F. Ho, "Field studies in foreign cultures: a cautionary note on methodological difficulties" in *Psychologia* 15 (March 1972), pp. 15-21.

on the linguistic origin of the word "foreign devil", which is supposed to have generated a regrettable "misunderstanding" concerning the veritable nature of Chinese ethnocentrism.¹³ Ho, however, has considerably truncated the original version of Agassi and Jarvie: "This ideology is overtly racist: to be born Chinese is the greatest privilege; to be born fair-skinned Chinese is to be beautiful as well. On the other hand to be born a European is to be born a foreign devil; to be born a negro is something worse."¹⁴

4

In an article concerning the role of skin colour and physical characteristics in non-Western countries published more than twenty years ago, Harold Isaacs argued that racism among non-Europeans existed long before their exposure to the ideas of the conquering white Europeans, and that the charge of Western responsibility for racial patterns in ex-colonies was only partly valid. "Where responses to Westerners took place in racial terms, they were superimposed upon strongly-rooted attitudes about race and skin color that

¹³ D.Y.F. Ho, "Prejudice, colonialism, and interethnic relations: an East-West dialogue" in *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 20 (1985), pp. 224-225.

¹⁴ J. Agassi and I.C. Jarvie, "A study of Westernization" in J. Agassi and I.C. Jarvie, eds., *Hong Kong: a society in transition*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, p. 158.

long antedated this encounter."¹⁵ Frederic Wakeman has established a link between sexual xenophobia and Chinese racism during the Opium War,¹⁶ whereas Paul Cohen has indicated how racial prejudice among the Chinese was particularly virulent long before the reform movement of the 1890s.¹⁷ Despite these findings, the dominant trend of interpretation tends to flatly equate Chinese racial thinking with "Western influence". Perhaps it is true, as Lucian Pye has suggested, that "many China specialists seem anxious to avoid any hint of offensive to the Chinese".¹⁸ Perhaps some Westerners are burdened by a feeling of white guilt that can only be exorcised by a constant process of self-accusation. "The guilty white liberal is only too glad to assign all virtues to the oppressed; the oppressed is usually only too ready to accept this gratuitously offered halo", believes Isaacs.¹⁹ Perhaps there has also been a tendency to idealize Chinese culture, erected as a receptacle for

¹⁵ H.R. Isaacs, "Group identity and political change: the role of color and physical characteristics" in *Deadalus*, Spring 1967, p. 367.

¹⁶ F. Wakeman, *Strangers at the gate. Social disorder in south China, 1839-1861*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966, pp. 55-56.

¹⁷ P.A. Cohen, "Christian missions and their impact to 1900" in D. Twitchett and J.K. Fairbank, eds., *The Cambridge history of China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, vol. 10, part 1, p. 568.

¹⁸ L.W. Pye, *The mandarin and the cadre: China's political cultures*, Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, 1988, p. 1.

¹⁹ H.R. Isaacs, "Group identity", p. 364.

Western frustrated ideals: China had to be pure and uncorrupted before the arrival of the West. Whatever the twisted relationship some sinologists might entertain with Chinese culture, the idea of Western influence presents some serious limitations. Though Western influence has undeniably contributed to shape modern intellectual processes, it cannot alone account for Chinese racial consciousness. The purpose of the introductory chapter of this thesis is to show how 1) attitudes about skin colour and physical characteristics were age-old in China; 2) significant parts of the Confucian cosmology predisposed the Chinese to perceive the new world order created by Western expansion in highly racialist terms; 3) successive periods of contact with exogenous groups fostered proto-nationalist feelings and generated a strong consciousness of biological continuity. An important aspect of this study is to analyze how this cultural background guided the Chinese perception and interpretation of Western racial theories. The impact of Western influence, it is believed, was largely dependent on the nature of the traditional Chinese world view. Perhaps a comparison with the BaKongo can illustrate this nodal point. According to MacGaffey,²⁰ the traditional cosmology of the BaKongo was based upon a complementary opposition between this world

²⁰ The following is based on W. MacGaffey, "The West in Congolese experience" in P.D. Curtin, *Africa and the West. Intellectual responses to European culture*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972, pp. 49-74.

and the other. It was believed that the skin of the dead turned white when they crossed the water to join the spirits in the other world. When Westerners first arrived among the BaKongo, it was thought that they emerged from the water, where they would return at night to sleep. This integrative world view prevented the BaKongo from distinguishing civilizations in racial terms and impeded the emergence of a sharp distinction between Western culture and BaKongo cosmology. As a result, Congolese thinking has been remarkably resistant to decades of concentrated Western influence, including the racial panoply characteristic of colonialism.

5

"Modern Chinese intellectual history, the period of western influence, may be summed up as two reciprocal processes, the progressive abandonment of tradition by iconoclasts and the petrification of tradition by traditionalists."²¹

Any account of intellectual change in modern China will have to confront the problem of continuity versus discontinuity. The scholarship of Joseph Levenson, author of the above declamation, was guided by the conviction that modern China could present only little continuity with "tradition", a concept perceived as more or less

²¹ J.R. Levenson, *Confucian China and its modern fate. The problem of intellectual continuity*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958, p. xvi.

equivalent to Confucianism. Through a case study of Liang Qichao, a major intellectual figure of modern Chinese history, Levenson attempted to demonstrate how Chinese intellectuals who advocated the emulation of Western achievements were alienated from the Chinese tradition. The only continuity, it seemed, resided in a purely emotional tie. Confucianism, Levenson argued, was merely used as a "sugar-coat" to cover up "Westernism".²² Levenson, like many other historians of his generation, operated out of a conceptual framework that has been identified as the modernization, or tradition-modernity approach. This approach has been increasingly criticized for its eurocentrism, as it imposes Western history as the norm by which Chinese history should be measured.²³ As a reaction to the parochial tradition-modernity paradigm, recent scholarship has oriented itself towards an internal approach, capable of accounting more accurately for the complexity of Chinese history. Chang Hao, for instance, has argued that Liang Qichao's intellectual trajectory can hardly be interpreted as a "response" to the West, as he also responded creatively to a vast and complex intellectual background, mainly dominated by the Confucian ideal of practical

²² J.R. Levenson, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the mind of modern China*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953, p. 2.

²³ For an overview and criticism of eurocentric approaches to Chinese history, see P.A. Cohen, *Discovering history in China: American historical writing on the recent Chinese past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.

statesmanship and by New Text thinking.²⁴ Whereas Levenson described the fate of Confucianism in the hands of communist China as a process of "museumification", Kam Louie has demonstrated how scholars on the mainland have responded to the legacy of the past in an essentially traditional way, much like their predecessors in imperial times.²⁵

This study incorporates both the external approach, which emphasizes the unique nature of the Western impact on China, and the internal approach, which focuses on the autonomous nature of modern historical developments. The combination of both methods is necessary for an understanding of Chinese history in its own terms.

6

The term "racism" seems to have appeared in the English language at the end of the 1930s. It rapidly acquired a strongly pejorative connotation, as it was used mainly to attack doctrines of inequality. Since its appearance, definitions of "racism" have tended to accumulate as the doctrines under attack have diversified. This terminological extension has rendered the concept virtually meaningless. In the broad sense, as

²⁴ Chang Hao, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and intellectual transition in China, 1890-1907*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971.

²⁵ K. Louie, *Inheriting tradition: interpretations of the classical philosophers in communist China, 1949-1966*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1986, p. viii.

Michael Banton notes, it tends to roll "into one ball cultural assumptions, motives, institutions, attitudes, and beliefs about superiority: it may be politically effective, but it is not suited to comparative or historical analysis."²⁶ Strictly defined, "racism" asserts that race determines culture. But even in the narrow sense, the concept of "racism" exhibits a grave handicap for the cultural historian, as it assumes that all theories of biological inequality are essentially the same. George Mosse's study on the historical roots of racism, for instance, is based on the assumption that racism can only be interpreted as a global European phenomenon.²⁷ Recent studies, however, have adopted a narrower focus, and indicate that even within Europe, different cultural backgrounds can generate divergent interpretations of physical dissimilarity.²⁸ Equally important is the observation that the meaning various cultural groups have assigned to racial theories has greatly varied. In England, for instance, there have been at least three different approaches to racial thought

²⁶ M. Banton, *The idea of race*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1978, p. 157.

²⁷ G.L. Mosse, *Toward the final solution: a history of European racism*, New York: Howard Fertig, 1978; the same approach has been adopted by L. Poliakov, *Le mythe aryen. Essai sur les sources du racisme et des nationalismes*, Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 1987.

²⁸ See for instance N. Stepan, *The idea of race in science: Great Britain, 1800-1960*, London: Macmillan, 1986, and W.B. Cohen, *The French encounter with Africans. White response to blacks, 1530-1880*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980.

based on the different senses in which the word race has been used since the sixteenth century.²⁹

This study emphasizes both the cultural divergence and the historical variance of racial thinking by employing the concept of perception. It recognizes that there are more or less apparent phenotypical (=physical) differences between or within population groups that are transmitted genetically, but it believes that "race" (zu, zhong, zulei, minzu, zhongzu, renzhong, in Chinese) is a subjectively defined concept dependent on both cultural and biological processes of perception that can diversify or shift. From this perspective, a history of racial theories can only adopt a nominalist approach: it describes how "race" has been defined, and how these definitions have changed historically. The English word "race", when used in any study describing non-English racial perceptions, should be enclosed in quotation marks, were there no practical and stylistic considerations. "Racial" is used here as the adjectival form of "race".

In brief, this thesis attempts to analyze how Chinese intellectuals have perceived and interpreted physical differences from 1793 up to 1949. Whether or not these perceptions should be defined as "racist" is a judgement that rests entirely with the reader.

²⁹ See M. Banton, *Racial theories*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

As this study emphasizes the idea of perception, it might be useful to clarify what the term embraces. The process of perception (visual perception, mental "apprehension", etc.) is dependent on both cultural and biological factors. The social sciences have mainly been interested in the influence of cultural and social factors upon perception. The focus on the socioculturally constituted facets has been identified as the "social construction" approach. Historian Alain Corbin, for instance, has brilliantly demonstrated how the olfactory perception of the French has been dramatically redirected from the eighteenth century onwards as a result of changes in the sociocultural environment.³⁰ In linguistics, the Whorf hypothesis suggests that language may have a direct influence upon the perception of colours.³¹ More recently, sociologist Harré has edited research on the social construction of emotions.³²

The natural sciences have been more concerned with the biological foundations of human perception. Physiologists, for example, explain that human perception of colour is due to three sets of cones, each with its

³⁰ A. Corbin, *Le miasme et la jonquille: l'odorat et l'imaginaire social, 18^e-19^e siècles*, Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1982.

³¹ B.L. Whorf, *Four articles on metalinguistics*, Washington: Foreign Service Institute, 1950.

³² R. Harré, ed., *The social construction of emotions*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.

own light-sensitive material and its own absorption characteristics, responding to light from different parts of the spectrum. A controversial aspect within this field of research is the comparative study of biological mechanisms underlying perception. Marc Bornstein, for instance, posits that there is a physiological basis for cultural variations in colour perception. Light-eyed people, he believes, are more sensitive to colour than people with a dark retinal pigmentation.³³

The main body of the social sciences has so far remained impervious to any arguments stressing the biological foundation of human activity. If such biophobic attitude is understandable in the light of past political misuses of biology, it is nonetheless based on intellectual prejudice harmful to a fuller understanding of human behaviour.

8

The analytical framework of this study is centered around the concept of group definition. Groups are socially constructed entities that fulfil a purpose of identification and organization. Though there is undoubtedly a biological foundation to the group phenomenon, the forms groups assume are largely of an impermanent and transitory nature. Changes in the

³³ M.H. Bornstein, "The influence of visual perception on culture" in *American Anthropologist* 77, no. 4 (December 1975), pp. 774-798.

ingroup's perceptions and the valuations of outgroups, for instance, will lead it to alter its membership definition. Group membership, of course, is a notion that can only exist in a relational context with other groups. The nature of the network of intergroup relations can cause a group to ascribe to itself several definitions, all of which will have varying degrees of overlap. This study, of course, primarily investigates group definitions based on racial perceptions.³⁴

Group formation has been explained predominantly in terms of rational pursuit of self-interest. This analytical approach is characteristic of the classical Marxist interpretation of class conflict and capitalism as well as the liberal interpretation of market economics: both are dominated by a narrow economic determinism that does not allow for any instinctive or seemingly irrational factors.³⁵ Social theories of power

³⁴ My notion of the group as a transitional and impermanent phenomenon is in agreement with Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic groups and boundaries: the social organization of cultural difference*, Bergen: Universitetsförlaget, 1969.

³⁵ It should be noted that both the Marxist and the liberal interpretations, however helpful they might be in highlighting certain aspects of industrial societies, are misleading when they link the processes of production and distribution in pre-modern societies to specific economic interests attached to the possession of goods. Both interpretations tend to read the past in present terms. It was not the propensity to barter that dominated traditional societies, but the notion of reciprocity in social behaviour; see Karl Polanyi, *Origins of our time. The great transformation*, London: Victor Gallancz, 1945. It should also be pointed out that the notion of "rationality" is a concept largely proper to modern industrial societies. Gellner, for instance, underlines that rationality, or the belief in one internally unitary

relations, in terms of class struggle or status attainment, have failed to do justice to the complexities of racial behaviour on the unconscious level.

Already in 1953, Gordon Allport warned that the problem of intergroup prejudice could not be ascribed to any "single taproot", and should be explained by plural causation.³⁶ The conceptual framework of this research takes into account the emotional, psychological, and biological aspects of racial thinking by drawing upon notions derived from the sociology of intergroup behaviour, social psychology, psychological anthropology and sociobiology.³⁷

world in which "all facts are located within a single continuous logical space", is a notion absent in the pre-modern world. To assume that members of traditional societies behaved according to a "rational spirit" is to be guilty of presentism. The naive notion of "rationality" as the main criterion for social action has been recently suggested for the study of racial relations; see M. Hechter, "Rational choice theory and the study of racial and ethnic relations" in J. Rex and D. Mason, eds., *Theories of race and ethnic relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 264-279. On the modern notion of "rationality", see Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983, pp. 20 ff.

³⁶ G.W. Allport, *The nature of prejudice*, Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1989, p. xviii.

³⁷ In the sociology of race relations, sociobiology has recently be used by Van den Berghe. Van den Berghe interprets ethnicity as an extension of nepotism between kinsmen. Nepotism allows the biological principles of maximization of inclusive fitness; see P.L. Van den Berghe, *The ethnic phenomenon*, New York: Elsevier, 1981. Van den Berghe has perhaps overstated his case. I prefer to follow the more cautious aspects of V. Reynolds, V. Falgar and I. Vine, eds., *The sociobiology of ethnocentrism: evolutionary dimensions of xenophobia, discrimination, racism and nationalism*, London: Croom Helm, 1987.

This study is based on a wide range of source material. It incorporates the writings of leading intellectuals, influential political texts, scientific journals, popular periodicals, travel accounts, textbooks and translations, as well as scientific literature and popular texts on evolution, biology, medicine, anthropology, genetics, eugenics, racial hygiene and human geography. One common denominator links these disparate sources: they are all the products of the educated section of the Chinese population. If it is possible to distinguish between different cultural levels, then this study clearly represents an elitist history: it is concerned with the educated fringe of society. The subordinate culture, or the Little Tradition of the peasantry, which constituted more than 80% of the population, has not been considered for practical reasons. The overwhelming illiteracy of the subordinate classes,³⁸ the scarcity of reliable information, but

³⁸ Evelyn Rawski's study on popular literacy in the Qing concludes that 30 to 45 percent of men and 2 to 10 percent of women "knew how to read and write". Rawski defines minimal functional literacy as the mastery of a few hundred characters. Today, however, even reading the *People's Daily*, written in highly simplified Chinese accessible to the largest possible public, requires at least one thousand characters. Rawski's estimates appear to be rather idealistic with respect to the quantitative extent of literacy. If in Qing China a couple of hundred characters would amply suffice to buy a bag of peanuts, it was certainly not enough to be considered "literate"; see E.S. Rawski, *Education and popular literacy in Ch'ing China*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979, p. 140.

above all the restrained contact the subordinate classes had with foreigners, and their limited awareness of a non-Chinese world, suggest that relevant research should initially concentrate on the dominant culture. In any event, the substantial variations in regional behaviour, local culture, professional affiliation, etc., clearly indicate the danger of any kind of cultural overdeterminism. They also point to the conceptual inadequacy of a simple binary opposition between "dominant" and "popular" culture. Though the nature of the relationship between Great Tradition and Little Tradition is still an important point of debate,³⁹ it might be hypothesized that a high degree of reciprocal influence existed between these two cultural levels. A careful study of the racial perceptions of the lower strata of Chinese society would probably reveal many parallels with the views held by the educated elite.⁴⁰ Similarly, this study assumes that in their confrontation

³⁹ Ralph Thaxton, for instance, believes that there existed an unbridgeable gap between both worlds, the peasants having created a "potentially oppositionist countersociety"; R. Thaxton, *China turned rightside up: revolutionary legitimacy in the peasant world*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983, p. 19.

⁴⁰ During the Opium War of 1842, it was widely believed in scholar official circles that English soldiers could not run, as their legs and feet were bandaged. In 1949, an English Chinese girl returned to China to join the revolution. Her roommates in the army assailed her with questions: "Is it true English people only have one straight bone in the leg and can't bend their knees?"; see Esther Ying Cheo, *Black Country girl in red China*, London: Hutchinson, 1980, p. 32. This example clearly illustrates how ideas could shift from one cultural level to another.

with and interpretation of the outside world, the majority of scholar officials interacted with the dominant culture in a manner that globally transcended their individual ethnic background. Although it focuses upon the Han Chinese, it believes that there were no predominant differences between them and the Hakka or the Manchus with respect to racial perceptions of foreigners. Nor is it in the nature or scope of this work to examine Han perceptions of national minorities.⁴¹ The phenotype of most minorities in China was not significantly at variance with that of the Han Chinese: there was a physical continuity that precluded the elaboration of racial theories. Despite many disparaging comments on the supposedly bestial origins of the minorities, the Han perception of minority Chinese remained embedded in an ethnocentric framework that stressed sociocultural differences. This thesis investigates how Chinese perceived physically discontinuous people, mainly Westerners and Africans.

⁴¹ Han perceptions of national minorities have already been extensively treated. For an introduction, see T. Heberer, *China and its national minorities*, New York: Sharpe, 1989; J.T. Dreyer, *China's forty millions. Minority nationalities and national integration in the People's Republic of China*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976, and J.N. Lipman, "Ethnicity and politics in Republican China" in *Modern China* 10, no. 3 (July 1984), pp. 285-316.

PART ONE

1

RACE AS CULTURE: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

SECTION ONE

Introduction

Chinese racial theories emerged at the turn of the last century as a result of the country's exposure to alien races and foreign systems of thought. They were embedded in a framework of traditional ideas that predisposed the Chinese to perceive the new world order created by Western expansion in highly racial terms. Though the core of this framework can be traced back to the Classics of Confucianism, most of its elements took shape during successive periods of contact with exogenous groups that conquered and ruled China, particularly the Toba (386-534), the Jin (1126-1280), the Mongols (1280-1368) and the Manchus (1644-1911). These traditional ideas are briefly outlined in this chapter. It should be emphasized that in the absence of any substantial studies concerning the idea of race in traditional China, this introduction can only be tentative.

The barbarian in the classics

Thought in ancient China is generally believed to have been oriented towards the world, or tianxia, "all under heaven". The world was perceived as one homogeneous unity named "great community" (datong). The absence of any kind of cultural pluralism implicit in this world view has been called a "political solipsism":¹ the Middle Kingdom, dominated by the assumption of its cultural superiority, measured alien groups according to a yardstick by which those who did not follow the "Chinese ways" were considered "barbarians". It is assumed that this world view, which mainly originated from the Gongyang school, generated at least one valuable tendency: it obliterated racial distinctions to emphasize cultural identity. A theory of "using the Chinese ways to transform the barbarians" (yongxiabianyi) was strongly advocated. It was believed that the barbarian could be culturally assimilated (laihua, "come and be transformed", or hanhua, "become Chinese"). The Chunqiu, a chronological history of the Spring and Autumn period (722-481 B.C.) traditionally attributed to Confucius, hinged on the idea of cultural assimilation. Later, He Xiu (129-182), in his commentary on the Gongyang, distinguished between the zhuxia, the "various people of Xia [the first Chinese empire]", and the Yi and Di

¹ Hsiao Kung-chuan, *A history of Chinese political thought*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 24.

barbarians, living outside the scope of the Chinese cultural sphere. In the Age of Great Peace, the barbarians would flow in and be transformed: the world would be one.

The delusive myth of a Chinese antiquity that abandoned racial standards in favour of a concept of cultural universalism in which all barbarians could ultimately participate has quite understandably attracted some modern scholars. Living in an unequal and often hostile world, it is tempting to project the utopian image of a racially harmonious world into a distant and obscure past.

To counterbalance this highly idealized vision of the Chinese past, some researchers have underlined parts of the Classics apparently incompatible with the concept of cultural universalism. Most quoted is a sentence appearing in the *Zuozhuan* (fourth century B.C.), a chronicle of feudal history: "If he is not of our race, he is sure to have a different mind" (*feiwo zulei, qixin biyi*).² This sentence seems to support the allegation

² J. Legge, *The Chinese classics*, London: Henry Frowde, 1860-1872, 5,1, pp. 354-355. This sentence has been perceived as the core of "Chinese racism" throughout the recent past. Three examples: a missionary writing in the *Wanguo gongbao* (The Chinese Globe Magazine) of 8 July 1882 blamed the Chinese for "discriminating" (*qishi*) against foreigners, and attributed this hostile attitude to the classics by quoting the *Zuozhuan* (*Wanguo gongbao*, vol. 14, 8 July 1882, pp. 193-194). It is also the point of departure for a discussion on "racial discrimination" in Chinese antiquity by Yang Lien-sheng, who believes that such racism should be "spelled out in order to be dispelled" (Yang Lien-sheng, "Historical notes on the Chinese world order" in J.K. Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese world order: traditional China's foreign relations*,

that at least some degree of "racial discrimination" had been formed during the early stage of Chinese civilization.

The culturalistic and the racialist perspectives have in common the adoption of a Western conceptual framework that sharply distinguishes between culture and race, corresponding respectively to ethnocentrism and racism when used as a yardstick to diminish alien groups. The dichotomy between culture and race, which has proved to be a viable conceptual tool in analyzing recent Western attitudes towards outsiders, should be abandoned in the Chinese case. It introduces an opposition so far not supported by historical evidence and tends to project a modern perception onto a remote phase of history.

Physical composition and cultural disposition seem to have been confused in Chinese antiquity. The border between man and animal was blurred. "The Rong are birds and beasts."³ This was not simply a derogatory description of the barbarians; it was part of a mentality that integrated the concept of civilization with the idea of humanity, picturing the alien groups living outside the pale of Chinese society as distant savages hovering

Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968, p. 27). More recently, Bo Yang, a Taiwanese historian who has aroused considerable indignation by compiling the negative aspects of Chinese civilization, placed the phrase at the centre of an article on "Chinese racism" (*zhongzu qishi*) (Bo Yang, *Choulou de Zhongguoren* (The ugly Chinese), Taipei: Linbai chubanshe, 1985, p. 212).

³ Yang Lien-sheng, "Historical notes", p. 24. This quotation from the *Zuozhuan* has not been translated by James Legge.

on the edge of bestiality. Names of the barbarians were written in characters with an animal radical:⁴ the Di, a northern tribe, were thus assimilated with the dog, whereas the Man and the Min, barbarians from the south, shared the attributes of the reptiles. The Qiang had a sheep radical.

The *Liji*, or Book of rites (third century B.C.), underlined that "the Chinese, the Rong, the Yi and (the other) peoples of the five quarters all have (their own) nature, which cannot be moved or altered."⁵ The "five quarters" referred to a cosmographical plan which first appeared in the *Tribute of Yu*, a part of the *Shujing*, or *Classic of Documents* (fifth century B.C.). This plan divided the world in five concentric configurations. Around the imperial centre (*didu*), the hub of civilization, came the royal domain (*dianfu*) and the lands of the feudal princes (*houfu*). Beyond these two areas lay a zone of pacification (*suifu*) that separated civilization from the last two zones, inhabited by steppe people and savages.⁶ As noted by Ruth Meserve, the very name of the last zone, called the "submissive wastes" (*huangfu*), evoked a dreadful imagery of drought and

⁴ This habit persisted until the 1930s, and was only officially abolished in 1949.

⁵ See Lionello Lanciotti, "Barbaren" in *altchinesischer Sicht* in *Antaios* 6 (March 1968), p. 573.

⁶ See C. Waltham, *Shu ching, book of history. A modernized edition of the translation of James Legge*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971, pp. 39-54.

famine, of barrenness and desolation.⁷

Throughout its history, China viewed the tribes of the northern steppes with an almost traumatic apprehension. The sea, on the other hand, gave it a feeling of natural protection. The spherical concept of the world inherent in most of China's cosmological plans was conveniently completed by surrounding all habitable ground by four seas (*sihai*). China placed herself at the centre of the world. Exogenous groups were relegated to the peripheries: they were referred to as the "barbarians of the four quarters" (*siyi*).

Every barbarian tribe's name could be combined with a particular colour. The ancient texts repeatedly mentioned the red or black Di, the white or black Man, the pitch-dark Lang.⁸ These colours were merely symbolic. They indicated either the dominant tint of the clothes or the directions of the compass: white for the West, black for the North, red for the East, blue-green for the South. Yellow represented the Centre.

Every civilization has an ethnocentric world image in which the outsiders are reduced to manageable spatial units. Ancient India opposed the pure land of the Aryans

⁷ Ruth I. Meserve, "The inhospitable land of the barbarian" in *Journal of Asian History* 16 (1982), p. 54.

⁸ See C.C. Müller, "Die Herausbildung der Gegensätze: Chinesen und Barbaren in der frühen Zeit" in W. Bauer, ed., *China und die Fremden. 3000 Jahre Auseinandersetzung in Krieg und Frieden*, München: C.H. Beck, 1980, p. 62.

to the territories of the mleccha, or "barbarians".⁹ The Europeans, from the Greeks onward, viewed the world as composed of three continental parts: Asia, Europe and Africa. This tripartite division of the earth was associated with the three sons of Noah during the Middle Ages.¹⁰ Europe, however, only occupied a quarter of this universe, as noted Isidore of Seville, a bishop of the seventh century and author of a representative geographical compilation:

The ancients did not divide these three parts of the world equally, for Asia stretches right from the south, through the east to the north, but Europe stretches from the north to the west and thence Africa from the west to the south. From this it is quite evident that the two parts Europe and Africa occupy half the world and that Asia alone occupies the other half."¹¹

Whereas the eurocentric vision of the West was tempered by a threefold representation of the earth, China's imagination was trapped by a narrow dichotomy that opposed the civilized centre to the barbarian periphery.

⁹ R. Thapar, "The image of the barbarian in early India" in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13 (1971), p. 411.

¹⁰ See G.H.T. Kimble, *Geography in the Middle Ages*, London: Methuen, 1938, chapter 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

The barbarians in mythology

The degree of remoteness from the imperial centre corresponded to the grade of cultural savagery and physical bruteness. In the *Shanhaijing* (fourth century B.C.), spirits and monstrous beasts roaming on the edges of the world, beyond the Great Wilderness (*dahuang*), were half man half animal. The spirit *Yingzhao* had a human face and the body of a horse;¹² another spirit possessed a human body but exhibited a dragon head.¹³ Barbarians living beyond the realm of Chinese civilization were all dehumanized: the mythological function of the *Shanhaijing* clearly supplanted its ethnographical purpose. There was a tribe of one-eyed people (*Yimuguo*),¹⁴ as well as a country of three-headed barbarians (*Sanshouguo*).¹⁵ One-armed barbarians with three eyes also appeared.¹⁶ For the Chinese, cultural intolerance towards the outsider was associated with a feeling of physical discontinuity. The natural constitution of the barbarian had to reflect his cultural inadequacy.

Skin colour was considered a similar anatomical

¹² Rémi Mathieu, *Etude sur la mythologie et l'ethnologie de la Chine ancienne: traduction annotée du Shanhai jing*, Paris: Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1983, p. 89.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

oddity. It branded the barbarian with the indelible stigma of animality. A mystical country in the west was inhabited by white people whose long hair covered their shoulders.¹⁷ Barbarians from another tribe had a human face, "but their eyes, hands and feet are entirely black."¹⁸ Only the Chinese were described as *ren*, "man", or "human being", thus implicitly degrading alien groups to bestiality.¹⁹

The *Huainanzi*, a major work of Taoism dating from the second century B.C., also associated cultural inferiority with physical oddity. "In the West is the high land where streams and valleys come out, where the sun and moon enter. There its men have mean faces, are deformed, have long necks, walk upright, and have a hole going through the nose. The skin is like leather. The white color governs the lungs. They are intrepid, but not virtuous."²⁰ The *Huainanzi* reported that the North was "gloomy and dark, not bright and fresh. That (i.e. the light) is obstructed, and there is only wintry ice. Therefore even insects hibernate. Whosoever is there hides and its people contract the appearance of short necks, large shoulders, and a cavity going down to the end of the spine, cold bones. Black governs the kidneys. Its people are simple and stupid, like beasts and are

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 408.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 445.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 451-452.

²⁰ Meserve, "The inhospitable land", p. 55.

long-lived."²¹

Cultural intolerance associated with a feeling of physical discontinuity in ancient China has only a partial equivalent in the ancient Western world. When Ethiopians first appeared in Homeric poems as the most remote people on earth, their image was essentially favorable.²² Greek environment theories provided examples of man's diversity: Ethiopians exemplified the broad scale of human faculties and potentialities.

In the early Roman Empire, Pliny the Elder reported that the lesser known regions of the distant north and south were inhabited by imaginary creatures. Skin colour, however, did not play a significant role in the antiquity's imagery. Frank Snowden believes that the familiarity with Ethiopian realities as well as the general pattern of white-black encounters in antiquity hindered the emergence of the idea of skin colour as an outward manifestation of cultural inferiority.²³

Environmental determinism

The school of Yin and Yang, attributed to Zou Yan (340-260? B.C.), is perhaps at the origin of a belief in environmental determinism that contributed to the

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

²² Frank M. Snowden, *Before colour prejudice: the ancient view of Blacks*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983, pp. 46 ff.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

dehumanization of the alien. Yin and yang, the two primogenial forces of nature, produced all living organisms. Yin was the negative fluid, associated with the earth. It was female, dark, cold, moist and quiescent. Yang was the positive fluid, related to heaven. It was male, active, warm and light. The yin pole was situated in the North, where it produced cold and darkness. The yang pole was in the South and generated heat and light. Only man was the result of a perfect harmony of both fluids. The furred and feathered creatures were dominated by the yang fluid, whereas the scaly and shell-covered existed by the yin fluid.²⁴

The five colours of the five directions also described the differences in the nature of the soil, supposed to exert a shaping influence on nature and man: "It is yellow, red, or black, of superior, average, or inferior quality."²⁵

Other fluids participated in the elaboration of nature. In his commentaries on the *Liji*, Zheng Xuan (127-200) explained that differences in the natural constitution of the barbarian were caused by the local "earth fluid" (*diqu*).²⁶

²⁴ On the Yin-Yang school, see A. Forke, *The world conception of the Chinese: their astronomical, cosmological and physico-philosophical speculations*, London: Arthur Probsthain, 1925.

²⁵ Wang Chong, *Lun-heng*, tr. by A. Forke, New York: Paragon Book Gallery, 1962, vol. 1, p. 390.

²⁶ E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist conquest of China: the spread and adaptation of Buddhism in early medieval China*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959, p. 265.

Such environmental theories were developed under the Tang (618-907). Du You (735-812) believed that the barbarians of his time were backward partly because they were less favoured in their climate and environment than China. They lacked the spiritual guidance of the sages China's environment had produced, nurtured by the pure ethers of Heaven and Earth.²⁷

"Raw" and "cooked" barbarians

Two categories of barbarians lived within the Middle Kingdom. The *shengfan*, literally "raw barbarians", were considered savage and resisting. The *shufan*, or "cooked barbarians", were tame and submissive. The consumption of raw food was regarded as an infallible sign of savagery that affected the natural constitution of the barbarian.

A geographical work of the twelfth century entitled *Lingwai daida*, written in 1178 by Zhou Qufei, was mainly concerned with Guangxi, a province in the south inhabited by numerous aboriginal peoples. A chapter on Hainandao, an island off the coast of south China, distinguished between "raw" and "cooked" Li barbarians. The tame Li lived on the border of the island, enjoying all the benefits of Chinese civilization. The wild Li, however, populated the dark forests of the centre of the island,

²⁷ D. McMullen, "Views of the state in Du You and Liu Zongyuan" in S. Schram, ed., *Foundations and limits of state power in China*, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1987, p. 64.

far away from the humanizing influence of the Han Chinese. When a member of their community died, they would kill a buffalo and eat it raw.²⁸ Nature and nurture were closely associated in the Chinese mind.

The *Pingzhou ketan*, written by Zhu Yu in the beginning of the twelfth century, noted that rich people in Canton used to keep "devil slaves" (*guinu*):

"Their colour is black as ink, their lips are red and their teeth white, their hair is curly and yellow. There are males and females...They live in the mountains (or islands) beyond the seas. They eat raw things. If, in captivity, they are fed on cooked food, after several days they get diarrhoea. This is called "changing the bowels" [*huanchang*]. For this reason they sometimes fall ill and die; if they do not die one can keep them, and after having been kept a long time they begin to understand human speech [i.e. Chinese], although they themselves cannot speak it."²⁹

Physical change enhanced intellectual capacity, though the black would never reach the level of inter-human communication. This example, though more research would be necessary to evaluate how representative it is, clearly corroborates the hypothesis of a mental link between the racial constitution and the cultural level of

²⁸ A. Netolitzky, *Das Ling-wai tai-ta von Chou Ch'ü-fei: eine Landeskunde Südchinas aus dem 12. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1977, pp. 32 ff.

²⁹ J.J.L. Duyvendak, *China's discovery of Africa*, London: Arthur Probsthain, 1949, p. 24; I have replaced Duyvendak's translation of "people's language" (*renyan*) by "human speech".

the barbarian in the Chinese mind.³⁰

The skin colour of the barbarian

Skin colour did not only play a significant role in mythology: the Chinese developed a white-black polarity among themselves at an early stage of their history. A white complexion was highly valued, as many verses of Chinese poetry show. This is how the *Shijing*, the earliest collection of poems, extols the whiteness of a famous princess:

"Her fingers were like the blades of the young white grass;

"Her skin was like congealed ointment;

"Her neck was like the tree-grub;

"Her teeth were like melon-seeds;

"Her head cicada-like, her eyebrows the silkworm

³⁰ A survey of the different races in Yunnan in the 1930s demonstrates that these mental attitudes were still deep-rooted in the first half of this century. When describing the Qiawa, the author distinguishes between "raw" and "cooked" barbarians. The "raws" are "stupid and brutal, barely different from animals" (Li Cheng-tchoang, "Etude sur les races du premier district des marchés coloniales yunnanaises" in J. Siguret, tr., *Territoires et populations des confins du Yunnan*, Peking: Henri Vetch, 1937, p. 198). They like to eat raw dog meat, and touch their rice only when its rotten. When they have beef, they usually wait a couple of days before consuming it: "After several days, it is putrid, fetid and maggoty. Then only the savage Qiawa gather around it and ingest their gluey rice after having dipped it in the putrid meat and blood (*ibid.*, p. 199)". The author then describes the pitch-black, hairy body of the Qiawa, who never take a bath. Only their fingers, with which they eat, remain white. "These human animals are indeed a strange sight!", sighs the author, who nevertheless admits that he is not a specialist. He actually never had had the leisure to go and visit the described tribes personally (*ibid.*, pp. 200, 213).

moth"³¹

White jade was used as a metaphor for a light complexion. Though it was mainly a canon of feminine beauty, it could also apply to men. Wang Yan, the last prime minister of the Jin dynasty (265-316), was famous for his grace, in particular for the "jade-like" whiteness of his hands.³²

Not all Chinese had the privilege of a light complexion. Labourers were called "black-headed people" to differentiate them from the landlord class. Though this term changed in meaning as a result of an official decree issued in 221 B.C., it had long been associated with a negatively valued dark complexion. According to the *Shuowen* (first century A.D.), the common people had been called black-headed because of their pigmentation. The *Chunqiu* emphasized the black complexion of the peasant, burned swarthy by the sun. Under the Zhou, slaves were called *renli*. *Li* referred to a large cooking utensil stained by smoke and blackened by fire. It was a metaphor for the black faces of the slaves who tilled the fields under the burning sun and implied contempt and

³¹ J. Legge, *The Chinese classics*, 4,i, *The She king*, London: Henry Frowde, 1860-1872, p. 95; see also p. 77.

³² A. Waley, "The fall of Loyang" in *History Today* 4 (1951), p. 8, quoted in A.F. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese history*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959, p. 31.

disdain.³³

The polarity between white and black, derived from both a differentiation of social classes and a particular aesthetical value system, was projected upon the outside world when the Chinese came into contact with alien groups. As already noted by Henri Maspero, the Chinese called their own complexion "white" from the most ancient times.³⁴ This colour consciousness was sustained by encounters with people from neighbouring countries, who were generally of a darker complexion. When Albuquerque first arrived in Malacca in 1511, the natives drew his attention to the existence of "white" people in the region: Albuquerque found Chinese emigrants.³⁵ A Chinese geography of the early Ming corroborates this anecdote by reporting that "people in Malacca have a black skin, but

³³ I have heavily relied upon Shih Lun, "The black-headed people" in Li Yu-ning, ed., *First emperor of China: the politics of historiography*, New York: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1975, pp. 242-258.

³⁴ H. Maspero, *La Chine antique*, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1955, p. 13. Maspero ascertained that the Chinese had a "yellow complexion", and was surprised that they could describe their skin colour as white. Richard Wilhelm, in an analysis of the canons of feminine beauty according to Li Yu (1611-1680?), also wondered how white could be regarded as the ideal skin colour by the "yellow race" (R. Wilhelm, "Chinesische Frauenschönheit" in *Chinesisch-Deutscher Almanach* 1931, p. 23). The idea that the Chinese had to be yellow was indeed so pervasive that even the European's visual perception of the "Mongoloid" was altered.

³⁵ P. Huard, "Depuis quand avons-nous la notion d'une race jaune?" in *Institut Indochinois pour l'Etude de l'Homme* 4 (1942), p. 40.



some are white: these are Chinese."³⁶

The Roman Empire was called Daqin, or "Big Qin", Qin being also the name of a Chinese dynasty (221-206 B.C.). The *Houhanshu* (fifth century A.D.) thus reported that people in Daqin were "tall and well-proportioned, somewhat like the Chinese, whence they are called Ta-ts'in."³⁷ Zhao Rugua, an Inspector of Foreign Trade in Fujian, introduced skin colour into this equation. He noted that in Baghdad, "the inhabitants are tall and of a fine bright (xi) complexion, somewhat like the Chinese, which is the reason for them being called Ta-ts'in."³⁸ Zhao wrote these lines in 1225, during the Southern Song (1127-1280) dynasty. This period witnessed a heightening of colour-consciousness as a result of the increase in maritime activities and contacts with foreigners.³⁹ It was also under the Song that the Buddhist pantheon was sinicized, including the transformation of the

³⁶ Zhang Xie, *Dongxi yangkao* (Geography of south-east Asia), Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1981, p. 67.

³⁷ F. Hirth, *China and the Roman Orient: researches into their ancient and medieval relations as represented in old Chinese records*, Hong Kong: Kelly and Walsh, 1885, p. 41.

³⁸ F. Hirth and W.W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua: His work on the Chinese and Arab trade in the 12th and 13th centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chi*, St. Petersburg: Printing Office of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1911, p. 103.

³⁹ On the Song seaborne trade, see Zhang Xiang, *Woguo gudai de haishang jiaotong* (Chinese ancient maritime communications), Peking: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1986, chapter 5; see also Lo Jung-p'ang, "The emergence of China as a sea power during the late Sung and early Yüan periods" in *Far Eastern Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (1955), pp. 489-503.

Bodhisattva type from a "swart half-naked Indian to a more decently clad divinity with a properly light complexion."⁴⁰

Black physically differentiated the socially most distant Chinese from the educated Chinese. It also symbolized the most remote part of the geographically known world. Chinese texts up to the Tang dynasty presented the distant southerners of the Nam-Viet Cham empire as black, wavy-haired barbarians of the mountains and the jungles. They were seen as "devils" or "ghosts" (gui).⁴¹ The Khmers were also called kunlun people, by reference to a mythical mountain appearing in the *Shanhaijing*. The Kunlun Mountain delimited the western edge of the world. As geographical knowledge progressed, the location of the kunlun people shifted.

In the eighth century, the term was applied to Malaysians. In 750, Jianzhen (688-765) noticed the presence of many "Brahmans, Persans and Kunluns [Malaysians]"⁴² in Canton. The *Book of the Tang* reported that "every year, Kunlun merchants come in [their] ships

⁴⁰ A. Soper, "Hsiang-kuo-ssu, an imperial temple of Northern Sung", quoted in Wright, *Buddhism*, p. 98.

⁴¹ E.H. Schafer, *The vermilion bird: T'ang images of the south*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967, p. 16; see also p. 73.

⁴² J. Takakusu, "Le voyage de Kanshin en Orient (742-754)" in *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient* 28 (1928), p. 466.

with valuable goods to trade with the Chinese."⁴³

Madagascar, discovered during the Song, was called *Kunluncengqi*, *cengqi* transcribing the general Arab word for negro, *Zang*. Madagascar was believed to have "many savages with bodies as black as lacquer and with curly hair."⁴⁴

Between white, the centre of the civilized world, and black, the negative pole of humanity, relegated to the edge of the known world, lay a whole range of nuances. Shades of colour became more precise as the Chinese grew familiar with aliens. Under the Tang, "the darker skin of India seems to have interested some of the Chinese image makers; one supposes at times that they were confused by the dark-skinned people, for they did not clearly distinguish between Hindus, Negroes and Malays", observes Jane Mahler.⁴⁵

Confusion dissipated with familiarity. Under the Song, which saw an increase in the social perception of skin colour, distinctions become more common. Zhao Rugua's work tells us that people in Ceylon were "very

⁴³ Wang Gungwu, "The Nanhai trade. A study of the early history of Chinese trade in the South China Sea" in *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 31 (1958), no. 182, p. 75.

⁴⁴ Netolitzky, *Ling-wai tai-ta*, p. 49.

⁴⁵ J.G. Mahler, *The Westerners among the figurines of the T'ang dynasty of China*, Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1959, p. 84.

black" (*jifu shenhei*).⁴⁶ In Malabar, people were of a "purple complexion" (*zise*).⁴⁷ Savages of the Andaman islands, feared to be anthropophages, were of a colour described as "resembling black lacquer" (*shen ru heiqi*).⁴⁸

During the early Ming, several expeditions to distant countries were organized by Zheng He as part of the policy of expansion of the Yongle emperor (r. 1403-1424). Ma Huan accompanied Zheng He on three expeditions and published an account entitled *Yingya shenglan* in 1451.⁴⁹ The body of people in Malacca was "slightly black" (*shenti weihei*)⁵⁰, whereas the faces of Bengalis were "completely black" (*ren zhi rong jiehei*).⁵¹ Natives of Ormuz had a "clear white" complexion (*qingbai*).⁵² The inhabitants of Mekka had what was described as a "purple-chest colour" (*zitangse*).⁵³

⁴⁶ Zhao Rugua, *Zhufanzhi* (Records on the various barbarians), Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1956, juan 2, p. 10b.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, juan 2, p. 16a.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, juan 2, p. 34a.

⁴⁹ See the translation of J.V.G. Mills, *Ying-yai sheng-lan, The overall survey of the ocean shores*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

⁵⁰ Ma Huan, *Yingya shenglan jiaozhu* (Annotated Overall survey of the ocean shores), ed. with notes by Feng Chengjun, Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1955, p. 23.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

Westerners, despite their white pigmentation, were as weird as Africans.⁵⁴ An early mention of Westerners by a commentator of the *Qianhanshu*, Yan Shigu (eighth century A.D.), noted that they had "blue eyes and red beards; they look like macaques (*mihou*)."⁵⁵ In Chinese eyes, Europeans were just another variety of physically defective creatures, comparable to the albinos in the Western mind: they provoked curiosity mingled with a feeling of repulsion and pity. Their complexion was not purely white, it was "ash-white" (*huibai*), the exteriorization of the demonological forces that drove the foreign devils in their expansion overseas. Zhang Xie, who also mentioned the presence of "white" Chinese in Malacca, thus described the Portuguese: "They are seven feet tall, have eyes like a cat, a mouth like an oriole, an ash-white face, thick and curly beards like

⁵⁴ The Chinese discovered the European in the 16th and 17th centuries with the same apprehension with which the European faced the Negro in his exploration of Africa. Jan Nieuhof, who accompanied Peter de Goyer and Jacob de Keyser on the first European mission to the Qing in 1655, was struck by this inversion of roles. When a crowd of officials and courtiers loitered near by in Peking, he remarked that they stared at them "as if some new monster from Africa had arrived"; J. Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap der Neerlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie aan den Grooten Tartarischen Cham den tegenwoordigen Keizer van China*, Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1665, p. 173.

⁵⁵ Zhang Xinglang, "Zhongguo renzhong Yindu-Riermanzhong fenzi" (Indo-Germanic elements in the Chinese race) in *Furen xuezhì* 1, 1928, p. 180. For a summary of the different theories concerning the origin of this tribe, see J.R. Gardiner-Garden, "Chang Ch'ien and central Asian ethnography" in *Papers on Far Eastern History* 33 (March 1986), pp. 28-30.

black gauze, and almost red hair."⁵⁶ These hairy goblins were naturally associated with their black counterparts from beyond the Kunlun mountains, as the verses of a nineteenth century poem on the English and Indian troops show: "The white ones are cold and dull as the ashes of frogs, the black ones are ugly and dirty as coal."⁵⁷ One crucial difference, however, distinguished them: the negro was a slave.

The black slave

Aborigines, throughout Chinese history, were considered imperfect copies of human beings (i.e. Chinese), and constituted an ideal source for cheap labour. The natives of South China were exploited and enslaved under the Tang by the Chinese settlers during their expansion southward.⁵⁸ This ^{section} paragraph will examine the equation of "black" with "slave" in the Chinese perception of social order.

Zhang Xinglang has argued that African slaves had been imported into China as early as the Tang dynasty.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Zhang Xie, *Dongxi yangkao*, p. 93.

⁵⁷ Jin He, "Shuo gui" (About ghosts), repr. in A Ying, comp., *Yapian zhanzheng wenxue ji* (Collection of literary writings on the Opium War), Peking: Guji chubanshe, 1957, p. 44.

⁵⁸ Shafer, *The vermilion bird*, p. 15.

⁵⁹ Zhang Xinglang, "Tangshi Feizhou heinu shuru Zhongguo kao" (The importation of African black slaves into China during the Tang) in *Furen xuezhì* 1, 1928, pp. 101-119.

According to Duyvendak, the first definite reference to the African continent appears in the *Youyang zazu*, written by Duan Chengshi (?-863) at the end of the Tang dynasty. It is significant that this early reference already identifies the African with the lowest scale in the social hierarchy, namely slavery:

"The country of Po-pa-li [Berbera] is in the south-western sea. (The people) do not eat any of the five grains but eat only meat. They often stick a needle into the veins of cattle and draw blood which they drink raw, mixed with milk. They wear no clothes except that they cover (the parts) below the loins with sheepskins. Their women are clean and of proper behaviour. The inhabitants themselves kidnap them, and if they sell them to foreign merchants, they fetch several times their price."⁶⁰

Under the Song, reports on the Arab slave-trade became more common. Zhou Qufei wrote that Madagascar had many savages, who were "enticed by food and then caught and carried off; thousands are sold as slaves."⁶¹ Zhao Rugua made the same remark and added that "they are used for gate-keepers (lit., to look after the gate-bolts). It is said that they do not long for their kinsfolk."⁶² These black slaves, carried to Asia by the Persian and Arab merchants, could fetch three taels of gold or its equivalent in scented woods per head on the Chinese

⁶⁰ Duyvendak, *China's discovery*, p. 13.

⁶¹ Netolitsky, *Ling-wai tai-ta*, p. 49.

⁶² Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, p. 149.

market.⁶³ Zhu Yu called the black door-keepers *yeren*, "wild man", or *guinu*, "devil slave". He also mentioned "kunlun slaves", a variety of black creatures from near the sea "that can enter the water without blinking the eyes": these slaves worked on ships, repairing sprung seams below the water-line.⁶⁴ A work of the eighteenth century relates that many Chinese families of the fourteenth century bought black slaves to use as gatekeepers; they were called "devil slaves" or "black servants" (*heisi*).⁶⁵

Negro stewards served on the Chinese ships during the Song.⁶⁶ As late as the nineteenth century, crews on Chinese owned ships were Manila men and "seedies", natives from Africa:⁶⁷ they were despised by the Chinese as "black devils", according to a missionary's report.⁶⁸

Black slaves were a popular topic in literature. The *Taiping guangji* (981) contains many tales about the kunlun slaves, believed to be simple-minded but

⁶³ See P. Wheatley, "Geographical notes on some commodities involved in Sung maritime trade" in *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 32, no. 186 (1959), p. 54.

⁶⁴ Zhu Yu, *Pingzhou ketan* (Anecdotes and stories), Changsha: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1935-36, juan 2, p. 2b.

⁶⁵ Hirth and Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, p. 32.

⁶⁶ Lo Jung-P'ang, "China as a sea power", p. 500.

⁶⁷ W.C. Hunter, *The "fan kwae" at Canton before the treaty days, 1825-1844*, Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1911, p. 148.

⁶⁸ *Wanguo gongbao* (The Globe Magazine) 15, 2 December 1882, pp. 146a-147.

courageous in obeying orders regardless of any danger.⁶⁹

During the Song period, Medieval Europe had little interest in Africa as such, despite its geographical proximity.⁷⁰ Information about Africa was mainly obtained through the Arabs in Spain, who had been exploring parts of the continent since the seventh century. From the twelfth century onward, Christians had a growing number of slaves, mainly Muslims from the Maghreb, but also some blacks. This trade steadily increased during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, mainly in the hands of European merchants.⁷¹ Contempt for and aloofness towards the black slaves seems to have been common among certain social classes of the South of Europe, an attitude not shared by the North at that period.⁷²

The equation of black with slave, an important factor in the development of racist attitudes,⁷³ was thus

⁶⁹ See E. Wang, "The k'un-lun slave: a legend" in *Asia* 41 (1941), pp. 134-135.

⁷⁰ See F. de Médeiros, "Recherches sur l'image des noirs dans l'Occident médiéval, 13^e-15^e siècles", thèse de doctorat de l'Université de Paris, 1973.

⁷¹ See C. Verlinden, "Esclavage noir en France méridionale et courants de traite en Afrique" in *Annales du Midi* 128 (1966), pp. 335-443.

⁷² J. Devisse, "Africa in inter-continental relations" in D.T. Niane, ed., *General History of Africa*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, vol. 4, p. 652.

⁷³ The Académie Française equated the term "nègre" with slave in the eighteenth century. "Noir" partly supplanted "nègre" during the latter half of the eighteenth century, as attests the title of a French abolitionist society founded in 1788: *La Société des Amis des Noirs*. See W.B. Cohen, *The French encounter with Africans. White response to blacks, 1530-1880*,

realized at a very early stage in China. It existed long before Westerners established themselves at the frontiers of the Empire.

When the Portuguese settled in Macao during the second half of the sixteenth century, they imported many slaves from their colonies in Africa, India and Malacca. African negresses and numerous female Timorese slaves were brought to Macao after 1555.⁷⁴ Antonio Bocarra, who wrote in 1635, reported that each Portuguese household in Macao had an average of six slaves, "amongst whom the majority and the best are negroes and such like."⁷⁵ These African slaves sometimes ran away into China, and eventually constituted their own community in a district of Canton. Chinese merchants engaged in foreign trade occasionally used them as interpreters.⁷⁶

Mateo Ricci (1552-1610) now and then intervened by returning runaway slaves to the Portuguese. He himself had had black interpreters in his years of apprenticeship, but gradually switched to native

Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980, p. 132.

⁷⁴ C.R. Boxer, *Portuguese society in the tropics: the municipal councils of Goa, Macao, Bahia and Luanda, 1510-1800*, Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965, p. 65.

⁷⁵ C.R. Boxer, "Macao as a religious and commercial entrepot in the 16th and 17th centuries" in *Acta Asiatica* 26 (1974), p. 65.

⁷⁶ A. Coates, *A Macao narrative*, Hong Kong: Heinemann, 1978, p. 35.

servants, presumably because the "blacks frightened the Chinese".⁷⁷

For the Chinese, black had always been a synonym for slave. In their mental universe, the Portuguese merely followed the native tradition of keeping kunlun slaves. In this respect at least, it seemed that the barbarians faithfully adopted the "Chinese ways".

⁷⁷ J.D. Spence, *The memory palace of Matteo Ricci*, London: Faber and Faber, 1985, p. 209.

SECTION TWO

The first section of this chapter has focused on the Chinese perception of the barbarian's physical appearance. This section will briefly examine the political theories that rejected cultural universalism and the sinicization of the barbarian.

The dominant feature of these theories is a belief in the incompatibility between the natures of the Chinese and the barbarian. The incipient stage of this belief is usually dated back to the Classics, more particularly to a passage in the works of Mencius. In this passage, Mencius reproached Chen Xiang for having abandoned the learning of China, saying: "I have heard of men using the doctrines of our great land to change barbarians, but I have never heard of any being changed by barbarians."⁷⁸ The nature of the Chinese was regarded as impermeable to the evil influences of the barbarian; no retrogression was possible. Only the barbarian could eventually change by adopting the Chinese ways.

Mencius' remark was first developed during the Six Dynasties (221-589), when the flourishing of Buddhism threatened the sense of cultural superiority China had developed since its early history. The anti-Buddhist arguments that were advanced were based in the main on Mencius' citation, but its content was expanded into a mutual exclusiveness.

⁷⁸ Legge, *Classics*, 2, pp. 253-254.

Anti-Buddhist arguments during the Six Dynasties

Buddhism was a curiosity confined to the court under the Han Dynasty. It was only after the fall of the Han empire in 221 A.D. and the partitions that followed that it expanded rapidly. By the fifth century, it had flourished and conquered such large sections of the society that it provoked Taoist opposition.

Gu Huan (390-453) was a prominent enemy of Buddhism. In his treatise entitled *Yixialun* (About Chinese and barbarians), he argued that Buddhism was inferior to Chinese systems because it was a foreign creed:

"Buddhism originated in the land of the barbarians; is that not because the customs of the barbarians were originally evil? The Tao originated in China; is that not because the habits of the Chinese were originally good?...Buddhism is not the way for China, Taoism is not the teaching of the western barbarians. Fishes and birds are of different origins, and never have anything in common. How can we have Buddhism and Taoism intermingle to spread to the extremities of the empire?"⁷⁹

The comparison of Buddhism and Taoism to fishes and birds underlined a basic discontinuity between both religions. The idea of a fundamental difference in nature between Chinese and Indians had also been put forward by He Chengtian (370-447):

⁷⁹ K. Ch'en, "Anti-Buddhist propaganda during the Nan-Ch'ao" in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 15 (1952), p. 172.

The inborn nature of Chinese is pure and harmonious, in accordance with altruism and holding to righteousness—that is why the Duke of Chou and Confucius explained to them the doctrine of (original unity of) nature and (differentiation by) practice. Those people of foreign countries are endowed with a hard and obstinate nature, full of evil desires, hatred and violence—that is why Sakyamuni severely restrained them with the five prohibitive rules (for laymen)."⁸⁰

The taoist work Sanpolun was even more violent in its attack against Buddhism. It contained an unabashed appeal to the extermination of the barbarians:

"The barbarians are without benevolence, unyielding, violent and without manners, and are not different from birds and beasts...They are also coarse and uncivilized. Desiring to exterminate their evil progeny, Lao-tzu ordered the males not to take wives, and the females not to take husbands. When the entire country submits to the teaching of Lao-tzu, they will be exterminated as a matter of course."⁸¹

These criticisms were formulated in a period of disunity, on a background of violence and mass slaughter between Chinese and alien intruders. The north of China had been conquered by the Tartars in 317.

Most anti-Buddhist arguments were articulated in the south, where great numbers of people had taken refuge, escaping from the barbarian invasions. Migrations beyond the Yangzi moved the cultural centre south to the newly

⁸⁰ Zürcher, *Buddhist conquest*, p. 265.

⁸¹ K. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China. A historical survey*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964, pp. 137-138.

acquired territories.

Although this train of thought was limited in its appeal, it reappeared occasionally throughout Chinese history, particularly when Chinese self-confidence was shattered by a foreign creed or a forceful alien group. The political threat created by alien invasions or foreign religions challenged the traditional ideal of cultural universalism. This threat could generate a defensive reaction that led to the adoption of beliefs clustered around the negative pole of China's value system. Such a threat reappeared during the Song dynasty.

The Song loyalists

The Jurchen empire of the Jin, originally based in Manchuria, invaded the North of China in 1126. The Song were unable to resist the nomad cavalry and had to retreat south of the Yangzi: this was the second partition of the empire between an alien conqueror and the Chinese. The Song retained the Yangzi valley and everything south of it.

The philosophical controversies of the Southern Song (1126-1280) were concerned in the main with the self-preservation of the dynasty through conciliatory policies with the Jin. Discarding the traditional tribute system predicated on the belief in China's superiority, officials from the tenth to the thirteenth century adopted a realistic and pragmatic foreign policy: foreign

states were accepted as equals. The realistic appraisal of powerful neighboring states, however, did not prevent officials from continuing to despise foreigners as "barbarians". According to Herbert Franke, "the principle of reciprocity in diplomatic relations with these states was nothing more than an enforced concession, which was but grudgingly granted because of the Sung's military weakness."⁸² Internal official records and private writings remained disrespectful of foreigners: they were referred to as inferior peoples, "barbarians", "caitiffs", or simply "animals".⁸³ Though equality with neighbor states was recognized, Tao Jing-shen has noticed the appearance of a nationalistic imagery critical, for instance, of intermarriage with the Khitan, a practice normally favoured by the Chinese.⁸⁴

Despite the official rhetoric of equality, some uncompromising scholars based their arguments in favour of a recovery of the lost territories on anti-barbarian grounds. Chen Liang (1143-1194), a scholar from Zhejiang province, wanted to restore the North to the control of the Song by driving out the Jin. According to Hoyt Tillman, Chen's denigration of the foreigners was similar

⁸² H. Franke, "Sung embassies: some general observations" in M. Rossabi, ed., *China among equals: the Middle Kingdom and its neighbors, 10th-14th centuries*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983, p. 121.

⁸³ Tao Jing-shen, "Barbarians or Northerners: Northern Sung images of the Khitans" in Rossabi, *China among equals*, pp. 71-76.

⁸⁴ Tao Jing-shen, *Two sons of heaven: studies in Sung-Liao relations*, Tucson: University of Arizona, 1988.

to anti-Buddhist literature.⁸⁵

Chen's call to expel the foreigner rested upon a belief in environmental determinism. Different environments had different spatial energies (qi), and only China possessed the central and most beneficial energy in the cosmos. Foreigners had an inferior energy that perverted the spatial energy of the Central Plain. Chen Liang expounded his ideas to the emperor in a memorial:

"Your obedient servant ventures to suggest that only China (Zhongguo) -the standard energy (zhengqi) of heaven and earth- is that which the heavenly mandate to rule (tianming) endows, where the hearts of the people gather, where the rituals of civilization cluster, and that which kings and emperors have inherited for a hundred generations. Is it at all conceivable that [such a country] could be violated by the perverse energy (xieqi) of the barbarians?...The pure air of heaven and earth has been restricted and enveloped by the offensive odor of sheep and goats [of nomadic barbarians] and for long has not attained release; it surely must and will vent itself. The hearts of the people and the mandate to rule are certainly not long confinable to a peripheral area of the world."⁸⁶

Ye Shi (1150-1223), a friend of Chen Liang, was even more outspoken about the barbarians.⁸⁷ Ye, like Chen, had

⁸⁵ H.C. Tillman, "Proto-nationalism in twelfth-century China?" in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 39, no. 2 (December 1979), p. 404.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 408.

⁸⁷ The following is based on Winston Wan Lo, *The life and thought of Yeh Shih*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1974.

been attracted by a strand of learning called *jingshi*, "practical statecraft". It was characterized by a preoccupation with concrete results in statecraft at the expense of philosophical contemplation. His "Postscript", written shortly before his death, contained several programs of action against the Jurchen. Ye urged the Emperor to issue a proclamation inciting the Northerners to abandon the enemy armies. The Song government should also pay five hundred strings of cash for each head of a killed barbarian (*huren*). Decapitation of the enemy would force its withdrawal to the steppes in the North.

Ye Shi abandoned the traditional notion of barbarians versus Chinese and attempted to see Song-Jin relations in more realistic terms. "Within the microcosm of Ye Shih's mind, Confucian cultural universalism had to be dethroned before militant nationalism could hold sway",⁸⁸ writes his biographer Winston Wan Lo.

Hu Han, another scholar concerned with the reappraisal of Chinese relations towards the Jin, took the opposite path to reach the same conclusion. In his discussion of legitimacy, he invoked the traditional criteria of the *Chunqiu*, based on a strict dichotomy between Han and non-Han rule.⁸⁹ Though he was far from renouncing the myth of the barbarian, his repudiation of the Jin was close to that of Ye Shi.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁸⁹ Chan Hok-lam, *Legitimation in imperial China: discussions under the Jurchen-Chin dynasty, 1115-1234*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984, p. 129.

China was finally united in 1279, but not quite in a way the Southern Song had anticipated: the Mongols, whose invasions had started in 1235, swarmed over the country, reunified it and ruled it until 1368. Chinese officials were summoned to serve the Mongol administration. Most Confucian literati participated actively in public service, perhaps in order to "preserve the race and culture" (baozhongcunwen), as Sun Kekuan has suggested.⁹⁰

Some yimin, or Song loyalists, withdrew from public life and sought refuge in Taoist monasteries in south China, refusing to serve an alien conqueror. Deng Mu and Ye Lin died in 1305 after starving for two months in response to an imperial order to serve the government.⁹¹

Though most of Song loyalism was politically and morally motivated, Frederick Mote has noticed that "an incipient racism made brief appearance, contradicting in its spirit the traditional patronizing Chinese attitude toward "barbarian" neighbors."⁹²

Most remarkable was the bitter denunciation of the barbarians by Zheng Sixiao (1239-1316), whose work was found in an iron box in a well of the Chengtian temple near Suzhou during the late Ming. This work, entitled

⁹⁰ Cited in J.D. Langlois, "Introduction" in J.D. Langlois, ed., *China under Mongol rule*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 14.

⁹¹ Fu Lo-shu, "Teng Mu, a forgotten Chinese philosopher" in *T'oung Pao* 52 (1965), p. 43.

⁹² F.W. Mote, "Confucian eremitism in the Yüan period" in A.F. Wright, ed., *The Confucian persuasion*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1960, p. 202.

Tiehan xinshi, describes the Mongols as being "of a non-human origin" (fei renlei); it compares them to "dogs and goats".⁹³

The authenticity of this work has been disputed, but it should be remembered that most of the exponents of anti-foreign theories had to write in secret for fear of persecutions. The works of these authors have often been lost, if not voluntarily destroyed. The result is a certain imbalance in the literary heritage of Chinese history.

Fang Xiaoru wrote after the fall of the Mongol Yuan dynasty and the foundation of the Ming dynasty in 1368. Influenced by Hu Han's thought, he also made a categorical distinction between Chinese and barbarians: "to elevate them to a position above the Chinese people would be to lead the world to animality. If a dog or a horse were to occupy a human's seat, even small boys would be angry and take a club to them...why? Because the general order would be confused."⁹⁴ John Fincher believes that a "racist" strain dominates Fang's metaphors though culturalism retains a hold on his logic."⁹⁵

Fang insisted upon an ethnic criterion in his

⁹³ J.D. Langlois, *Mongol rule*, p. 17.

⁹⁴ J. Fincher, "China as a race, culture and nation: notes on Fang Hsiao-ju's discussion of dynastic legitimacy" in D.C. Buxbaum and F.W. Mote, eds., *Transition and permanence: Chinese history and culture. A festschrift in honour of Dr. Hsiao Kung-ch'üan*, Hong Kong: Cathay Press, 1972, p. 59.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

discussion of legitimacy: the Emperor could not be a barbarian. But he also considered Chinese usurpers, of which Wang Mang (1st century A.D.) was a prototype, as "barbarians". His anti-foreign sentiment was still much embedded in a culturalistic tradition. It was only under the Qing, a Manchu dynasty founded in 1644, that the racial factor became a significant argument in the delineation of the barbarian, bringing about a major departure from the culturalistic norms which traditionally prevailed.

Anti-Manchu thought

In 1644, a Manchu emperor ascended the throne in Peking and founded the Qing dynasty, which would last until its collapse in 1911. The conquest of China by this frontier tribe had met with a wide range of responses from the Chinese. The North had been occupied without marked opposition. Strained by peasant revolts and banditry, officials were quick to surrender, some even welcoming the Manchus as the restorers of law and order. These officials were placed in leading positions in an administration that retained most of its Chinese characteristics. In the South, however, resistance against the alien invader was actively organized by a rebellious gentry. It took the new dynasty several decades to achieve the conquest of the regions beyond the Yangzi. Yunnan was captured in 1682 only. Thousands of

loyal Chinese were massacred; many retired from official life after the failure of armed rebellion. Among these retired scholars, some developed loyalist ideas characterized by racial hostility to the new dynasty.

Gu Yanwu (1613-1682), for instance, refused to serve the new dynasty. He emphasized the sense of shame in serving a barbarian ruler.⁹⁶ Lü Liuliang (1629-1683), a scholar from Zhejiang province, entered Buddhist priesthood after the Manchu conquest. Most of his anti-Manchu ideas were elaborated in commentaries on the Classics. He became the focus of an official campaign in 1773, almost a century after his death. This campaign attempted to suppress literati who continued to insist upon ethnic differences between the Manchus and the Han Chinese.⁹⁷ Lü was accused of having distorted the Classics in order to propagate anti-Manchu views based on racial grounds.⁹⁸ His corpse was disinterred and decapitated on imperial edict.

The most virulent critic of alien rule was Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692). Wang retired in seclusion after the failure of an uprising against the Manchus he had led in his home province Hunan. Most of his time was devoted to

⁹⁶ Mi Chu Wiens, "Anti-Manchu thought during the early Ch'ing" in *Papers on China* 22A (1969), p. 8.

⁹⁷ On this campaign, see the biography of Zeng Jing in A.W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period (1644-1912)*, Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1944, pp. 747-749.

⁹⁸ See T.S. Fisher, "Accommodation and loyalism. The life of Lü Liu-liang (1629-1683)" in *Papers on Far Eastern History* 15 (March 1977), p. 102.

writing.

Wang recast traditional ideas concerning environmental determinism and the difference in nature of the barbarian in a theory about the isolated development of groups. His whole philosophical system was based on the concept of ether. Ether was the creating force of the universe. Ether agglomerated to assume different forms and images, strictly differentiated by the concept of category (*lei*):

"They accept what is similar and oppose what is different, and thus all things flourish in profusion and form their various categories. Each of these categories has its own organization. So it is that dew, thunder, frost, and snow all occur at their proper times, and animals, plants, birds, and fish all keep to their own species...Nor can there be between man and beast, plant and tree, any indiscriminate confusion of their respective principles."⁹⁹

Universal order was based on clear distinctions between categories. This philosophical system had important political implications. If the Chinese did not mark themselves off from the barbarians, the principle of ether would be violated, as both were different categories. Chinese were the "ether of Heaven" (*tianqi*), whereas the barbarians were "impure ether" (*jianqi*).¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ I. McMorran, "Wang Fu-chih and the neo-Confucian tradition" in W.T. De Bary, *The unfolding of neo-Confucianism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1975, p. 438.

¹⁰⁰ E. Vierheller, *Nation und Elite im Denken von Wang Fu-chih (1619-1692)*, Hamburg: Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, 1968, p. 30.

The vital distinction between purity and impurity was implicit in the title of Wang's central work, entitled the *Yellow Book* (*Huangshu*) (1656): the last chapter opposed the colour yellow (*huangse*), one of the five pure colours, to mixed colours (*jianse*).¹⁰¹ China was named the "yellow centre" (*huangzhong*). Distinctions between Chinese and barbarians could not be blurred, as everything distinguished them:

Chinese and barbarians are born in different places, which brings about the differences in their atmospheres, which in turn are responsible for the differences in their customs. When their customs are different, their understanding and behaviour are all different."¹⁰²

The purity of categories (*qinglei*) had to be preserved by strict boundaries (*juezhen*) and a specific "Lebensraum" (*dingwei*). The territory of the Chinese race was the "middle region" (*zhongqu*) or "divine region" (*shenqu*): "North of the deserts, west of the Yellow River, south of Annam, east of the sea, the ether is different, people have a different essence, nature produces different things."¹⁰³ The first duty of the emperor was to keep the boundaries between races clear:

Now even the ants have rulers who preside over

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 124, n. 5.

¹⁰² Mi Chu Wiens, "Anti-Manchu thought", p. 11.

¹⁰³ Vierheller, Wang Fu-chih, p. 34.

the territory of their nests and, when red ants or flying white ants penetrate their gates, the ruler organises all his own kind into troops to bite and kill the intruders, drive them far away from the anthill and prevent foreign interference."¹⁰⁴

This famous metaphor seems to be unique in Wang's works¹⁰⁵ and should therefore not be placed out of the global perspective of his work. The idea of racial purity, however, pervaded most of Wang's political thought. Its logical consequence was the rejection of the notion of universal mankind and the exclusion of the other races from the divine soil of the Middle Kingdom.¹⁰⁶ Both biological inheritance and environmental determinism erected boundaries between Chinese and barbarians that should not be crossed¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁴ I. McMorran, "The patriot and the partisans: Wang Fu-chih's involvement in the politics of the Yung-li court" in J.D. Spence and J.E. Wills, eds., *From Ming to Ch'ing. Conquest, region, and continuity in seventeenth-century China*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979, p. 157.

¹⁰⁵ V.G. Burov, *Mirovozzrenie Kitaiskogo myslitelya XVII veka Van Chuan'-shanya*, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1976, p. 197, n. 20.

¹⁰⁶ Vierheller, Wang Fu-chih, pp. 29 and 37.

¹⁰⁷ Anti-Manchu arguments that were developed during the early Qing by Ming loyalist scholars struck a popular chord with nineteenth century secret societies, especially the Taipings: "Though there is no direct verbal connection between the Taiping ideology and the ideas of these scholars, since the Taipings had borrowed in toto Ku Yen-wu's explanation of the old examination degree titles it is not at all improbable that their ethnic consciousness was also due to the inspiration of these Ming loyalists", believes Murumatsu; see Y. Muramatsu, "Some themes in Chinese rebel ideologies" in A.F. Wright, ed., *The Confucian persuasion*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960, pp. 253; see also V.Y.C.

The idea of group was expressed in terms like *qun*, "herd", "group" or "flock", *lei*, "category", "sort", "class" and *zu*, "lineage". Besides *lei*, "category", the term *zu*, expressing the idea of lineage, with a strong connotation of horizontal continuity maintained by ancestor worship, was particularly emphasized by Wang. *Zu* could be translated in English by "race", a term similarly dominated by the idea of lineage in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe. Emerging from the Middle Ages, Europe was still dominated by a Church that regulated every aspect of life. The Bible was read regularly: Adam was considered the ancestor of human kind. The Genesis explained that Shem, Ham and Japhet had founded separate nations after the flood. God's curse on Ham accounted for his black skin. Foxe, in his *Book of Martyrs* (1570), wrote that men were of "the race and stocke of Abraham".¹⁰⁸ In the context of the seventeenth century, "race" and *zu* are etymologically and semantically similar enough to be compared. Adam's race, however, had spread and populated the three continental parts of the world, whereas the Chinese *zu* was narrowly confined to the Middle Kingdom.

Shih, "Some Chinese rebel ideologies" in *T'oung Pao* 44 (1956), pp. 150-226, and V.Y.C. Shih, "The ideology of the T'ai-p'ing t'ien-kuo" in *Sinologica* 3 (1953), pp. 1-15.

¹⁰⁸ M. Banton, *Racial theories*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 2.

Conclusion

Chinese attitudes towards outsiders were fraught with ambivalence. On one hand, a claim to cultural universalism led China to believe that the barbarian could be "sinicized", or transformed by the beneficial influence of culture and climate. On the other hand, when its sense of cultural superiority was threatened, she appealed to categorical differences in nature to expel the barbarian and seal the country off from the perverting influences of the outside world. In both cases, the foreigner was never faced: the myth of his inferiority could be preserved. Absorbed or expelled, he remained a non-entity.

The defensive reaction, however, remained exceptional. Physically, the barbarian's relative similarity to the Han Chinese impeded the development of theories based on categorical differences. Culturally, apart from Buddhism that had conquered the country during a period of disorder, no serious challenge had ever affected China's self-confidence. It was only in the nineteenth century that the arrival of strikingly dissimilar barbarians would instil enough doubt in China's self-image to finally undermine its entire world view.

RACE AS TYPE (1793-1895)

Introduction

Naitō Konan, a leading sinologist at the beginning of this century, distinguished two principal factors in the decline of the Qing dynasty: the rise of the idea of race, which would lead to the overthrow of the Manchus in 1911, and excessive reverence for Confucius.¹ The Japanese historian started his analysis of the racial issue with the Macartney mission to the Qianlong court in 1793. Lord Macartney refused to pay homage to the Chinese court and did not accept the tribute system which had traditionally regulated contacts with foreigners. Macartney's unyielding attitude led the Qing to cling more than ever to the proper tributary forms to be upheld in its contacts with Westerners. Golovkin, the Russian ambassador to China in 1805, was required to kowtow in front of a symbol of the emperor draped in yellow silk before being granted an audience at the court. Golovkin refused and returned to Russia. The Qing decided to keep non-tributary commerce with Russia limited to barter

¹ J.A. Fogel, *Politics and sinology: the case of Naito Konan (1866-1934)*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984, p. 135.

trade at Kiakhta, and to keep the English confined to a settlement outside the walls of Canton.

Macartney's mission should be interpreted as the first important confrontation of two radically opposed symbolic universes. Berger and Luckmann have defined a symbolic universe as a set of beliefs that integrates different provinces of meaning and encompasses the institutional order in a symbolic totality.² It can be seen as a collective delusional system that provides the necessary legitimation for the structure and values of a society. The West threatened Chinese society by shattering its symbolic universe.

Western military and economic threats during the nineteenth century also existed, but have been unduly emphasized. The military threat was merely a series of short campaigns that resulted in a couple of treaties. At the end of the first so-called "Opium War" (1842), the treaty of Nanking ceded a barren island called Hong Kong to Britain and opened five ports to British residence and trade. The Anglo-French invasion and the second treaty settlement (1857-1860) enlarged the scope and nature of foreign activities in China and opened most of the empire to Western contact. Two decades later, the French took Vietnam, China's principal tributary in the south. Foreign military activities, however, never reached the

² This definition is taken from P.L. Berger and T. Luckmann, *The social construction of reality. A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*, New York: Doubleday, 1966, p. 88.

intensity, scope, and duration of China's internal military challenges, such as the Taiping rebellion (1850-1864), described as the most destructive war in the nineteenth century with casualties of at least twenty million. Western economic impact was so insignificant that it has been aptly described as "a flea in the elephant's ear".³

The Western threat was neither military nor economic, it was of intellectual nature. By its sheer presence, Western social cosmology demonstrated that China's own worldview was purely relative. Chinese intellectuals increasingly discovered that the well-established symbolic universe in which they operated was neither total nor absolute. The social construction of reality, it appeared, was precarious and needed to be defended.

The cultural variance of the menacing outgroup was rapidly associated with its phenotypical difference: the physical discontinuity of the barbarian corroborated his cultural inadequacy. This chapter briefly analyzes how the physical features of foreigners were perceived from the Macartney mission in 1793 up to 1895.

The Chinese perception of race during this period can best be understood as a process of defensive stereotyping. It differs fundamentally from the European racial thought of the first half of the nineteenth

³ P.A. Cohen, *Discovering history in China: American historical writing on the recent Chinese past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984, p. 125.

century. Until Darwin, European racial typology believed that mankind could be divided into several permanent racial types, each of which had existed without change since their creation on earth.⁴ Such typology cannot be found in China, where racial theories only started to be formulated at the end of the nineteenth century. The word "type" is used here as a synonym for stereotype, or the simplified image a given group has about an outgroup. As in nineteenth century Europe, only a section of the educated elite felt compelled to reduce outgroups to manageable stereotypes. Though the racial imagery described below is by no means representative of the whole of Chinese society, it did appeal to an authoritative fraction of the scholar gentry.

Foreign devils

A common historical response to serious threats directed towards a symbolic universe is "nihilation", or the conceptual liquidation of everything inconsistent with the official doctrine.⁵ Foreigners could be labelled "barbarians" or "devils" in order to be conceptually eliminated.

Some Chinese perceived the Westerner as a devil, a ghost, an evil and unreal goblin hovering on the border

⁴ See M. Banton, *Racial theories*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, chapter 2.

⁵ Berger and Luckmann, *The social construction of reality*, p. 106.

of humanity. Many texts of the first half of the nineteenth century referred to the English as "foreign devils" (*yangguizi*), "devil slaves" (*guinu*), "barbarian devils" (*fangui*), "island barbarians" (*daoyi*), "blue-eyed barbarian slaves" (*biyan yinu*), or "red-haired barbarians" (*hongmaofan*). Officials in Canton wrote that "even though the people have had social intercourse with the barbarians, they still call them *fan-kuei*. They do not even consider them to be human beings."⁶ The only English textbook available in the bookshops near the Factories in Canton was simply called "Devils' Talk".⁷ On a more sophisticated level, Wang Kaiyun (1833-1916), a celebrated scholar from Hunan province, compared foreigners to *matter (wu)*, an entity without life.⁸

Dehumanization of the enemy is a common process. During religious violence in early modern France, for instance, the enemies were transformed into "vermin" or "devils" before being dragged through the streets, having their genitalia cut away and their members chopped off.⁹

⁶ F. Wakeman, *Strangers at the gate. Social disorder in south China, 1839-1861*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966, p. 79.

⁷ W.C. Hunter, *The "fan kwae" at Canton before treaty days, 1825-1844*, Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1911, p. 63.

⁸ Hao Yen-p'ing and Wang Erh-min, "Changing Chinese views of Western relations, 1840-1895" in D. Twitchett and J.K. Fairbank, eds., *Cambridge history of China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, vol. 11, part 2, p. 186.

⁹ N.Z. Davis, *Society and culture in early modern France*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987, p. 181.

Diabolization of the enemy not only sanctioned violence, it also enhanced group identity. In China, group cohesion was promoted by dichotomizing the world into subhuman foreigners and superhuman Chinese.

Barbarian colours

Skin colour played an important role in the foreign terminology. "The Chinese call the barbarians "devils", and differentiate them according to their skin colour", wrote Xu Shidong (1814-1873) in the 1840s.¹⁰ There were "white devils" (*baigui*) and "black devils" (*heigui*), presumably the Cameronians and Sepoy troops. "The white ones are cold and dull as the ashes of frogs, the black ones are ugly and dirty as coal", explained Jin He (1819-1885).¹¹ White ash and black coal, both were the tetralogical products of Death, two facets of a same unreality: the foreign devil. Travelling on a boat crowded with Chinese passengers, Reverend T.C. Selby overheard the following conversation in the last century: "How much whiter his skin is than ours! "Yes" said the passenger addressed, "foreign devils are very singular.

¹⁰ Xu Shidong, *Toutouji* (Notes on stealing a head), repr. in A Ying, comp., *Yapian zhanzheng wenxue ji* (Collection of literary writings on the Opium War), Peking: Guji chubanshe, 1957, p. 836.

¹¹ Jin He, "Shuo gui" (About ghosts), repr. in A Ying, *Yapian zhanzheng*, p. 44.

They are born entirely white or entirely black."¹² Chinese saw foreigners as a litter of puppies: Sikh, Negro or European, all came from the same stock.

Social position distinguished whites from blacks: "black devils are slaves, white devils are rulers", commented one perceptive author who did not believe that all barbarians could be slaves.¹³

The origin of the black devil was not always clear, as one report on the disposition of the English troops in Ningbo testifies: "They carry off young men, shave their heads, paint their bodies with black lacquer, give them a drug which makes them dumb, and so turn them into black Devils, using them to carry heavy loads".¹⁴ Others believed that the blacks were recruited merely because of their stupidity: idiots were easier to handle.¹⁵

The foreigner was hardly comparable with the human features of the Chinese:

"When the foreign devil entered China, he heaved a first sigh: he saw the elegantly chiselled features of the Chinese, embodiment of human feelings, neatly dressed and capped. The foreigner and the Chinese are greatly different! The foreign devil heaved a second sigh when he looked in the mirror: (...) yellow

¹² Quoted in E.J. Hardy, *John Chinaman at home*, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907, pp. 321-322.

¹³ Quoted in A Ying, *Yapian zhanzheng*, p. 967.

¹⁴ Arthur Waley, *The Opium War through Chinese eyes*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1958, pp. 163-164.

¹⁵ Cui Guoyin, *Chushi Mei Ri Bi riji* (Mission to America, Japan, and Peru), Peking: Huangshan shushe, 1988, p. 105.

hair on the head, curly hair on the body, green pupils. Disconsolately sitting head in hand, he looks like a monkey goblin!"¹⁶

Most descriptions of the physical appearance of Westerners were conveniently encapsulated in the formula "blue eyes black beard" (*biyanwuxu*), in which both colours could vary. Wang Zhongyang, for instance, pictured the English as having "the beak of an eagle, the eyes of a cat, red beards and hair":¹⁷ his portrayal of the foreigner was simply plagiarized from the *Mingshi* (History of the Ming). Wang shared the common belief that the green "cat" eyes of the foreign devil could not stand the sunlight, and had to remain closed at noon. Another poet writing during the Opium War found that the eyes of the foreign ghost were "blue and dizzy".¹⁸ For another observer, "the white ones are really ghosts; the sounds of their speech are similar to birds, their shins and chest are covered with hair, their green eyes suffer when

¹⁶ Author unknown, "Waiguo yangren tan shi sheng" (The foreigner sighs ten times), in *A Ying, Yapián zhānzhēng*, p. 253; the original text has been lost, and some parts of the poem remain obscure. I have changed *bang*, "stick", for *lian*, "face", to make sense out of the last sentence translated here.

¹⁷ Wang Zhongyang, "Gengzi liuyue wenzhou shanjing" (Alarm at hearing the foreign ships beyond the mountains in the sixth month of 1840), repr. in *A Ying, Yapián zhānzhēng*, p. 191.

¹⁸ Zhu Kuizhi, *Miao jixiangshi shichao* (Collected poems from the wonderfully propitious room) repr. in *A Ying, Yapián zhānzhēng*, p. 171.

they look in the distance".¹⁹

In the eyes of some Chinese, the foreigner suffered from other serious physical handicaps. A popular text entitled *Short study of the English red haired barbarians* thought that foreign soldiers "cannot run, as their legs and feet are bandaged, and are difficult to bend or to stretch; if they fall forward, they can not rise again: this is why they often suffer from a bleeding nose [i.e. are often defeated in battle]."²⁰ This cliché was repeatedly used at the highest levels,²¹ for instance by the governor general of Liang-Jiang, Yuqian (1793-1841), a radical conservative who had tortured several British captives to death during the Opium War. Of course foreign affairs experts like Bao Shichen (1775-1855) questioned such belief,²² but it was still put forward by some high-ranking officials at the turn of the century.²³

¹⁹ Lu Song, "Jiangzhou shugan" (Relating impressions from Jiangzhou), repr. in A Ying, *Yapian zhanzheng*, p. 143.

²⁰ Wang Wentai and Huang Pengnian, *Hongmaofan Yingjili kaolüe* (A short study of the English red-haired barbarians), in A Ying, *Yapian zhanzheng*, p. 757.

²¹ Hao Yen-p'ing and Wang Erh-min, "Changing Chinese views", p. 153.

²² Qi Sihe et al. ed., *Yapian zhanzheng* (The Opium War), Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguangshe, 1954, vol. 4, p. 466.

²³ For instance Gangyi, a prominent Manchu bannerman; Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bianfa renwu zhuangao* (Draft biographies of leading figures of the reform movement), Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1982, p. 530.

Hairy barbarians

Many Chinese were struck by the hairy appearance of foreigners. Centuries ago, the bearded missionaries had already made a durable impression. Giulio Aleni, for instance, had been described as a "man with blue eyes and the beard of a dragon" during his first visit to Fujian province between 1625 and 1639.²⁴

As cultural clichés about the barbarians gradually turned into racial stereotypes after the Opium War of 1842, hair became a central element in the physical description of the foreigner. Lin Zexu (1785-1850), Imperial Commissioner appointed to suppress the Canton opium traffic, focused on beards: "They have heavy beards, much of which they shave, leaving one curly tuft, which at first sight creates a surprising effect. Indeed, they do really look like devils; and when the people of these parts call them "devils" it is no mere empty term of abuse."²⁵ Zhigang, head of the first diplomatic mission to the West from 1866 to 1870, was shocked by the natives of Ceylon, whose "black hair, about four centimeters long, covers their chest and all of their back."²⁶

²⁴ Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian impact: a conflict of cultures*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 250, n. 12.

²⁵ Waley, *The Opium War*, pp. 68-69.

²⁶ Zhigang, *Chushi Taixiji* (Notes on the first mission to the West), Peking: Yuelu shushe, 1985, p. 374.

Xu Jiyu (1795-1873) published a widely influential work on the geography of the world in 1848. It attempted to provide background information on the so little-known foreigners. Europeans were described as follows:

"Europeans are tall and fair-skinned. They have high noses, recessed sockets and yellow eyes (some have black eyes). Their hair is often left on the temples or coiled around the cheeks. Some have it straight like Chinese, some have curly whiskers, some are entirely shaven, some leave it long, some separate the whiskers and the moustache like the Chinese. Young and old alike, the hair is worn about a decimetre long; it is cut when it is longer. Hair and beards are often yellow or red (during the Ming, the Dutch were called "red-haired", and recently the English too have been called "red-haired", both because their hair is yellowish-reddish. However, all Europeans are like this, not only people from these two countries). Some of them have black hair (those with black hair also have black eyes). This is also true for the hair and eyes of girls."²⁷

During the second half of the nineteenth century, more detailed descriptions of barbarian pileous systems could satisfy the curious reader. Zhang Deyi (1847-1919) reported from Europe that "when about twenty years old, the moustache and beard of foreign men start to grow. As a rule, they do not cut or shave them, allowing them to develop. At the age of fifty or sixty, either they start to trim the moustache, or they cut both moustache and beard, as it is said that when men become older and weaker, there is no need anymore to wear them,

²⁷ Xu Jiyu, *Yinghuan zhilüe* (A brief survey of the maritime circuit), Osaka: Kanbun edition, 1861, juan 4, p. 7b.

as they hinder whilst drinking or eating."²⁸ Even Western females were thought to be hairy beings.²⁹ In France, noticed Zhang, "many women have long beards and moustaches."³⁰

This early fixation on hair, which would become a vital part of the Chinese perception of race in the twentieth century, was also due to a difference in customs, as can be seen from a missionary's description of a barber in the Middle Kingdom at the end of the 1880s:

"The streets of every town abound in barbers, who find plenty of work shaving the heads and faces of the natives. It is not considered good form to grow a moustache till a man is about forty years of age, and even then probably only half-a-dozen straggling hairs will appear on each side, while only old men wear a beard. The Chinese barber shaves every nook and cranny of the face with great care, even to the eyelid,

²⁸ Zhang Deyi, *Suishi Faguoji* (Notes on following the mission to France), Peking: Yuelu shushe, 1985, p. 450.

²⁹ One foreigner travelling in the interior of China during the 1870s reported how his abundantly bearded but exceedingly short companion was consistently taken to be his wife. He overheard one observer explain to bystanders that "in their country the women have beards exactly the same as the men"; C. Holcombe, *The real Chinaman*, New York: Dodd and Mead, 1895, p. 173. Misconceptions were of course rife on both sides: Zhang Deyi complained that in Russia many people mistook him for a woman because of his queue and his gown; Zhang Deyi, *Hanghai shuqi* (Travels abroad), Peking: Yuelu shushe, 1985, p. 553. Chinese diplomats used to ride ladies' bicycles because of their long gowns, thereby reinforcing their female appearance to Westerners; see W.W. Yen, *East-West kaleidoscope 1877-1946. An autobiography*, New York: St. John's University, 1974, p. 21.

³⁰ Zhang Deyi, *Suishi Faguoji*, p. 395; see also p. 424.

nose, and ear, both inside and out."³¹

The anatomy of the foreign devil

The repulsive physical features of the foreigner were interpreted as the outward manifestations of an innate inadequacy. Speculations about the inner physical organization of the barbarian's body confirmed his non-humanity. Some believed that the foreigner's digestive system was dependent on tea and rhubarb. Without these two fundamental ingredients, the barbarian would become blind or would suffer from serious diseases of the intestines.³² This misconception prevailed among many scholar-officials after the Opium War.

Chinese imagination was stimulated by the absence of the most elementary anatomical knowledge. Anatomy was virtually unknown until the middle of the nineteenth century.³³ The human body had always been considered a gift from the ancestors that should be preserved intact. Mutilation or dissection of a corpse was perceived as disrespectful to the whole lineage. Traditional medicine only hinted at human organs in their relation to cosmological elements. Such beliefs had naturally

³¹ J.A. Turner, *Kwang Tung, or five years in south China, Hong Kong*: Oxford University Press, 1888 (1st ed. 1894), p. 136.

³² Hao Yen-p'ing and Wang Erh-min, "Changing Chinese views", p. 154.

³³ See M. Porkert, *Die Chinesische Medizin*, Düsseldorf: ECON Verlag, 1982, p. 41.

inhibited the development of anatomical knowledge.³⁴

Only by the end of the eighteenth century did a Chinese doctor start to record human dissections scientifically. Wang Qingren (1768-1831)³⁵ had dissected the corpses of a group of dead he had located after an epidemic of measles and dysentery in his home province in 1798: "I thus saw about thirty perfect bodies and in this way I came to know and compare the various parts with the ancient drawings and found they did not agree."³⁶ When he

³⁴ The last recorded dissection dated from the Song dynasty. It described the vivisection of 56 political prisoners (Sugimoto Masayoshi and D.L. Swain, *Science and culture in traditional Japan, A.D. 600-1854*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978, p. 379). Basic elements of anatomy introduced by the missionaries in the seventeenth century remained virtually unnoticed. Adam Schall (1591-1666), a German Jesuit, had presented a treatise on anatomy to an inquiring scholar from Shandong named Bi Gongchen. The treatise had been translated by Jean Terrenz as *Renshenshuo* (On the human body) and was published on the instigation of Bi in 1635 under the title *Taixi renshen shuogai* (Elements of the Westerner's body) (see A.W. Hummel, "Pi Kung-ch'en" in *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 621-622). A second source was provided by the Jesuit Dominique Parnnin (1665-1741). The Emperor Kang Xi (1662-1722), after having been relieved of a malignant fever by French Jesuits in 1692, showed a genuine interest in Western medicine. On imperial order, Parnnin compiled a text on anatomy in the Manchu language, complete with ninety hand drawings of human organs (see F.R. Lee and J.B. Saunders, *The Manchu anatomy and its historical origin*, Taipei: Li Ming Cultural Enterprise Co, 1981).

³⁵ On Wang, see Ma Kanwen, "Zuguo Qingdai jiechu de yixuejia Wang Qingren" (Wang Qingren, outstanding medical scientist of our country's Qing dynasty) in *Kexueshi jikan* 6 (1963), pp. 66-74.

³⁶ K. Chimin Wong and Wu Lien-teh, *History of Chinese medicine*, Tianjin: The Tientsin Press, 1932, p. 223. The Japanese had reached the same conclusion half a century earlier. Some physicians discovered by the middle of the eighteenth century that the Chinese medical texts traditionally used were at variance with what they had actually observed. It was concluded that there had to be

finally published a small volume revealing his work in 1830, he was condemned by colleagues as inhuman, sadistic and even mad.³⁷

The absence of common anatomical knowledge led to easy speculations about the unhuman organization of the barbarian's physical constitution. A pornographic novel of the eighteenth century, for instance, wondered whether the European body functioned in the same way as that of the Chinese.³⁸ Yu Zhengxie (1775-1840), a major scholar remembered for his strong interest in research and his liberal ideas, noticed the following differences between the foreigner and the Chinese:

1) Foreign devils had four lobes in the lungs, whereas Chinese had six;

2) Foreign devils had only four chambers in the heart, whereas the Chinese had seven;

3) The liver of the foreign devil was located at the right side of the heart, whereas the Chinese liver was

some physiological differences between Chinese and Japanese. Doctor Sugita Gempaku (1733-1817) witnessed a post-mortem dissection of an old woman in 1771, and found out that his observations agreed with a Dutch textbook of anatomy, which he subsequently undertook to translate; see D. Keene, *The Japanese discovery of Europe, 1720-1830*, rev. ed., Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969, pp. 21-22.

³⁷ Yen Chung-nien, "A Chinese anatomist of the nineteenth century" in *Eastern Horizon* 15, no. 5 (1976), p. 50.

³⁸ K. McMahon, "A case for Confucian sexuality: the eighteenth-century novel, *Yesou puyan*" in *Late Imperial China* 9, no. 2 (December 1988), p. 38, n. 22

situated at the left;

4) The foreign devil had four testicles, whereas the Chinese had two.³⁹

Driven by the vigour of his four testicles, the satyric foreigner was relentless in the pursuit of sensual pleasures. Anti-Christian propaganda leaflets spread the idea that Christians enjoyed sodomy with their fathers and brothers and fornicated with mothers and sisters. "During the first three months of life the anuses of all [Christian] infants - male and female - are plugged up with a small hollow tube, which is taken out at night. They call this "retention of the vital essence". It causes the anus to dilate so that upon growing up sodomy will be facilitated".⁴⁰ Celestials became the objects of the devils' licentiousness. Chinese ladies were ravished in the confessional. Young Chinese boys were abducted by missionaries to be sodomized, claimed another anti-Christian pamphlet.⁴¹ Psychoanalytic observers have applied the concept of projection to group stereotypes.⁴² This approach claims that people tend to

³⁹ Li Ao, *Dubai xiade chuantong* (Tradition descended as a monologue), Taipei: Wenxing shudian, 1988, p. 4.

⁴⁰ P.A. Cohen, "Christian missions and their impact to 1900" in D. Twitchett and J.K. Fairbank, eds., *Cambridge history of China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, vol. 10, part 1, p. 569.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 569.

⁴² See for instance B. Bettelheim and M. Janowitz, *Dynamics of prejudice*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950, pp. 156-159.

attribute to outsiders unacceptable impulses within one's self. Stereotypes of the outgroup are fantasies derived from unconscious needs of the ingroup. In the presence of the foreigner, strait-laced Confucian ethics were thrown overboard and imagination was allowed to run wild.

A feeling of sexual inadequacy also lurked behind the amplification of the barbarian's reproductive organs: it was believed that Christians gave Chinese female converts aphrodisiacs and initiated them in the pleasures of sex; they would then despise their husbands.⁴³ Xenophobia found an easy ally in sexual fear.

Odour was another racial characteristic of the foreign devil. In texts concerning the Opium War, the arrival of foreign troops was usually announced by an "atmosphere of demons" (*yaofen*) and a "wind carrying the smell of rotten fish" (*xingfeng*). The *Bixie jishi* (1861), a very influential anti-Christian tract that has been analyzed by Paul Cohen, spread the idea that Westerners used to drink the menstrual flow of women, regarded as a precious gift conferred by God: this explained the unbearable stench emanating from the foreign devil.⁴⁴ The consumption of beef was also believed to be responsible for the rank odour of the Europeans: "what they call our European odour is quite as nauseous to them as their

⁴³ P.A. Cohen, *China and Christianity. The missionary movement and the growth of Chinese antiforeignism, 1860-1870*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963, p. 91.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

yellow smell (sic) is to us",⁴⁵ assured John Hardy. Another Englishman warned his countrymen not to be shocked if a Chinese lady held a handkerchief to her nose while passing a foreigner, "for you as a foreigner are credited with a nasty smell."⁴⁶

The geography of the barbarian

Before the skirmishes with the English in Canton at the beginning of the 1840s, barely three works were available to introduce the Chinese public to some elementary notions of world geography. They were Chen Lunjiong's *Record of things seen and heard about the maritime countries* (*Haiguo wenjian lu*, 1730), Wang Dahai's *Annals of the barbarian maritime islands*, (*Haidao yizhi*, 1760), and Xie Qinggao's *Maritime record* (*Hailu*, 1820). All three were based on the traditional barbarian imagery that had been passed down for hundreds of years. The widely used work of Chen Lunjiong, for instance, still mentioned the red-haired barbarians and the black

⁴⁵ Hardy, *John Chinaman*, p. 325. John Hardy believed that a Chinese defined a Christian as "one who eats beef (...) and says "God damn"; *ibid.*, p. 326. Beef became fashionable in Japan after the Meiji restoration. A popular novel of the middle of the nineteenth century suggested that being civilized was synonymous with eating beef stew. It was one of the insignia of modernity like umbrellas, oil lamps, watches and knitted underwear; see G.B. Sansom, *The Western world and Japan: a study in the interaction of European and Asian cultures*, Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1950, p. 383.

⁴⁶ G.G. Barnes, *Enter China! A study in race contacts*, London: Edinburgh House Press, 1928, p. 104.

devils of the dark continent. Ethnocentric aesthetic criteria were projected upon outsiders such as the Japanese, whose "features and skin texture cannot be compared to the Chinese".⁴⁷ These works were based on distorted information copied from previous literary compilations. Such widespread plagiarism added to confusion and superficiality: was England another name for Holland or was it a dependency of Holland? Portugal was near Malacca, France was originally Buddhist, later turned Catholic, and was finally believed to be the same as Portugal.⁴⁸

During the 1840s, scholar officials directly involved in foreign affairs became increasingly aware of the need for a more adaptive perspective. Officials like Lin Zexu, Xu Jiyu or Wei Yuan (1794-1856) compiled world geographies concerned with more practical valuations of the outside world. Their works, however, were fraught with ambivalence. On the one hand, they actively contributed to the dissolution of sinocentrism by relativizing their own universe's position: they showed that China was only one nation among many others. On the other hand, their treatment of outsiders was highly stereotyped. The *Yinghuan zhilüe*, for instance, was a

⁴⁷ Chen Lunjiong, *Haiguo wenjian lu* (Record of things seen and heard about the maritime countries), Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1985, p. 36.

⁴⁸ These examples are taken from the new edition of the Guangdong provincial gazetteer edited under Ruan Yuan in 1819-1822; see J.K. Fairbank, E.O. Reischauer and A.M. Craig, *East Asia: the modern transformation*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965, pp. 126-127.

geographical account compiled from various Western and Chinese sources by Xu Jiyu in 1848. Xu Jiyu, despite his personal contacts with foreigners in Xiamen, still believed that "the hair and eyes of some [foreigners] gradually turn black when they come to China and stay for a long time. The features of such men and women half-resemble the Chinese."⁴⁹ It was perhaps reassuring to know that residence in the Celestial Empire could half-humanize the foreigner.

Compensation characterized these early attempts towards the construction of a different worldview. "In his discussion of the continents, he [Xu Jiyu] attempted to compensate for China's occupation of only a corner, and control of less than a half, of Asia by observing that Asia was the largest of the world's continents. He also felt compelled to deliver an opening statement on China's magnificence."⁵⁰ Wei Yuan's treatise adopted a traditional vocabulary by categorizing the world in ocean-regions that were in conformity with the classical image of China as a centered maritime world.⁵¹

Compensation for a lowered self-esteem was mainly found in the increased denigration of non-Western people, especially Africa. By a process of positive

⁴⁹ Xu Jiyu, *Yinghuan zhilüe*, juan 4, p. 7b.

⁵⁰ F.W. Drake, *China charts the world: Hsu Chi-yü and his geography of 1848*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975, p. 66.

⁵¹ J.K. Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's rediscovery of the maritime world*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984, p. 109.

differentiation between themselves and other non-Western people, the Chinese enhanced their threatened self-esteem and boosted their own identity. Xu Jiyu's account presented Africa as a desperately chaotic continent, inhabited by retrograde black barbarians. "It is scorching, miasmatic, and pestilential. Its climate and its people are the worst of the four continents."⁵² Ethiopians were described as animals "living in holes and catching insects for food."⁵³ In West Africa, the blacks "go half-naked, not covering their genitals", freely coupling "without distinguishing races" (*zhongzu wu bie*);⁵⁴ enslaved, they "never complain and never try to escape",⁵⁵ a remark that echoed the legends on the *kunlun* slaves. Like Xu, many compared Africa to the *hundun*, or Chaos, the primeval state of the Universe according to Chinese folklore.⁵⁶ Tan Sitong (1865-1898), a brilliant philosopher who would become one of the most radical reformers during the 1890s, also resorted to traditional concepts to divide the world into three regions in his "Views on the management of world affairs" (1889). China, Korea, Tibet, Vietnam, and Burma formed the core of the universe, called *huaxia zhi guo*, or Chinese states. Japan, Russia, Europe, and North America constituted the

⁵² Xu Jiyu, *Yinghuan zhilüe*, juan 8, p. 1a.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, juan 8, p. 5b.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, juan 8, p. 17a.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, juan 8, p. 17a.

⁵⁶ Cui Guoyin, *Chushi*, pp. 154, 179, 225, 294.

yidi zhi guo, or States of the Barbarians. Africa, South America, and Australia were relegated to the lowest category, the qinshou zhi guo, or States of the Beasts.⁵⁷

It were precisely those who attempted to adapt China to a more practical vision who were the most eager to denigrate coloured people. The relativization of the ingroup required the conceptual debasement of specific outgroups. Negative stereotyping clearly acted as a kind of surrogate for emotional stability. When one looks at prejudices from a perspective that takes biological factors into account, it seems indeed that they can be regarded as some sort of compensation. Emotional stability evidently correlates with the formation of stereotypes.⁵⁸

First encounters

Fear of strangers is a major input into the ethnocentric syndrome. This affective reaction seems to appear during infancy, but gradually fades before the end of the first year. It is probable, however, that a readiness to react in a xenophobic way towards persons

⁵⁷ Tan Sitong, *Tan Sitong quanji* (Collected writings of Tan Sitong), Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1981, vol. 1, pp. 231-236.

⁵⁸ See Heiner Flohr, "Biological bases of social prejudices" in V. Reynolds, V. Falgar and I. Vine, eds., *The sociobiology of ethnocentrism. Evolutionary dimensions of xenophobia, discrimination, racism and nationalism*, London: Croom Helm, 1987, pp. 190-207, particularly p. 203.

who are substantially different from one's expectations remains and can be actively encouraged within highly discriminatory cultures.⁵⁹

Foreigners travelling in China during the years after the Opium War were generally met with alarm. "Indeed it was painful to observe the undue timidity that men, women, and children of all classes evinced at the sight of the foreigner (...) At fifty yards off, my appearance was the signal for women to bolt into their houses with the screaming children and bar the doors (...) A crowd of gaping mouths and staring eyes would follow at a distance."⁶⁰ Those who finally discovered that the foreigners' legs were not so stiff that they would simply fall, that they were not stone-blind, and that their faces were not uniformly red still judged their appearance awesome and ugly. "They vote his large nose ugly, dislike his pale complexion, criticise the color of his eyes, and object to the angle at which they are set. They draw unfriendly comparisons between his ears and those found on their donkeys."⁶¹ Foreigners had "huge feet" and were "mightily tall"; some had a head "as

⁵⁹ I. Vine, "Inclusive fitness and the self-system. The roles of human nature and sociocultural processes in intergroup discrimination" in Reynolds, *Sociobiology*, p. 69.

⁶⁰ W.C. Milne, *Life in China*, London: G. Routledge, 1857, pp. 113-114.

⁶¹ Holcombe, *The real Chinaman*, pp. 172-173.

large as a bucket".⁶²

The first encounters of Chinese envoys abroad with the coloured people were often dominated by fright. Zhang Deyi found that the Mexicans had "fat features, flat noses and big bones; they are black or yellow. Males and females, old and young, they all look like devils; they are shocking and scaring."⁶³ Representatives of three East African countries met in London were "frightening with their iron faces and silver teeth."⁶⁴

Binchun, travelling for the first time abroad in 1866 in the company of Robert Hart, was scared by the prostitutes of Ceylon. "They have their hair coiled up in a bun, deep-red lips and faces coloured like pale ink. When they see passing travellers, their laughing dimples, their exposed teeth, and their bare feet frighten people."⁶⁵ The black whore did not inspire the Celestial. Her Caucasian companion also failed to allure the diffident Chinese. The big-breasted, azure-eyed prostitute oozed a sexuality that scared the potential

⁶² E.H. Parker, *Chinese account of the Opium War*, Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1972, p. 35; Harfeld, *Opinions chinoises sur les barbares d'Occident*, Paris: Plon, 1909, p. 138; Wang Zhi, *Haike ritan* (Notebooks of a journey to England), Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1969, p. 261.

⁶³ Zhang Deyi, *Ou Mei huanyouji* (Notes on travelling around Europe and America), Peking: Yuelu shushe, 1985, pp. 649-650.

⁶⁴ Zhang Deyi, *Suishi Ying E ji* (Notes on following the embassy to England and Russia), Peking: Yuelu shushe, 1985, p. 570.

⁶⁵ Binchun, *Chengcha biji* (Travels abroad), Peking: Yuelu shushe, 1985, p. 101.

customer away. In the 1890s, one of these noted that "most of them have big teeth and tousled hair, as ugly as devils and as frightful as lionesses. They freeze the hearts of beholders."⁶⁶

Ignorance distorted the Chinese perception of the foreigner. Chinese attracted by ethnology found only tedious accounts that indefatigably repeated age-old clichés, some dating back to the Shanhaijing:

"The interested student in ethnology may find in the bookstores of Peking and other Chinese cities to-day volumes containing descriptive accounts of some of these outside barbarians, with carefully executed representations of them done in water-colors. One type has ears reaching to the earth, another has no legs worthy of mention. The representation of one tribe forces the student to the conclusion that the Chinese must have heard, and with some accuracy, of the gorilla. One race is pictured as having its face as a sort of boss in low relief upon the breast, while another carries its head conveniently located under the left arm. Small wonder that China desired no close acquaintance with people concerning whom she knew so little and imagined so much."⁶⁷

Ingrained with traditional barbarian imagery and nourished with highly stereotyped literature, the Chinese abroad needed time to adjust to a more realistic vision of the alien: "Some of them have thick tufts of hair, red and yellow, on their faces, making them look like monkeys. Their arms and ears do not reach to the ground

⁶⁶ J. Ch'en, *China and the West. Society and culture, 1815-1937*, London: Hutchinson, 1979, p. 217.

⁶⁷ Holcombe, *The real Chinaman*, p. 5.

as they are depicted by us. Though sleepy-looking, I think they have intelligence",⁶⁸ wrote a Chinese who had just arrived in Australia.

Once adjusted, the Chinese envoys were still puzzled by the phenotypical variety of the foreign populations. They rapidly proceeded to codify this bewildering variety, thereby reducing its apparent complexity and directing the perception into the more habitual channels. Zhang Deyi decomposed the population of the United States into three groups: those of a black mother and a white father, those of a black mother and a native father, and those of a native mother and a white father.⁶⁹ One of the first students to be sent abroad under Yung Wing in 1872 also divided the American people into three groups: the aborigines, the descendants of the African slaves ("many of which are slaves"), and the descendants of the English.⁷⁰ Li Gui (1842-1903), the Chinese delegate at the Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876, noted in his diary that the Westerners called the Indians "reds", the Africans "blacks", and themselves "whites".⁷¹

Not all travellers abroad perceived Westerners as white. In the North of Europe, wrote Binchun, "men and

⁶⁸ Hwuy-Ung, *A Chinaman's opinion of us and of his own country*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1927, p. 9.

⁶⁹ Zhang Deyi, *Ou Mei huanyouji*, pp. 654-655.

⁷⁰ Qi Zhaoxi, *You Meizhou riji* (Diary on my travels in America), Peking: Yuelu shushe, 1985, p. 225.

⁷¹ Li Gui, *Huanyou diqiu xinlu* (New records on my travels around the world), Peking: Yuelu shushe, 1985, p. 333.

women have broad faces and full cheeks, their flesh is reddish purple; they cover themselves with fur and feathers, and greatly resemble the Mongols."⁷² Most observers, however, fully accepted the adjective "white" for the Westerners. Western "whiteness" was sometimes explained in curious ways. Zhigang (ascribed the Europeans' white skin and red hair to their daily baths of cold water.⁷³ Xue Fucheng (1838-1894) believed that the consumption of milk accounted for the white skin of European babies.⁷⁴

Chinese abroad increasingly referred to their own people as "yellows". The exact origins of the idea of a "yellow race" remain obscure. A Song encyclopaedia of the tenth century recorded an early legend on the origins of mankind dividing people between noble and ignoble classes: the noble had been made of yellow mud, the ignoble of vulgar rope.⁷⁵ The idea of a yellow race probably originated in the West at the end of the seventeenth century as a reaction to the Jesuits reports on the symbolic value of the colour yellow. The concept did not exist in the Ancient World, and was not used by

⁷² Binchun, *Chengcha biji*, p. 125.

⁷³ Zhigang, *Chushi*, p. 325.

⁷⁴ Xue Fucheng, *Chushi siguo riji* (Diary in four countries), Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1981, pp. 192-193.

⁷⁵ *Taiping yulan* (Song encyclopaedia), quoting the late Han "Fengsutong", Taipei: Xinxing shuju, 1959, p. 1693 (360:5a). See also Zhou Jianren, "Renzhong qiyuan shuo" (Legends about the origins of human races) in *Dongfang zazhi* 16, no. 11 (June 1919), pp. 93-100.

travellers of the Middle Ages like Marco Polo, Plan Carpin, Bento de Goës, or any of the Arab traders. In 1655, the first European mission to the Qing described the Chinese as having a white complexion, "equal to the Europeans", except from some southerners whose skin was slightly brown.⁷⁶ When a young inhabitant of the Celestial Kingdom was presented to the court of Louis XIV in 1684, he was described as a "young Indian".⁷⁷ According to Huard, the first scientific work in which the notion of a "yellow race" appeared was François Bernier's "Etrennes adressées à Madame de la Sablière pour l'année 1688". In this work, Bernier distinguished four races, including the "yellows".

The notion of a "yellow race" was rapidly popularized in Western racist literature of the nineteenth century, and reached China through the intermediary of the missionaries. During the beginning of the 1890s, mission schools in China even taught their pupils how to recognize the "characteristic colors of the various races of mankind" (when asked what the colour of the Chinese was, one boy answered "human colour").⁷⁸ An

⁷⁶ J. Nieuhof, *Het gezantschap der Neerlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie aan den Grooten Tartarischen Cham den tegenwoordigen Keizer van China*, Amsterdam: Jacob van Meurs, 1665, part 2, p. 56.

⁷⁷ The following is based on P. Huard, "Depuis quand avons-nous la notion d'une race jaune?" in *Institut Indochinois pour l'Etude de l'Homme* 4 (1942), pp. 40-41.

⁷⁸ R.H. Graves, *Forty years in China, or China in transition*, Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1972 (first edition 1895), pp. 37-38.

article on the division of mankind into races according to skin colour was finally published in Chinese by Westerners in 1892.⁷⁹

It would be simple, however, to suggest that the Chinese passively accepted a label invented by Western anthropology. Yellow, one of the five "pure" colours in China, was considered very favorably, as it symbolized fame and progress. Yellow was coupled with the concept of the middle, probably because the annual deposit of loess from the Gobi desert turned the plains of North China yellow.⁸⁰ Yellow became the colour of the Emperor of the Middle Kingdom, ancestral place of the descendants of the Yellow Emperor. The Yellow River is still regarded in China as a symbol of the country.⁸¹ White, on the other hand, was associated with the West. It symbolized death.

Besides the symbolic values of the colour yellow, it should also be noticed that the coding of colours has a direct influence on the perception of colours. The Zuni Indians, for instance, frequently confuse yellow and

⁷⁹ "Ren fen wulei shuo" (The theory of dividing mankind into five races) in *Gezhi huibian* 7, no. 2 (1892). Later, missionaries would also publish on the racial differences of mankind; see for instance the *Wanguo gongbao* 185 (June 1904).

⁸⁰ W. Eberhard, *A dictionary of Chinese symbols: hidden symbols in Chinese life and thought*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986, p. 322.

⁸¹ The official version of Chinese history for foreigners still mentions that by the end of the primitive clan society, "the Huanghe (Yellow River) valley was inhabited by many tribes, among which the one headed by Huangdi (the Yellow Emperor) was very powerful with its culture highly developed"; see *Chinese history*, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1987, p. 2.

orange: they use the same name for both.⁸² In China, yellow generally covers a much broader range in the spectrum of colours than in Europe. Its perception seems to include shades ranging from broken white to light brown (hence the perception of foreigners' blond or brown hair as "yellow").

Chinese in search for ingroup similarity would turn more and more to the idea of a yellow race. Familiarity with outgroups led to an increased relativization of the ingroup's cosmological position and to an increased specification of the ingroup's identity. Heightened awareness of differences between groups led to a tendency to underestimate the differences within the group. During prolonged contact with an outgroup, the Chinese provincial consciousness was increasingly supplemented with a racial consciousness. Already in 1895, Li Hongzhang (1823-1901) upheld the idea of perpetual peace and harmony between China and Japan, "so that our Asiatic yellow race will not be encroached upon by the white race of Europe."⁸³

Miscegenation

Miscegenation was often perceived as a form of

⁸² M.D. Vernon, *The psychology of perception*, London: Penguin Books, 1971, p. 70.

⁸³ S.Y. Teng and J.K. Fairbank, *China's response to the West, a documentary survey 1839-1923*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954, p. 126.

mongrelization. Early reports from abroad, for instance, noted how the mixture of Caucasian yang and coloured yin engendered shades of yellow, black, red, and purple.⁸⁴ Copulation of "the white barbarians with the black faces engenders bastards, (...) a yellow-faced curly-haired type", thought Linzhen.⁸⁵

Miscegenation of a Chinese with a foreigner was inconceivable for some scholars. It was considered shameful for the individual and for the country. As a result of excessive contact between students abroad and white women, students were expressly commanded not to approach foreign women in 1910. Marriage with an alien female would only lead to the abandonment of the course of study, to a waste of money, and to national subjugation.⁸⁶

Official disgrace and public opprobrium menaced those who betrayed the race. Lu Zhengxiang (1871-1949), future minister of foreign affairs, married a Belgian girl in 1899, despite the formal disapproval of his superiors. His wife was not allowed to attend any official reception for almost a decade.⁸⁷ When Frederick

⁸⁴ Zhang Deyi, *Ou Mei huanyouji*, p. 655.

⁸⁵ Linzhen, *Xihai jiyou cao* (Draft travel notes on the Western seas), Peking: Yuelu shushe, 1985, p. 37; see also Zhang Deyi, *Ou Mei huanyouji*, pp. 649-450, on the South-American "bastards".

⁸⁶ Shu Xincheng, *Jindai Zhongguo liuxue shi* (A history of Chinese students studying abroad in recent times), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1933, p. 177.

⁸⁷ Lou Tseng-Tsiang, *Souvenirs et pensées*, Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1945, p. 44.

Townsend Ward, a leader of the Ever Victorious Army fighting the Taiping, married the daughter of a wealthy Chinese banker, she cried for days before the wedding ceremony, "not because she felt like weeping, but because it was expected of her."⁸⁸ Foreign husbands, noticed Jerome Ch'en, provoked an "acid feeling" among some Chinese males who sneered at Chinese girls married to foreigners, and would even write threatening letters to them to urge them to stay "pure".⁸⁹

Fear of racial impurity did not haunt only some sections of the educated elite. In Texas, the Chinese community grew considerably at the beginning of the 1880s as a result of the arrival of railways. Despite the notable absence of Chinese women, few Chinese would marry a local girl: "through ostracism of those who did marry outside the race, the Chinese were able to keep intermarriage with Mexicans to a minimum."⁹⁰ In Hawaii, Chinese labourers did marry local women in the middle of the nineteenth century, but ceased as soon as Chinese women became available in the 1920s.⁹¹

Sexual fear combined with racial prejudice in order

⁸⁸ H. Cahill, *A yankee adventurer. The story of Ward and the Taiping rebellion*, New York: Macaulay Company, 1930, p. 166.

⁸⁹ Ch'en, *China and the West*, p. 166.

⁹⁰ N.E. Farrar, *The Chinese in El Paso*, El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1972, p. 35.

⁹¹ S.W. Kung, *Chinese in American life: some aspects of their history, status, problems, and contributions*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962, p. 216.

to maintain social distance between the Chinese and the foreigner. Carnal contact with the alien was taboo, even at the level of the brothel. Before the 1840s, flower-boat girls would allure foreigners, but their services were exclusively reserved for the Chinese; aliens were not allowed to enter.⁹² Strict rules of segregation eased somewhat after the treaties, especially in Shanghai, but sexual distance remained the public norm.

Conclusion

Even without prior expectancies about an outgroup's characteristics, inaccurate impressions may develop as a result of the selective perception or memory of the ingroup.⁹³ In China, however, an extensive barbarian imagery had been built on this purely cognitive basis of prejudice since the earliest times. The result was that the perception of outgroups was reduced to highly stereotyped patterns. Racial stereotypes of outgroups evolved from these traditional patterns during the nineteenth century in order to defend a threatened symbolic universe, promote group cohesion, and compensate

⁹² C.T. Downing, *The fan-qui in China in 1836-1837*, London: Henry Colburn, 1838, vol. 1, p. 242. As late as 1911, Jean Rodes reports that the prostitutes in Shanghai would hastily run away at his sight, as if he were a "devil"; see J. Rodes, *Scènes de la vie révolutionnaire en Chine (1911-1914)*, Paris: Plon, 1917, p. 63.

⁹³ J.C. Brigham, "Race and eyewitness identifications" in S. Worchel and W.G. Austin, eds., *Psychology of intergroup relations*, Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1986, p. 274.

for a lowered self-esteem. They also facilitated the emergence of a racial consciousness.

Absence of familiarity with physically discontinuous people eased the appearance of a racial consciousness in China. India, in comparison, reacted to Westerners in a very different way. The Indians developed an awareness of racial distinctiveness only after 1860, mainly as a reaction to the rise of Western racial theories that accompanied the extension of foreign economic dominance on the subcontinent. "But probably most important, the subcontinent had seen too many alien conquests, all of them by people whose foreignness had both racial and religious aspects, to regard the English as significantly different, at least for the first century or so."⁹⁴ China had only been invaded by tribes that were subsequently culturally and physically assimilated.

Racial consciousness appears first among those who have extended contact with the outgroup. In Indonesia, ethnic awareness of Indonesians increased in proportion to interethnic contact with the Dutch.⁹⁵ The same was true for the Chinese. The Canton area in particular and the coastal regions generally first developed a sense of racial identity that was to spread gradually to the whole of the country. Intellectuals directly exposed to

⁹⁴ R. Murphey, *The outsiders. The Western experience in India and China*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977, p. 67.

⁹⁵ G.W. Skinner, ed., *Local, ethnic and national loyalties in village Indonesia: a symposium*, New Haven: Yale University Cultural Report Series, 1959, p. 7.

foreigners were also vital in the activation of a racial consciousness.

Stereotypes and misperceptions largely facilitated the emergence of a racial identity so vital in the process of relativization and adaptation. Misperceptions, however, can also impede adaptation when it is dependent on accurate prediction or understanding of the outgroup's behaviour and intentions.⁹⁶ The tension between these two mutually exclusive goals, namely the need for a strong ingroup identity and the urge for adaptation to an outgroup, would have dramatic effects on the course of Chinese modern history until the middle of the twentieth century.

⁹⁶ See P.C. Rosenblatt, "Origins and effects of group ethnocentrism and nationalism" in *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 8, no. 2 (1964), p. 142.

PART TWO

RACE AS LINEAGE (1895-1902)

Introduction

Evolution, along with its bastard stepchild race, had perhaps been disseminated through the channels of private conversation in late nineteenth century China, but it had to wait until 1895 to appear overtly on the intellectual scene. That year was marked by the Qing Empire's shattering defeat in the Sino-Japanese War. This traumatic experience was the culmination of a series of convulsions that had begun about half a century before with the Opium War.

Japan, contemptuously designated as a country of "dwarf slaves" (*wonu*), still considered a vassal of the Empire,¹ dealt a blow to China's pride and self-confidence by gaining an overwhelming victory in the Sino-Japanese War. This was a decisive phase in the process of gradual erosion of China's sinocentric view of the world. China had now to accept a new world order in which it was no longer the hub of civilization.

¹ See S.C. Chu, "China's attitudes toward Japan at the time of the Sino-Japanese War" in A. Iriye, ed., *The Chinese and the Japanese: essays in political and cultural interactions*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980, pp. 74-95.

The Japanese victory was unexpected, even by those who had been aware of China's deficiencies. It led to an outpouring of patriotic agitation in the country. An unprecedented flow of memorials advocating reforms reached the throne after the Shimonoseki peace settlement of 1895. The scholar-gentry, upset by the shock of events, advocated prolonged warfare and clamoured for the punishment of those responsible for China's defeat. In this general atmosphere of intellectual ferment, study societies created by the scholar class to discuss political issues sprouted up all over the country. Journals and newspapers mushroomed and spread the ideas of reform elaborated in the study societies. The main concern was the survival of China. Polemical essays, translated news from the foreign press and educational articles supported the journals' arguments in favour of institutional reforms and intellectual renewal.

Liang Qichao (1873-1929) was one of these young Chinese intellectuals whose patriotic spirit had been spurred by his country's defeat. He had been a student of Kang Youwei (1858-1927) and had read the essays of Yan Fu (1853-1921) on Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin. A precocious student from a farmer-scholar family of Guangdong, he had passed the provincial examinations at the age of sixteen. After the defeat of 1895, Liang actively participated in the setting up of study societies and the creation of journals to which he made substantial contributions. He would soon become China's

most brilliant journalist and would exert a lasting influence on two generations of intellectuals through the voluminous outpourings of his pen.

This chapter considers the notion of race as lineage in China from 1895 to 1902. It is mainly confined to the works of the reformers, with special emphasis on Liang Qichao.² 1902 was a turning point in the perception of race in China, marked by the gradual emergence of a virulent nationalism represented by Sun Yatsen and his revolutionary group. The nationalists will be analyzed in the next chapter, concerned with the perception of race as nation.

Interracial struggles

"What is history? History is nothing but the account of the development and strife of human races."³ From 1896 onwards, when he started his journalistic activities, a significant part of Liang Qichao's world view revolved around the notion of race. Races, he held, had developed

² The political implications of Liang's racial thinking have been discussed by Chang Hao. For the concept of qun or "social grouping" see pp. 95-112, for the concept of nation-race (minzu), see pp. 259-261 in Chang Hao, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and intellectual transition in China, 1890-1907*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971.

³ Liang Qichao, "Xin shixue" (New historiography) in *Yinbingshi wenji* (Collected writings of Liang Qichao), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1941 (hereafter YBSWJ), 4, 9:11; see also another important article entitled "Lun minzu jingzheng zhi dashi" (About the general trend of racial struggles) in YBSWJ, 4, 10:10-35.

side by side until they eventually engaged in war against each other. Modern times were characterized by struggle between the races. Races could be divided into two categories: the historical races (*you lishi de zhongzu*) and the un- or ahistorical races (*fei lishi de zhongzu*).⁴ The latter were unable to expand their race and were subjugated by the former, more cohesive and united. The red, brown and black races were consequently eliminated from the stage, leaving the drama of history to the whites and yellows.

The idea of racial struggle pervaded many of the writings of the intellectual elite after 1895. A racial interpretation of world history came to compete with an economic vision which had been developed since the 1860's.⁵ The idea of commercial warfare (*shangzhan*) had first appeared in 1862 in the writings of Zeng Guofan (1811-1872) and soon attracted high officials and patriotic merchants of the treaty ports as an alternative to the idea of military self-strengthening, which focused on the preparation of a military confrontation (*bingzhan*). The concept of *shangzhan* believed in the

⁴ *Ibid.*, 4, 9:12.

⁵ This discussion of *shangzhan* is based on Hao Yen-p'ing and Wang Erh-min, "Changing Chinese views of Western relations, 1840-1895" in J.K. Fairbank and Liu Kwang-ching, eds., *Cambridge history of China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, vol. 11, part 2, pp. 191-194; see also Wang Ermin, "Shangzhan guannian yu zhongshang sixiang" (The idea of commercial warfare and the importance attached to commerce) in *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* 5 (June 1966), pp. 1-91.

necessity of using trade as a weapon to resist foreign encroachments. It echoed the ideas of the legalist thinker Shang Yang (d. 338 BC), who had developed a strategy of *gengzhan*, or "agricultural warfare".

A worldview of racial warfare imposed itself after 1895, as all efforts to develop commerce and industry in order to rival with the foreigners seemed meaningless in the light of the Japanese victory. Starting with Yan Fu, the focus was shifted from trade to race. Many reformers gradually came to adopt a vision of an international scene dominated by a white race against which China had to fight if it wanted to survive.

Yan Fu had introduced Darwin and Spencer to the Chinese public in four essays published in 1895 in the *Zhibao*, a newspaper edited in Tianjin. The aim of these essays was to tackle the problem of China's weakness and its corollary question about the sources of the West's wealth and power. Yan Fu assumed that the secret of the success of the Westerners lay in their belief in progress and energy, vitality and struggle. He presented an image of a world engaged in a perennial process of evolution, in which races had to struggle for survival. This is how he pictured the different races:

"There are four main races on the earth: the yellow, the white, the brown and the black. The yellow race's territory is contiguous with the north of Siberia, extending to the south Chinese sea, bordered by the Pacific and up to the Kunlun mountains in the west. They have prominent cheek-bones, a shallow nose, long eyes and straight hair. The white race dwells

west of the salted lakes of the Ural, on the ancient territory conquered by the Daqin [Rome]. They have blue eyes and curly hair, a prominent forehead and deep-set sockets. On the many islands south of Vietnam, west of Luzon and east of India is the brown race. The black race is the lowest.⁶ They live in Africa and in the territories around the tropics. They are the so-called black slaves."⁷

Yan Fu addressed an imaginary critic who denied that the country was on the verge of extinction. This critic argued that China had repeatedly been invaded by alien races but had always managed to survive by culturally swallowing its conquerors. Yan Fu's answer was articulated on the notion of race. It drew a dividing line between the western barbarians and the traditional barbarians. He transferred China's sense of identity from a cultural unity, traditionally opposed to various barbarians who could eventually be annihilated through a process of absorption, to a racial group, faced with aggressive alien races in an international context of struggle for survival. The clear distinction between a yellow and a white race implied that the Manchus, Mongols and Han Chinese had never actually fallen to an alien kind. He thus radically inverted the traditional

⁶ The expression "lowest" reflects the Chinese belief in geographical determinism, thus having a latitudinal as well as an evolutionary connotation. The 1959 Peking edition has added a note explaining how this was part of the "persistent vilification of the black race by the capitalist and imperialist countries". Yan Fu, *Yan Fu shiwen xuan* (Selected poems and writings of Yan Fu), Peking: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1959, p. 39, n. 78.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

perspective and pleaded for solidarity between the Manchus and Han Chinese in order to parry the danger that loomed large in his discussion. Indeed, if the white race was not to succumb to Chinese culture, the reader could easily foretell the alternative: the Western sway over the yellow breed or, worse, the weeding out of the entire yellow race. "They will enslave us and hinder the development of our spirit and body...The brown and black races constantly waver between life and death, why not the 400 million yellows?"⁸

The inauspicious spectre of interracial war, along with the threat of racial extinction, overshadowing China's future, conveyed a heightened sense of urgency to the intellectuals' discussions of the country's shortcomings. The problem of the survival of the Chinese as a racial group was a concern shared by many writers of that decade.

Interlineage struggles

China as a racial group was a concept that had emerged among literati concerned with reforming the country. There was an urgent need for a concept capable of overarching the regional allegiances and linking the national interests in the face of both Western and Japanese aggression. Struggle for survival, however, was nothing new.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

Nineteenth century China was one of the most competitive periods in Chinese history. Demographic pressure and an increasing shortage of resources had led to a decline in social mobility. Intense competition was necessary in both public and private sectors. Common lineage bonds and common native bonds were increasingly used to achieve social advancement.⁹

The lineage (zu), or common descent group, had come to rise in its modern form under the Song.¹⁰ The zu was a model of social organization generally confined to a village or a neighborhood where it possessed land, schools and an ancestral hall. It developed a sense of solidarity among its members. Descent lines were recorded by the compilation of genealogies, a task that could require the labour of many zu members. The last edition of the genealogy of the Zeng in Hunan needed the participation of 106 members. It traced its descent from a prince of the Xia dynasty whose father had reigned from 2218 to 2168 B.C. Attempts to establish an hereditary link with a mythical personality were based on the need for prestige and on the necessity to mark the zu off from the barbarians who had ruled China for several centuries. It proved the "purity" of the zu.

⁹ See P.A. Kuhn and S.M. Jones, "Dynastic decline and the roots of rebellion" in D. Twitchett and J.K. Fairbank, eds., *Cambridge history of China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, vol. 10, pp. 108-115.

¹⁰ The following discussion is mainly based on Hu Hsien Chin, *The common descent group in China and its functions*, New York: Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, 1948.

Considerable friction could arise between zu, nurtured by a feeling of rivalry, suspicion and envy. Open hostilities were often the consequence of local contention and competition. Harry Lamley, who has analyzed such lineage feuds, believes that they were a major type of disorder during the Qing dynasty.¹¹ They prevailed throughout China, but were more common in the south-east, where the institution of the lineage had grown more powerful than in the north. Battles between lineages could involve many thousands of combatants. Zu leaders even subsidized paramilitary operations. Terror and wanton destruction of fields and villages was the normal outcome of such feuds, called xiedou, "armed battles".

During the Qing, interethnic conflicts (fenlei xiedou), or "armed battles to separate categories", became common between Han Chinese and Muslims, Hakka and Hoklo (Hokkien speaking Chinese), Hakka and Punti (native Cantonese). Ethnic feuds strived at "clearing the boundaries" (qingjie) by ejecting exogenous members from their respective territories. Such ethnic clashes could be extremely violent: a major Hakka-Punti conflict from 1856 to 1867 had a toll of over hundred thousand lost lives. The vision of a world engaged in fiercely competitive racial struggles was an outgrowth of a native

¹¹ See H.J. Lamley, "Hsieh-tou: the pathology of violence in south-eastern China" in *Ch'ing-shih Wen-t'i* 3, no. 7 (November 1977), pp. 1-39. The following is based on this article.

model based on lineage feuds. This vision was sustained by the semantical similarity between zu as lineage and zu as race. Huangzu meant both yellow lineage and yellow race. Conflicts between lineages became conflicts between races. Members of the yellow clan had to fight against the members of the white clan, who were outgrowing their territory. The Yellow Emperor became the common ancestor of all Chinese. The ancestral territories, the divine soil of the Middle Kingdom traditionally associated with the colour yellow, as opposed to the "red" and "black" soils of the barbarians, needed to be defended against the expanding white clan. The "white peril" was indeed a remarkable Chinese counterpart of the "yellow peril" fear then prevailing in the West.¹²

Racial classifications

Liang Qichao, like most of the reformers, had borrowed Yan Fu's ideas of racial identity and racial struggle, but added the American Indians to his classification of races. He divided mankind into five main races: the white race, the yellow race, the red race, the brown race and the black race. In Europe, Johann Blumenbach (1752-1840), a German anatomist considered to be one of the founders of modern anthropology, had also advanced a fivefold

¹² See H. Gollwitzer, *Die gelbe Gefahr. Geschichte eines Schlagworts*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1962.

classification: Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American and Malayan. Most Western scientists, however, propounded a white, yellow and black race when based on a pigmentation criterion.¹³ Western scientists, however, were more interested in the search for the origins of races than in classifications. Samuel Stanhope Smith, an early American anthropologist, dismissed classifications as "useless labour" because it was impossible to draw a clear line between the various races of the world.¹⁴ For the reformers, categories and classifications were of the utmost importance. Origins, on the contrary, attracted only scant interest: it was beyond doubt that the Yellow Emperor had originated the yellow lineage.

Liang was aware of various Western classifications, ranging from one single race to a maximum of sixty three races. He had briefly introduced these to the Chinese reader, and admitted that it was difficult to find an appropriate categorizing principle.¹⁵ He nonetheless adhered firmly to his own fivefold system. He adopted a Chinese pattern based on the symbolic number five. Such wide-ranging elements as colours (wucan), sense organs (wuguan), flavours (wuwei), spices (wuxiang), metals (wujin) and natural elements (wuxing) all fitted into

¹³ See F. de Fontette, *Le racisme*, Paris: PUF, 1981, p. 51.

¹⁴ J.C. Greene, *The death of Adam: evolution and its impact on Western thought*, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1959, p. 222.

¹⁵ Liang Qichao, "Xin shixue" in *YBSWJ*, 4, 9:12.

this traditional pattern. Manipulations to fit elements into this numerological set were common. The *Liji* mentioned 62 different kinds of five. Even the four seasons were meshed with the five phases.¹⁶ During the Buddhist expansion in China, a system known as *geyi*, "matching concepts", had reconciled the Buddhist Mahabhutas, or four elements, with the five Chinese elements.¹⁷

There were five directions, China being the Middle surrounded by the barbarians of the four compass points. A cosmographic view of the world appearing in the *Shujing* represented the Imperial Centre (*difu*) surrounded by five concentric configurations progressively approaching the waste lands (*huangfu*).

For Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909), the five races corresponded to the five continents.¹⁸ Tang Caichang (1867-1900) also neatly juxtaposed the five continents to the five skin colours (*Ya Ou Mei Fei Ao ye; huang bai hong hei zong*).¹⁹ As an opening to his study on races, published from November 1897 to February 1898 in the

¹⁶ J.B. Henderson, *The development and decline of Chinese cosmology*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984, p. 8.

¹⁷ A.F. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese history*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959, p. 37.

¹⁸ Zhang Zhidong, *Zhang Wenxiang gong quanji* (The complete papers of Zhang Zhidong), Peking, 1937, juan 103, p. 16a.

¹⁹ Tang Caichang, *Juedianmingzhai neiyuan* (Essays on political and historical matters), Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1968, p. 141.

Xiangxue xinbao, he quoted the *Gezhi huibian* (The Chinese scientific magazine). The *Gezhi huibian* was an illustrated periodical edited by John Fryer, a translator who cooperated closely with the missionaries. Tang thus presented the Western view of mankind: "Westerners divide mankind into five races: the Mongolian race, the Caucasian race, the African race, the Malaysian race and the American Indian race. Their skin colour differentiates them into yellow, white, black, brown and red peoples."²⁰ Fryer described the Mongolian race as "reddish brown" (*zhe*). American Indians, though they were called the "red tribe", were described as having a "bronze" (*tong*) skin colour.²¹

Fryer, however, had never related the five races to the five continents. This association was the pure product of the Chinese inclination for well-ordered symmetrical patterns. Chinese literati preferred to view the world in well-defined colours corresponding to clear-cut continents, similar to the ancient custom that associated the barbarians of the four quarters (*siyi*) with different colours: the red or black *Di*, the white or

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 472. Tang most likely referred to an article entitled "Ren fen wulei shuo" (About dividing mankind in five) in *Gezhi huibian* 7, no. 3, 1892. I have so far not been able to consult this article.

²¹ See J. Fryer, *Gezhi congshu*, 1901, ce 1, juan 12, p. 2a. The compendium of Western science published in Hong Kong in 1897 also briefly mentioned the five races; see *Xixue gezhi daquan* (Compendium of Western science), Hong Kong: Xianggang shuju, 1897, ce 1, "dili", p. 6a.

black Man.²² This vision was supported by the character *zhou*, "continent surrounded by water", used in the denomination of the world's geographical entities. The semantic content of the character *zhou* sanctioned the extension of the traditional world order beyond the four seas that had customarily delineated the inhabited territories. China now assumed the central position in Asia, the "Middle Continent". In this extended world order, barbarians did not come from the northern steppes anymore. They approached the Middle Kingdom from overseas. Asia was surrounded by four islands, each belonging to a different tribe. The western one (a direction that had always been symbolized by the colour white) was overflowing at an alarming speed. The red, brown and black tribes had not been able to resist the white barbarians, called "sea devils" (*yanggui*), and had been partly or totally conquered: they were inferior.

The darker races

In the universe of the reformers, the dominating white and yellow races were opposed to three darker races, doomed to racial extinction by hereditary inadequacy. Liang continuously divided his five races into dichotomous couples like "noble" (*guizhong*) and "ignoble" (*jianzhong*), "superior" (*youzhong*) and

²² Tang Caichang, when mentioning the ancient Chinese tribes, often used these appellations; see Tang Caichang, *Juedianmingzhai*, p. 525, for instance.

"inferior" (*liezhong*), "historical" and "ahistorical". Tang Caichang opposed "fine" (*liangzhong*) to "mean" (*jianzhong*) races.²³

Such binary classifications, often ascribed to the influence of Western "social Darwinism",²⁴ were part of the hierarchy in the Qing dynasty. Citizens were divided into two groups, namely "common people" (*liangmin*) and "mean people" (*jianmin*). "Mean people" comprised four groups: 1) government servants and attendants; 2) tenant-servants; 3) entertainers (*lehu*), including prostitutes and actors; beggars, "fallen people" (*duomin*), "boat people" (*jiuxing yuhu*) and Dan people; 4) slave-servants.²⁵ This line of demarcation had been legally abolished by Yongzheng in 1723, but social discrimination persisted until the twentieth century.

The "fallen people" of Shaoxing have been studied by James Cole. This hereditary group of outcasts were barred from participation in the examinations and registered separately from the commoners until 1911. Intermarriage between *duomin* and *liangmin* was inconceivable. A native of Shaoxing wrote an essay on the "fallen people" and

²³ Tang Caichang, *Juedianmingzhai*, p. 501.

²⁴ James Pusey, for instance, explains nearly every intellectual change in China between 1895 and the 1920s in terms of "social Darwinism"; see J.R. Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983. The question of "social Darwinism" is treated in detail in the next chapter.

²⁵ See Jing Junjian, "Hierarchy in the Qing dynasty" in *Social Sciences in China* (1982), no. 1, p. 166; see also Ch'u T'ung-tsu, *Law and society in traditional China*, Paris: Mouton, 1965, pp. 128-135.

justified their social position: "Among all men there are the respected and the base, the noble and the mean, the great and the little, the gentleman and the small man."²⁶ His argument was supported by Han Yu's (768-824) theory of three grades in human nature and by quotations from the *Analects*.

The reformers applied this native model of hierarchy to the world's different peoples. They did not attempt to establish any distinctions between the coloured races: they were all "mean". Tang Caichang constructed antithetical couplets with the four races Yan Fu's essays had introduced: "Yellow and white are wise, red and black are stupid; yellow and white are rulers, red and black are slaves; yellow and white are united, red and black are scattered."²⁷ He quoted a Japanese account of Australian aborigines, who "are pitch black, have emaciated limbs, resemble a macaque and are more repulsive than the orang-utang one can see in Malaysia."²⁸

Liang Qichao persistently denied any sense of equality to the coloured peoples. India did not flourish "because of the limitations of its race. All the black,

²⁶ J.H. Cole, "Social discrimination in traditional China: The To-min of Shaohsing" in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 25, part 1 (1982), p. 103.

²⁷ Tang Caichang, *Juedianmingzhai*, p. 468.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 563. The macaque, *mihou*, had previously been assimilated to the "blue-eyed, red-bearded barbarians" in the *Qianhanshu*; see chapter 1.

red, and brown races, by the microbes in their blood vessels and their cerebral angle, are inferior to the whites. Only the yellows are not very dissimilar to the whites";²⁹ (...) "blacks and browns are lazy and stupid."³⁰

Kang Youwei expounded a utopian vision of the world in a work completed in 1902, called *Datongshu*, or "One World". Kang wanted to eliminate the darker races in order to achieve universal harmony. He assumed that darker races were unequal and should be eradicated. He proposed to whiten the darker races by dietary change, intermarriage, migration and sterilization.

Dietary change consisted of replacing "indigestible insects, grass" and other gastronomical oddities³¹ on which Africans were thought to subsist, by properly cooked food. Several generations of negroes fed on a Chinese diet would at least lead to the vaporization of their fishy smell (*xingchou*).

Intermarriage was difficult to realize because the appearance of the blacks, "with their iron faces, silver teeth, slanting jaws like a pig, front view like an ox, full breasts and long hair, their hands and feet dark

²⁹ Liang Qichao, "Lun Zhongguo zhi jiangqiang" (About the future power of China) in *YBSWJ*, 2, 2:13.

³⁰ Liang Qichao, "Lun Zhongguo renzhong zhi jianglai" (About the future of the Chinese race) in *YBSWJ*, 2, 3:52; see also 2, 3:41; 3, 4:8; 5, 22:87; etc.

³¹ Kang Youwei, *Datongshu* (The one world), Peking: Guji chubanshe, 1956, p. 122.

black, stupid (chun)³² like sheep or swine" was simply too frightening.³³ No refined white girl would ever agree to mate with a "monstrously ugly black".³⁴ Whites and yellows who married blacks as a contribution to the purification of mankind should be awarded a medal with the inscription "Improver of the race".³⁵

The migration method was founded on the traditional belief in geographical determinism. Kang had already observed that British born in India had a "yellow-bluish" (huanglan) shade, whereas Chinese born in Europe or in the United States evidenced a distinctive white colour. Old blacks should consequently be moved to Canada, South America and Brazil, the best of the Africans being moved to Europe.³⁶

The last method recommended by Kang was sterilization. "Browns or blacks whose characteristics are too bad, whose physical appearance is too ugly or who carry a disease should be given a sterilizing medicament to stop the perpetuation of their race."³⁷ Some Western

³² Chunyu, "stupid", was the legal term used for the "mentally incompetent"; see Vivien W. Ng, "Ch'ing laws concerning the insane: an historical survey" in *Ch'ing-shih Wen-t'i* 4, no. 4 (December 1980), p. 55.

³³ Kang Youwei, *Datongshu*, p. 118; translation from L.G. Thompson, *Ta t'ung shu: the one world philosophy of K'ang Yu-wei*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958, p. 144.

³⁴ Kang Youwei, *Datongshu*, p. 118.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 122, my translation.

racialist theories ultimately proposed segregation or extermination, whereas Kang prescribed racial unity through assimilation, thus translating the traditional concept of cultural absorption into terms of physical amalgamation. Westerners sought purity, Chinese pursued unity. The West's technological superiority had led to the discovery of the world, but the world had revealed its numerical inferiority. The tortured imagination of the West created a vision of hordes of uncivilized savages who would overflow and destroy its superior civilization. Despite exclusion acts, impure elements infiltrated and infected the West. The search for purity was an expression of anxiety. China had nothing to fear. Kang had underlined the territorial size and the vast population of China, and could safely surmise that yellow would emerge as the dominant type after an amalgamation of the races, just like Mao Zedong, half a century later, would contemplate atomic war, firmly believing that China would come out first by the sheer weight of its numbers.

Geographical determinism was not only important for Kang Youwei's migration plans. Xue Fucheng (1838-1894), a high official and respected expert on foreign matters who was often quoted by the reformers, stopped in Saigon, Singapore and Ceylon on his way to Europe were he would serve as a minister from 1890 until his death in 1894. His *Diary in four countries* was an eyewitness report and provides clear evidence of Chinese prejudice: "I have seen the aborigines of Saigon, Singapore and Ceylon. They

are ugly and savage, similar to deers and swine. The various peoples from Vietnam, Burma, India, Malaysia, and Arabia are all black-faced, stocky and boorish. How could they be compared with the Chinese refinement and elegance or the Europeans' whiteness and tall stature?"³⁸

Climate was responsible for this racial inequality. Below the "red line", or equator, heat drained men from their *jingqi*,³⁹ or vital essence, leaving them without physical strength and mental energy. "Under the tropics, people propagate but have no spirit."⁴⁰ Only in the temperate zones could the *jingqi* congeal and accumulate, setting the whites and yellows apart from the other races.

Geographical determinism also helped Liang in explaining the irreversible inferiority of the darker races. Africans lived in tropical regions and had a "muddled mind"; they did not "think of progress".⁴¹ Darker races were only driven by instinctive desires for food and sex. During his trip through the United States

³⁸ Xue Fucheng, *Chushi Ying, Fa, Yi, Bi siguo riji* (Diary in four countries), Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1966-67, p. 28. This damaging evidence of racial prejudice has been deleted in the 1981 edition; Xue Fucheng, *Chushi siguo riji*, Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1981, p. 20; see also p. 14.

³⁹ *Jing* is a medical term for a fundamental substance maintaining the function of the body; *qi* is the vital energy for life.

⁴⁰ Xue Fucheng, *Siguo riji*, p. 29.

⁴¹ Liang Qichao, "Dili yu wenming zhi guanxi" (The relation between geography and civilization) in *YBSWJ*, 4, 10:106-107.

in 1903, Liang thus explained the American lynching practice: "The blacks behaviour is despicable. They die without regret only if they succeed in touching a white woman's skin. They often lurk in the darkness of woods to rape them. Thereafter these women are murdered so that they will not talk. Nine out of ten cases of lynching are due to this crime."⁴²

Extinction of the lineage

The five-racial classification, by including three cursed races, performed a prophetic function: darker breeds were harbingers of racial decline, exemplifying the fate that was awaiting China if it did not catch up with the white lords of mankind. In America, the ruthless law of evolution had already tracked down and killed off the "red barbarians" (*hongyi*).⁴³ Liang pondered on the future of China while touring the States, where he believed that the Indians would become museum pieces within thirty years time.⁴⁴ In Hawaii, he reported that the original inhabitants constituted only 1/15th of the total population. The aborigines, naive creatures sunk in

⁴² Liang Qichao, "Xin dalu youji" (Travel notes on America) in Liang Qichao, *Yinbingshi zhuanji* (Writings of Liang Qichao), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1941 (hereafter YBSZJ), 5, 22:87.

⁴³ Liang Qichao, "Shengjixue xueshuo yange xiaoshi" (Short history of the evolution of the science of livelihood) in YBSWJ, 5, 12:4.

⁴⁴ Liang Qichao, "Xin dalu" in YBSZJ, 5, 22:99.

ignorance, "were not even aware of their extinction".⁴⁵ The blacks from Africa and the browns from the Pacific were all enslaved and would "disappear from the face of the earth within several decades."⁴⁶

The blacks in the United States, driven by a crude instinct for sex, had reproduced themselves at a rate far superior to that of the whites. Industrialization, however, had outpaced them, leaving them without any place in society. They were slowly dying out: they would decrease by a third within a century according to the statisticians Liang quoted.⁴⁷

Fear of the extinction of the lineage lay at the root of Chinese interest in racial matters. Appeals for the "preservation of the race" (*baozhong*) were reiterated ad nauseam in the reformers' writings. It was announced as a main goal in the Hunan periodical *Xiangxue xinbao*.⁴⁸

Continuity of the *zu* was a perennial concern in Chinese civilization. Every *zu* compiled a genealogy in order to provide evidence of its continuity despite the turbulent periods of barbarian invasions. Male members were highly valued because they represented a potential for the perpetuation of the *zu*. Concubines could be taken

⁴⁵ Liang Qichao, "Xiaweiyi youji" (Travel notes on Hawaii) in *YBSZJ*, 5, 22:196.

⁴⁶ Liang Qichao, "Lun Hunan ying ban zhi shi" (About the affairs Hunan should handle) in *YBSWJ*, 2, 3:41.

⁴⁷ Liang Qichao, "Xin dalu" in *YBSZJ*, 5, 22:86.

⁴⁸ *Xiangxue xinbao* (The Hunan news) 1, no. 1 (1897), photolithograph, Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1966, p. 8.

to assure the posterity of the zu when the main wife was sterile.

The Western sense of continuity was vertical. From the creeping worm up to God there existed a Great Chain of Being. The problem was to discover the connection between animal and man: anthropology, craniology and comparative anatomy were all in search of the missing link. Charles White, for instance, had examined the anatomical features of over fifty blacks to conclude that they were closer to the ape than was the European. His account, published in 1799, was entitled *An account of the regular gradation in man, and in different animals and vegetables; and from the former to the latter.*⁴⁹ Peter Camper, a Dutch anatomist, compared the skulls of apes and Negroes in 1792: he too believed that the African was closer to the ape than to the European.⁵⁰ As late as 1831, a work was published in which the orang-utang was classified as human in the Great Chain.⁵¹ When the rise of the idea of progress finally disentangled European thought from the teleological belief in static creationism, the missing link was discovered. Darwin proved that there was a biological step from ape to man.

The perception of nature, either static or

⁴⁹ M. Banton, *Racial theories*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 14.

⁵⁰ See Greene, *Death of Adam*, pp. 188-192.

⁵¹ P.D. Curtin, *The image of Africa. British ideas and action, 1780-1850*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964, p. 368.

evolutionary, rested upon the assumption that there existed a continuity between animal and man. Nothing equivalent to this belief can be found in the Chinese realm of thought. Man and animal were considered to be of separate origins and of different categories. When barbarians were associated with animals, it was not to grade them down on a fictitious scale of beings, but to highlight their original difference.

Chinese believed in the polygenist origins of mankind long before European thought eliminated Adam in order to reject the monogenist explanation of humanity.⁵² The monogenist thesis had been introduced to China by the missionaries in the seventeenth century. The Chinese convert Li Zubai (died in 1665) published a history of the Christian Church in China in 1663. His account presented the Chinese as a branch of Judea that had migrated to China. It took Yang Guangxian (1597-1669), a prominent enemy of Christianity, only two years to publish a repudiation of Li's views:

⁵² The belief in polygenist origins of mankind was shared by the Japanese, whose perception of racial matters had a lot in common with China. The first Japanese mission abroad stopped in Angola in 1860 on its way to the United States. It was noted that the natives resembled somewhat the Buddhist images and it was concluded that "the natives of India and Africa both belong to one and the same tribe, of whom that Buddha must have been a chieftain". The diarist of the mission regretted that his country had worshipped such "primitive people" for so long; see M.B. Jansen, *Japan and its world: two centuries of change*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980, p. 47. For a study of the importance of skin colour in Japan, see Hiroshi Wagatsuma, "The social perception of skin color in Japan" in *Daedalus* (1967), pp. 407-443.

Schall's book says that one man and one woman were [created] as the first ancestors of mankind. He was not so bold as to state contemptuously that all the people of the world are the descendants of his religion. According to Li's book, however, our China is nothing but [an offshoot] of Judea; our ancient Chinese rulers, sages, and teachers were but the descendants of a heterodox sect; and our classics and sage teachings, propounded generation after generation, no more than the remnants of a heterodox religion. Are there no limits to foolishness?"⁵³

Liang Qichao mentioned the existence of both monogenist (yiyuan) and polygenist (duoyuan) theses in the West. The monogenist version, on which most Western racialist theories relied, was never developed. Liang also made a significant error by assuming that Hamites and Semites were two branches of the "historical white race" (as opposed to the "historical yellow race").⁵⁴ It indicated either his superficial acquaintance with Western racial theories or his assumption that the Chinese were of a different origin from the foreign devils, whether white or black.⁵⁵

The whole perception of race as lineage depended on polygenism. The Yellow Emperor was the progenitor of the yellow race. Exogenous elements were of little interest,

⁵³ P.A. Cohen, *China and Christianity. The missionary movement and the growth of Chinese antiforeignism, 1860-1870*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963, p. 25.

⁵⁴ Liang Qichao, "Xin shixue" in YBSWJ, 4, 9:12.

⁵⁵ The Japanese *Wanguo shiji* mentioned that the Africans descended from Ham; see Tang Caichang, *Juedianmingzhai*, p. 558. This is a possible source for Liang Qichao's misconception.

except when they threatened China.

Western influence

Liang had quoted the main source that had shaped his world view, namely the *Yinghuan zhilüe* (Brief account of the maritime circuit), bought in Shanghai in 1894 on his way back from Peking, where he had failed the metropolitan examination: reading this geography, he "started to discover that there were five continents and various nations."⁵⁶

The *Yinghuan zhilüe* was a world geography compiled from various Western and Chinese sources by Xu Jiyu in 1848. This account, which was introduced in the preceding chapter, presented Africa as a chaotic continent, inhabited by backward black barbarians. Tang Caichang, even more engrossed in racial studies than Liang, also drew upon the *Yinghuan zhilüe* in his description of Africa.⁵⁷ He acknowledged Yan Fu as a source of his investigation by introducing his "Study of the races of the world" with a summary of Yan Fu's essays.⁵⁸ Tang's study was merely a compilation of quotations taken from Chinese and Western sources, presented according to country and continent. Altogether, Tang Caichang quoted

⁵⁶ Ding Wenjiang, *Liang Rengong xiansheng nianpu changbian chugao* (A first draft chronological biography of Liang Qichao), Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1959, p. 15.

⁵⁷ Tang Caichang, *Juedianmingzhai*, pp. 558-562.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 467.

33 different sources, of which 18 were Chinese.⁵⁹ Besides Xu Jiyu, most cited was the *Wanguo shiji* (A world history), written by the Japanese author Okamoto Kansuke and translated in the 1890s. Of the remaining 15 Western publications, all missionaries' translations, 11 dealt exclusively with European history. Finally, of a total of 97 quotations, only 27 came from Western sources.

Robert Mackenzie's *Nineteenth century*, a history was often quoted by the reformers. Mackenzie's work had been translated by Timothy Richard in 1894 and was very popular among those Chinese who were curious about foreign countries. It had been credited a mark of distinction by being included in a choice of foreign books Liang recommended most to the students of the West.⁶⁰ Mackenzie's history was a vulgar hymn to the benefits of progress, depicted by confronting a state of barbarism and ignorance to a reign of enlightenment and democracy, presided over by science. Missionaries spent years of excruciating efforts to undermine heathenism and

⁵⁹ Chinese sources, besides contemporary material, also included the *Suishu* (622), the *Liangshu* (629), the *Jinshu* (645), the *Mingshi* (1735), Du You's (732-812) *Tongdian*, Ma Duanlin's *Wenxian tongkao* (1317), Gu Yanwu's (1613-1682) *Tianxia junguo libing shu* and Wei Yuan's (1734-1856) *Shengwuji* (1842).

⁶⁰ Liang Qichao, "Xixue shu mubiao (zhaize)" (A choice of books to study the West) in Jian Bozan et al. ed., *Wuxu bianfa* (The Hundred Days), Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguang she, 1953, vol. 1, pp. 447-462. A discussion of the complete list of books compiled by Liang can be found in Chen Chi-Yun, "Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's missionary education: a case study of missionary influence on the reform" in *Papers on China* 16 (1962), pp. 111-114. The author believes that "the missionary influence upon Liang Ch'i-ch'ao seemed to be rather indirect"; *ibid.*, p. 78.

reclaim the world for God.

A typical example were the Sandwich Islands. Before the arrival of Christianity and civilization, these had "sunk to the lowest depth of degradation. They fed on raw fish and the flesh of dogs...The family relation was unknown. Licentiousness was without limit or restraint of shame...Population was rapidly diminishing under the wasting influence of the vices which prevailed."⁶¹ With Christianity, however, the picture changed drastically. "The people became quiet, orderly, industrious... [Christianity was] bringing in its train security to life and property, peace, industry, and progress; raising the wasteful and treacherous savage to the dignity of a God-fearing, law-abiding citizen, who bears fairly in contributing to the common welfare of the human family."⁶² The reformers blotted out the whole process of progress which had elevated the savage to civilization, denying that the blacks could possibly be part of the "human family". They deliberately obliterated the enlightened panel of the diptych most Western sources (all chosen and translated by the missionaries) gave of the coloured races.

Another example is provided by W.A.P. Martin's translation in 1863 of Henry Wheaton's standard work, the *Elements of international law*. Wheaton's lengthy work was

⁶¹ R. Mackenzie, *The nineteenth century, a history*, London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1889, p. 212.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 213-214.

used by Tang Caichang and other reformers in support of their views about the minorities, who had no culture or religion and could thus not be considered equal to the civilized races. By quoting Wheaton, these views were given a pseudo-legal sanction. The reformers, however, considerably distorted the *Elements* by citing the only sentence concerning "savages" in a five hundred pages long treatise: "A state is also distinguished from an unsettled horde of wandering savages not yet formed into a civil society."⁶³

The Chinese had been forced to review their opinion of the Westerners, but would definitely not concede any sense of equality to the other peoples. Contempt for darker people was too deeply ingrained in the Chinese subconsciousness.

Extended experience with Western discrimination could activate defensive racist reactions. In a chapter entitled "California, 1882-1885: confrontation with racial antagonism", Noriko Kamachi has convincingly demonstrated how Huang Zunxian (1848-1905) developed an evolutionary world view of racial conflicts after having experienced racism in the United States. Huang was shocked by the violence of American anti-Chinese sentiment and felt humiliated by the lowered position of the Chinese in California. He would later express his pride in the yellow race in an aggressive military march:

⁶³ H. Wheaton, *Elements of international law*, London: Stevens, 1889, part 1, paragraph 17, lines 3, p. 30.

"Harmony among the five continents cannot be realized. Blacks and reds were humiliated by the whites. Now the whites are afraid of the "yellow peril". What is the yellow peril? It is we, we Asians! We! We! We!"⁶⁴ Belief in universal harmony was all too easily inverted into an opposite pole of racial conflagration.

Huang, however, had already developed racial ideas before his arrival in the United States. In Japan, he used the phrase "same culture same race" (*tongwen tongzhong*) to underline the biological unity of Chinese and Japanese. Huang insisted that the Japanese were descendants of the Han, and reproached the Japanese for neglecting to mention their Chinese ancestry.⁶⁵ In fact, before his arrival in the United States, Huang was already writing about the "black slaves" and the "yellow race" being endangered by the mounting white flood.⁶⁶ His ideas seemed to be in harmony with Okamoto Kansuke, the author of a world history popular with the reformers of the 1890s: "There are five human races: the yellow, the white, the black, the purple, and the copper. Their origins are all different."⁶⁷ In any event, did white

⁶⁴ See Noriko Kamachi, *Reform in China: Huang Tsunhsien and the Japanese model*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981, p. 141. See also Chen Chang-fang, "Barbarian paradise: Chinese views of the United States, 1784-1911", PhD of Indiana University, 1985, pp. 234-243.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁶⁶ Huang Zunxian, *Renjinglu shicao qianzhu* (Collection of annotated poems by Huang Zunxian), Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1981, p. 238.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 239, n. 4.

racism oblige Huang to denigrate what he called the "stupid black slaves", or had blacks never been part of his ideal of universal harmony (datong)?⁶⁸ Like Kang Youwei and other Chinese scholars, Huang perhaps confused harmony with unity. At the age of twenty, still immersed in a sinocentric universe, he wrote that "all men are fashioned out of yellow mud"; at fifty-four, after having discovered that there was more than yellow mud in the world, he wondered "why is the yellow race not the only race in the world?"⁶⁹

The white race

In the reformers' view, China was being pulled apart by the conflicting forces of decline and renewal. It could merge with the defeated hordes of the degenerated breeds or join the ranks of the dominating races. An even loftier ideal awaiting: China could subjugate the white race and become the master of the world. Liang Qichao thought that the whites were arrogant and disliked hard work.⁷⁰ Chinese, on the contrary, were humble and diligent. They were the initiators of civilization, the

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

⁶⁹ Kamachi, *Huang Tsun-hsien*, pp. 15, 141.

⁷⁰ Liang Qichao, "Lun Zhongguo renzhong zhi jianglai" in *YBSWJ*, 2, 3:52.

descendants of the Yellow Emperor.⁷¹ The Han race would unite the globe. Australia and America would become colonies of the ruling yellow race.⁷² To bolster China's self-confidence, Liang repeatedly alluded to the Westerners' apprehension of a "yellow peril": "Our Chinese race is the most expanding and vigorous race on the earth. Both England and France are alarmed because our race can not be restrained and will spread all over the world. They even fear that we will one day overflow and invade Europe."⁷³ Articles on the "yellow peril", taken from the foreign press, were translated and published in the reformers' organ.⁷⁴

Another question arose: were all whites equally superior? Liang, throughout his voluminous writings, took painstaking efforts to demonstrate that not all of them were fit for the struggle for survival. In the first issue of his "New Citizen" (Xinminshuo) of 1902, he tabulated the white race into a Latin, a Slavonic, and a Teutonic race. The Latins had reached their peak during

⁷¹ Liang Qichao, "Zhongguoshi xulun" (About Chinese history) in YBSWJ, 3, 6:6; "Lun Zhongguo xueshu sixiang bianqian zhi dashi" (About the general trend of the changes in Chinese scientific thought) in YBSWJ, 3, 7:4 for instance.

⁷² Liang Qichao, "Lun Zhongguo renzhong zhi jianglai" in YBSWJ, 2, 3:52-54.

⁷³ Liang Qichao, "Lun Zhongguo guomin zhi pingge" (About China's national quality) in YBSWJ, 5, 14:5; see also 3, 6:44.

⁷⁴ Shiubao (Current affairs), photolithograph, Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1967, vol. 1, pp. 361-362; see also vol. 1, p. 311.

the Middle Ages, but had perished under the Teutons, who had dominated Europe since the fall of Rome. The Teutons were further subdivided into Germans and Anglo-Saxons. The Anglo-Saxons proved to be the only superior race. They occupied a quarter of the globe and were present on all five continents. Their racial superiority was further evidenced by the tremendous progress of English as a dominant language in the world from 1801.⁷⁵ A more sophisticated classification of the same year (classifications and charts were Liang's craze; they gave an aura of scientific authenticity to his racialist message) distinguished between a Hamitic, a Semitic and an Aryan race. The Hamitic and Semitic races (assumed to be branches of the white race) had had their period of glory in ancient Europe, but only the Aryan race had contributed to modern European civilization. The Aryans comprised the Latin, Celtic, Teutonic and Slavonic sub-races. Through an inexorable process of struggle for survival, the Teutons had emerged in recent times as the leading power.⁷⁶

Such rather tedious articles were primarily designed to provide the reader with detailed information about the newly arisen barbarians, hitherto collectively designated as "Westerners" (*xiren*) or, more derogatory, as "devils".

⁷⁵ Liang Qichao, "Xinminshuo" (About renewing the people) in YBSZJ, 3, 4:7-8; see also "Ouzhou dili dashi lun" (About the general trend of European geography) in YBSWJ, 4, 10:101-106.

⁷⁶ Liang Qichao, "Xin shixue" in YBSWJ, 4, 9:19.

The Chinese were discovering that the West had a variety of life styles with values and norms widely at variance from their own country. But all these efforts to dissect the white race and to analyze its composition also conspired to belittle China's sole rival for supremacy. The notion of a white race was narrowed down to the Anglo-Saxons; remaining Westerners simply receded into the background.

The yellow race

Liang Qichao not only demeaned the white race; he also tended to aggrandize the yellow race by including every potential ally. Vietnamese were claimed to be "real yellows" who would "never allow themselves to become meat on the white race's chopping block.". They should struggle with the French devils (*fagui*) until not one single hirsute, grey-eyed white man remained in their country.⁷⁷ The Filipinos, normally despised as savages,⁷⁸ suddenly had conferred on them the privilege of participating in the yellow race's fight against the

⁷⁷ Liang Qichao, "Yuenan zhi wangguo shi" (The history of Vietnam's national subjugation) in *YBSZJ*, 4, 19:24-26.

⁷⁸ Missionaries implored the Chinese not to consider foreigners as devils and to refrain from calling seamen from Luzon "black devils" (*heigui*); see "Bianzheng rengui lun" (About properly distinguishing men from devils) in *Wangguo gongbao* 15 (2 December 1882), pp. 146-147.

white race.⁷⁹ Liang devoted an entire article to the Filipino struggle for independence against the United States in 1898 and described it as the "spearhead of the yellow race's struggle against the white race".⁸⁰ Japan's success in emulating the West was ascribed to the fact that its race had "originated from China".⁸¹

These attempts towards an enlarged yellow race were put into concrete form after Liang arrived in Japan in late 1898. With the help of Japanese pan-Asianists Hirayama Shū and Yamada Ryōsei, both envoys of the Okuma government, he had escaped from China after the coup d'etat that abruptly ended the Hundred Days.⁸² Some of Liang's closest friends in Japan were directly related to pan-Asianist associations, for instance Miyazaki Torazō and Kashiwabara Bantarō, co-founder of the Tōa Dōbun Kai. Pan-Asianism was based on the belief in a common race (dōshu) and a shared cultural heritage (dōbun), uniting

⁷⁹ Liang Qichao, "Mieguo xinfa lun" (About a new way of exterminating a country) in YBSWJ, 3, 6:38. The term *mieguo*, extermination or destruction of a country, often used in nationalist writings until the 1920s, resembles *miezu*, extermination of the zu, a punishment in ancient China.

⁸⁰ Liang Qichao, "Lun Mei Fei Ying Du zhi zhanshi guanxi yu Zhongguo" (About the effects of international conflicts on China) in YBSWJ, 4, 11:2.

⁸¹ Liang Qichao, "Lun Zhongguo zhi jiangqiang" in YBSWJ, 2, 2:13.

⁸² P. Huang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and modern Chinese liberalism*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972, p. 47. For the general influence of Japan on Liang, see Huang's third chapter; for an account of Liang's translation of Shiba Shiro's pan-Asian novel *Jiaren qiyu* (Strange encounters of elegant females), see pp. 49-52.

Asia in its struggle for independence against the West. Such doctrines strongly appealed to Liang, who echoed them in the first issue of his *Qingyibao* (Upright discussions), started two months after his arrival in Japan. The aims of his journal included the "exchange of information between China and Japan and the establishment of friendship." He also proposed to "expound the learning of East Asia in order to preserve Asia's essence (yacui)."⁸³ Japan was acclaimed as China's "fraternal neighbor, as closely related as lips to teeth."⁸⁴ Pan-Asianism was compatible with Liang's inclination towards a cosmopolitan world order, typical of Chinese intellectuals emerging from a Confucian ideal of universal harmony.⁸⁵ It did not, however, exert a lasting influence, as he would soon discover that this utopian vision was subordinated to Japan's military expansion, threatening China's national integrity. In a little over a year, on the occasion of the hundredth issue of the *Qingyibao*, the principles of pan-Asianism were not mentioned anymore.⁸⁶ A subsequent analysis of Asia's racial composition would only confer the title of

⁸³ Liang Qichao, *Qingyibao* in YBSWJ, 2, 3:31.

⁸⁴ Liang Qichao, "Lun xue Ribenwen zhi yi" (About the advantage of learning Japanese) in YBSWJ, 2, 4:82. This saying goes back to Han Fei, and became proverbial when used by the last Jin Emperor in a warning against the Mongols to the Song Emperor.

⁸⁵ See Kang Youwei's *Datongshu* or Tan Sitong's *Renxue*.

⁸⁶ Liang Qichao, "Qingyibao zhi xingzhi" in YBSWJ, 3, 6:54.

"superior yellow race" to China. Others would have to content themselves with the appellation of "inferior yellow race".⁸⁷ The future of the yellow race was now solely in the hands of the Chinese.

Liang not only evicted the Japanese from the leading yellows. In an article written in 1901 regarding races within China, Liang also excluded China's minorities, more or less assimilated ancient barbarian tribes.⁸⁸ The article was a response to the Western presumption that all yellows could be called the "Mongolian race".

Liang distinguished ten different races in China, of which six were of importance. The Miao were described as China's aborigines, similar to America's Indians or Australia's blacks. Liang admitted that they had contributed to China's prehistory, but noted that they had declined since the rise of the Han. They were scattered throughout Hunan, Guizhou, Yunnan and Guangxi. Liang's comparison with the Indians made it clear that they were doomed to a rapid extinction and deserved no further attention. Contrasting with the Miao, Liang wrote a passionate panegyric to the Han race. They were the initiators of civilization and could claim a divine origin. They had distinguished themselves the world over since thousands of years and had civilized the whole of Asia. The Tibetan race could be found in Tibet and Burma.

⁸⁷ Liang Qichao, "Yazhou dili dashi lun" (About the general trend in Asian geography) in YBSWJ, 4, 10:76.

⁸⁸ Liang Qichao, "Zhongguoshi xiaolun" in YBSWJ, 3, 6:5-7.

They were the descendants of the Jiang (during the Yin and Zhou dynasties), the Yue (during the Qin and Han dynasties), the Tufan (during the Tang dynasty) and the Xixia (during the Song dynasty). The Mongols, living in inner and outer Mongolia, were renowned for their military prowess and had founded the Yuan dynasty. The Xiongnu dwelled in Middle Asia and in the Xinjiang area; they also comprised several ancient barbarian tribes. The Tunguses had originated in north Korea and had spread over the Heilongjiang region. They were the founders of the Qing dynasty.

Though Liang found it difficult to determine the precise origins of a race, he concluded that the "gigantic Han race" was unique and in no way comparable to China's minorities.⁸⁹ He admitted using the terms "Han race" and "yellow race" interchangeably.⁹⁰ Only the glorious Han race could pretend to be genuinely "yellow".

Intermarriage

Intermarriage was a key to reform. Yi Nai actively advocated interracial marriage (*hezong*) as a means of strengthening the gene-pool of the empire. Though he anticipated intermarriage with the white race, unions with the inferior black and red races had to be

⁸⁹ Liang Qichao, "Lun Zhongguo xueshu" in *YBSWJ*, 3, 7:4.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3, 7:4.

discarded.⁹¹

Tang Caichang advocated the amalgamation of the white and yellow races.⁹² Only by "racial communication" (*tongzhong*) would China flourish again. Ten arguments were given in support of intermarriage:

1) The flourishing of flowers and plants was the result of their original intermingling. Giant prehistoric trees that had failed to merge with other varieties had disappeared after natural catastrophes.

2) Bees and butterflies were the matchmakers of nature. They contributed to the blooming of flowers by transmitting the pollen from one variety to the other.

3) Zoologists had proved that the nature of animals can be fostered by environmental and dietary change. In the Age of Great Peace, the world would be open to exchange, the base would be ennobled, the unruly become tractable. In times of trouble, people lived in insularity, devoured by envy and hatred for different people, debased by an evil nature.

4) In ancient times, marriage within the lineage had been prohibited. This principle was in accordance with the idea of racial exchange. Only people isolated by high

⁹¹ Yi Nai, "Zhongguo yi yi ruo wei qiang shuo" (China should take her weakness for strength) in *Xiangbao leicuan* (Classified compilation of articles from the *Xiangbao*), February 1898-April 1898, Taipei: Datong shuju, 1968, vol. 1, pp. 23-24.

⁹² The following is based on Tang Caichang, "Tongzhongshuo" (About racial communication) in *Tang Caichang ji* (Works of Tang Caichang), Pekin: Zhonghua shuju, 1980, pp. 100-104.

mountains and deep valleys were debarred from exogamy; their population could not flourish, and usually disappeared after little more than a century.

5) Between the five continents, there was a general flow of political, artistic, military, and economic exchanges. Why could racial exchange not follow?

6) The Japanese had already recognized the strength of the European race and the weakness of the Asian race: their government sanctioned the practise of intermarriage.

7) In Hong Kong, Singapore and the islands of the Pacific, intermarriage between Chinese and foreigners had produced offspring of unparalleled intelligence and strength.

8) Though England, Russia, France, and Germany all maintained national borders and nurtured mutual distrust, their citizens were free to intermarry.

9) Buddhism believed in a pervading spirit uniting all living creatures.

10) Intermarriage was not only confined to the treaty ports: even several high officials had taken Western wives.

Tang drew upon botany, zoology, history, and even Buddhism in his defense of race contact. So far, however, his arguments lacked one essential element: an indigenous cultural trait on which the idea of racial exchange could be grafted.

Tang continued his dissertation by opposing two

foreign schools of learning. The school of evolution believed in the theory of natural selection and the elimination of the unfit. Physiology, on the other hand, considered that with the progress of medicine and the prospering of universal truth, the weak could be cured and the evil transformed. Evolution corresponded to Xunzi's theory of man's evil nature. Physiology was compared to Mencius' teachings on the innate goodness of man. Whereas Xunzi upheld justice (*yi*), Mencius supported humanity (*ren*). Only Mencius, however, suited the "age of great unity" (*datong*), an age of equality in which racial communication would inevitably follow other forms of communication. Mencius sanctioned racial amalgamation. Only if the white and yellow races merged would the strength of the yellow race be enhanced, in accordance with the profound teachings of Confucius and Mencius.

The diplomat Wu Tingfang also pronounced himself in favour of mixed unions: "there is no doubt that mixed marriages of the white with the yellow races will be productive of good to both sides."⁹³

From the conservatives' point of view, discussions on racial matters were taboo, as they implied a degree of relativization that undermined the bases of their sinocentric universe.⁹⁴ A group of scholars drew up a

⁹³ Wu Tingfang, *America through the spectacles of an Oriental diplomat*, New York: Stokes, 1914, p. 185.

⁹⁴ See, however, S. Nagata, *Untersuchungen zum Konservatismus im China des späten 19. Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1978, pp. 118-120.

"Scholars' Covenant" of seven points criticizing the reformers in the middle of 1898. The sixth point lambasted the vitiated language of Kang Youwei's followers, and denounced the use of terms like "yellow race" (*huangzhong*) or "white race" (*baizhong*).⁹⁵ The concept of race introduced a comparative perspective that constituted a menace to the Confucian distinction between civilized Chinese and foreign barbarians. Ye Dehui also vehemently rebuked the reformers' proposals for racial amalgamation, which he could only describe as the "wild barking of mad dogs".⁹⁶ The idea of race remained the prerogative of the reformers.

Conclusion

The general image that emerges from the reformers' writings is that of a yellow lineage engaged in a merciless war for world supremacy with the white lineage, narrowed down to the Anglo-Saxons. This outlook was dictated mainly by China's traditional dichotomous view of a world divided between Chinese and barbarians. The lack of any pluralistic world view predisposed China to perceive mankind in antithetical terms of dominating and

⁹⁵ C.M. Lewis, *Prologue to the Chinese revolution: the transformation of ideas and institutions in Hunan Province, 1891-1907*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976, pp. 64-65.

⁹⁶ Ye Dehui, ed., *Yijiao congbian* (Documents of the campaign against the 1898 reform movement), Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1970, p. 442.

dominated races. Notions such as "equality among nations" (Wheaton's *Elements of international law* had been translated as early as 1863; Bluntschli's *Völkerrecht* was soon to follow), "human family" or "coexistence of civilizations" were discarded. There had been one world, and the world would be one.

In his utopian *One World*, Kang Youwei wanted to abolish the racial boundary by migration, intermarriage, dietary change or sterilization. Though not explicitly stated, it was clear that the yellows would outnumber the whites and thus preside over the *One World*, restoring China's age-old supremacy and stability.

This was utopia. In the reality perceived by most reformers, the outcome of the struggle was not so obvious. They were both prophets of doom and announcers of might. The future would be white or yellow.

4

RACE AS NATION (1902-1915)

Introduction

The racial theories that developed in China after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 have generally been reduced by Western historiography to a mixture of "traditional ethnocentrism" with "modern social Darwinism". Social Darwinism can be defined as the application of Darwin's biological theory of natural selection to the evolution of human society. It has, however, been uncritically used to characterize a variety of evolutionary ideas that exhibit significantly divergent features from Darwin's original theory. "Social Darwinism" has been invoked to justify seemingly incompatible opinions like individualism and socialism, competition and cooperation, aristocracy and democracy, etc.¹ Peter Bowler has warned that "little will be gained if the term "social Darwinism" is extended to cover so many different ideas that it becomes virtually

¹ F.H. Hankins, "Darwin, Charles Robert" in *Encyclopaedia of the social sciences*, New York: Macmillan, 1935, vol. 5, p. 4.

meaningless."²

The first part of this chapter clarifies the various evolutionary theories and analyzes how they affected racial perceptions in China. The remainder is devoted to the study of the conceptual link between race and nation. Primary sources do not reveal any strict dividing line between the racial perception of the reformers and that of the revolutionaries. Where reformers have contributed directly to the emergence of the concept of race-nation (*minzu*), they have been included in this chapter. The opening date 1902 has been chosen arbitrarily, as the perception of race as lineage only gradually shifted towards race as nation. 1902 does correspond, however, to the year in which Yan Fu published his influential translation of Spencer with the title "The science of grouping". 1915 was marked by the emergence of the New Culture Movement, the starting point of the next two chapters.

Evolution and group cohesion

It is difficult to define Charles Darwin's biological theory of evolution precisely, especially in view of the modifications he introduced in the subsequent editions of his *Origin of species*. Certain aspects of his work, however, should be highlighted in order to

² P.J. Bowler, *Evolution. The history of an idea*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, p. 267.

facilitate comparisons with different evolutionary views. Firstly, Darwin never developed a systematic analogy between the natural world and human society. He repeatedly insisted that he was incompetent to discuss the social application of his theory. He did, however, contribute to the rise of what would later be labelled social Darwinism by using highly metaphorical concepts in the theoretical exposition of natural selection. The adoption of metaphorical concepts, derived from Malthus and Spencer, reinforced the tendency to theorize in social rather than biological terms.³ Secondly, the *Origin of species* (1859) underlined the individual basis of the process of human evolution. The emphasis was on selection between individuals, as opposed to selection between groups: "Owing to this struggle for life, any variation, however slight and from whatever cause proceeding, if it be in any degree profitable to an individual of any species, in its infinitely complex relations to other organic beings and to external nature, will tend to the preservation of that individual, and will generally be inherited by its offspring."⁴ Struggle for existence arose between individuals of the same species, with individuals of other species, or with the environment, but Darwin admitted that "the struggle

³ On this, see J.A. Rogers, "Darwinism and social Darwinism" in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 33, no. 2 (1972), pp. 265-280.

⁴ C.R. Darwin, *On the origin of species* (reprint of the first edition), with a foreword by C.D. Darlington, London: Watts, 1950, p. 53.

almost invariably will be most severe between the individuals of the same species."⁵ In the *Descent of man* (1871), Darwin maintained his individualistic approach to evolution but also pointed to intergroup competition. Competition between groups, however, was combined with cooperation within groups. Thirdly, Darwin emphasized that development was a branching process, as opposed to the neo-Lamarckian theory of linear evolution, which viewed development as a single line of ascent from the apes. Finally, Darwin did not believe that social progress could be transmitted through inheritance. The theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics was also part of the Lamarckian paradigm.

As soon as it appeared, Darwin's theory was raided by authors of the most divergent political convictions, all searching to enshrine their preconceived opinions in a pseudo-scientific frame. In France, for instance, right-wing politicians appropriated Darwinist slogans to equate economic competition with the struggle for survival. The dominant tendency, however, was to downplay the "struggle for life" and to emphasize the progressive implications of evolution, such as social solidarity and cooperation.⁶ In the Arab world, some Christian intellectuals adopted Spencerian slogans of struggle for

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁶ See L.L. Clark, *Social Darwinism in France*, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1984.

survival.⁷ Generally, however, the theory of evolution was interpreted in terms of the Quranic authority: most intellectuals rejected the social Darwinian justification of racial conflicts and war. Shibli Shumayyil translated Büchner's commentary on Darwin into Arabic, replacing struggle and competition by cooperation and striving for the happiness of the whole.⁸ Ismail Mazhar supported Kropotkin's views of mutual aid; Jurji Zaydan appealed to Henri Drummond's idea of cooperation.⁹

When used as a conceptual tool in modern Chinese history, "social Darwinism" conveys a highly simplified image of evolutionary views that reduces a significant part of Chinese intellectual activity to a passive regurgitation of Western thought. Chinese intellectuals received the theory of evolution in a socio-political context very different from Western countries. They operated out of a cultural background that led them to reinforce different aspects of the evolutionary paradigm. As Mary Rankin noted, "although the idea of struggle for survival could be used in almost any context, the 1911 revolutionaries tended to apply it particularly in racial

⁷ H.B. Sharabi, *Arab intellectuals and the West: the formative years, 1875-1914*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1970, p. 69.

⁸ A. Hourani, *Arabic thought in the liberal age, 1798-1939*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 248-250.

⁹ A.A. Ziadat, *Western science in the Arab world: the impact of Darwinism*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986, pp. 57-60.

terms."¹⁰ The dominant interpretation of the Darwinian theory of natural selection was one of racial competition (*zhongzu jingzheng*) and racial survival (*baozhong*). Complete translations of Charles Darwin's work, however, were not even available until 1919.¹¹ Chinese intellectuals found their main source of inspiration in the synthetic philosophy of Herbert Spencer.

Yan Fu, dominated by the thought of the English philosopher at a very early stage,¹² had briefly introduced Spencer to the Chinese public in a series of essays written in 1895. Zhang Binglin, together with Zeng Guangquan, presented an introduction to the English philosopher's sociology in the reformist journal *Changyanbao* in 1898.¹³ The first Chinese book on sociology was Zhang Binglin's translation from a Japanese work mainly inspired by Spencer.¹⁴ It appeared in 1902,

¹⁰ M.B. Rankin, *Early Chinese revolutionaries. Radical intellectuals in Shanghai and Chekiang, 1902-1911*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 30.

¹¹ Ma Junwu, *Wuzhong yuanshi* (C.R. Darwin, *The origin of species*), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1919. See also R.B. Freeman, "Darwin in Chinese" in *Archives of Natural History* 13, no. 1 (1986), pp. 19-24.

¹² B.I. Schwartz, *In search of wealth and power. Yen Fu and the West*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964, p. 33.

¹³ *Changyanbao* (The Verax), no. 1-8 (July-September 1898), photolithograph, Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1967.

¹⁴ See Tang Zhijun, "Zhang Taiyan de shehuixue" (Zhang Binglin's Study of sociology) in Zhang Nianchi, ed., *Zhang Taiyan shengping yu xueshu* (The life and work of Zhang Binglin), Peking: Sanlian shudian, 1988, pp. 532-542. It is worth noting that Darwin was available in Japanese as early as 1881. Meiji Japan's interpretation

the same year in which Yan Fu finished his influential translation of Spencer's *A study of sociology* (1872)¹⁵. The following year, Ma Junwu presented a chapter of Spencer's *Principles of sociology*;¹⁶ Giddings compendium on Spencer was also made available in Chinese.¹⁷

An important feature of Spencer's synthetic philosophy was his metaphysical belief in the unity of evolution. For Spencer, all processes of change were the manifestations of a global cosmic evolution. Spencer's ethical belief in the necessity of a universal principle appealed to Chinese intellectuals, who were emerging from a Confucian universe that stressed the interrelation of human and cosmic processes. Reformers had attempted to insert their ideas of socio-political transformation into a more global framework of evolutionary cosmology. "This was a systemic conception of the universe, in which natural, spiritual and social phenomena were perceived as manifestations of a single cosmic reality", explains

of Darwinism was heavily nationalistic; it also used Darwin as a weapon against Christianity; see Eikoh Shimao, "Darwinism in Japan" in *Annals of Science* 38 (1981), pp. 93-102.

¹⁵ Yan Fu, *Qunxue siyan* (H. Spencer, *A study of sociology*), Peking: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1981 (1st ed. 1902).

¹⁶ Ma Junwu, *Shehuixue yinlun* (A guide to sociology), Shanghai: Xijiang ouhuashe, 1903.

¹⁷ Wu Jianchang, *Shehuixue tigang* (An outline of sociology), 1903.

Charlotte Furth.¹⁸

More important, perhaps, was Spencer's focus on group selection. His holistic approach to the idea of evolution stands in contrast to the individualistic basis of Darwin's theory. In Spencer's view, the individual citizen was embedded in a social aggregate that evolved organically. The object of sociology was to study these aggregates: "In every case its object is to interpret the growth, development, structure, and functions, of the social aggregate, as brought about by the mutual actions of individuals whose natures are partly like those of all men, partly like those of kindred races, partly distinctive."¹⁹ Societies were aggregates of men, groups whose properties were determined by the properties of their parts. Correlative to this holistic approach was Spencer's comparison of society to an organism. His organismic analogy was essentially opposed to the other main social theory of the nineteenth century, namely the mechanistic analogy, which viewed human intervention as independent from the social structure. Whereas the organismic view implied a collectivistic political theory, the mechanistic approach supported individualism

¹⁸ C. Furth, "Intellectual change: from the Reform Movement to the May Fourth Movement, 1895-1920" in J.K. Fairbank, ed., *Cambridge history of China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, vol. 12, part 1, p. 325.

¹⁹ H. Spencer, *The study of sociology*, London: Williams and Norgate, 1907, p. 53.

and atomism.²⁰ Contemporaries like Lester Ward were quick to point out the incompatibility of Spencer's organismic view of society with his almost fanatical belief in laissez faire. As Stanislaw Andreski noted, "rather than to fundamentalist liberalism, Spencer's theory of society should have led him to espouse some form of authoritarian collectivism because the organisms regarded as higher display a greater centralization of the nervous system, and a greater subordination of the parts to the whole."²¹

Chinese intellectuals were attracted by Spencer's holistic approach to the concept of group. Liang Qichao had published a study on the concept of qun, "group", "flock", in 1897. His "Shuoqun" (About groups) centered around the problem of integration and organization of the political community.²² For Liang, processes of change and evolution were directed by the cosmological principle of grouping. Liang was not the only reformer to explore the idea of grouping. Huang Zunxian, for instance, also perceived China's lack of national cohesion as the country's greatest weakness. He noted that in the West, individuals united in groups to cooperate. Xunzi's idea of qun, or group, corroborated his views: "Heaven created

²⁰ See W.M. Simon, "Herbert Spencer and the social organism" in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 21, no. 2 (April-June 1960), p. 299.

²¹ S. Andreski, *Herbert Spencer: structure, function and evolution*, London: Nelson, 1971, p. 28.

²² On Liang Qichao's concept of qun, see Chang Hao, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and intellectual transition in China, 1890-1907*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971, pp. 95 ff.

men without the ability to fly like birds or run as fast as beasts. Nonetheless, men are superior in the world. The reason is that men can pool their strength, which beasts cannot do. In the world nothing is stronger than the power of unified force. It is like burning coal: if the pieces are scattered, even a child can kick and extinguish them; if they are put together in a stove, the heat is so intense that no one can even approach it."²³ Noriko Kamachi notes how Huang developed a concept of national association evolving around the idea of qun by 1897.²⁴ Yan Fu linked the concept of qun to Spencer's idea of group by translating sociology as qunxue, "the study of groups", "for", as he explained, "Xunzi said that man is superior to animals by his ability to group."²⁵

Yan Fu's racial bias was clear in his brief presentation of Darwin, which focused exclusively on the theory of struggle for survival. Instead of conveying the individualistic approach of Darwin, Yan pictured evolution as a process of constant struggle between groups: "By struggle of species, it is meant struggle for survival. By natural selection, it is meant the survival of the fittest species (zhong). The idea is that people

²³ Noriko Kamachi, *Reform in China: Huang Tsun-hsien and the Japanese model*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981, p. 166.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

²⁵ Yan Fu, *Yan Fu shiwen xuan* (Selected poems and writings of Yan Fu), Peking: Renmin wenzue chubanshe, 1959, p. 15.

and living organisms appeared in the world and coexisted in all their variety, feeding together on the benefits of nature. When they came in contact with each other, they struggled for their own survival. In the beginning, species struggled with species (zhongzheng), then groups struggled with groups. The weak constantly became the prey of the strong, the stupid constantly became the slaves of the intelligent. Those who survived and perpetuated their species had to be resistant and valiant, agile and ingenious."²⁶ Yan Fu shifted the emphasis from individual competition to racial struggle. Group cohesion, Yan Fu believed, was the principle by which "the race is strong and the group can stand."²⁷

Zhang Binglin (1869-1936) expanded the racial basis of Yan Fu's interpretation and associated the principle of qun with racial strength. In his article "On bacteria" (1899), he explained that racial power was proportional to the ability to group (hequn): the inferior black, brown and red races prostrated before the yellow race because they had failed to group. On the other hand, the yellow race was dominated by the whites. The whites had vanquished the yellows because of their greater ability to group.²⁸

Spencer's cosmological philosophy of evolution and

²⁶ Ibid., p. 14.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

²⁸ Tang Zhijun, ed., *Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji* (Selected political writings of Zhang Binglin), Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1977, p. 139.

his concept of group survival attracted Chinese intellectuals. Struggle between groups, however, was not a salient characteristic of his philosophy. Spencer deprecated struggle, abhorred the growth of militarism and disliked Darwinian justifications for war. In his view, cooperation gained a clear preponderance over struggle in the industrial stage of society. Spencer had been influenced by Lamarck long before Darwin's work was published, and firmly believed in the theory of inheritance of acquired characteristics, one of the fundamental tenets of Lamarckian biology. From a Lamarckian point of view, the development of altruism was central to the process of adaptation to the environment. Natural selection and struggle for survival were no more than a passing phase of evolution, gradually replaced by cooperation.²⁹

Yan Fu's translation of Huxley's "Evolution and ethics" in 1898 completed the exposition of Spencer's cosmic evolution. In his lecture of 1893 on evolution and ethics, Thomas Huxley had vigorously attacked laissez faire policies and had defended the need to curtail self-interest. Social cooperation was seen as superior to social competition: "I have termed this gradual strengthening of the social bond, which, though it arrests the struggle for existence inside society, up to a certain point improves the chances of society, as a

²⁹ See J.D.Y. Peel, *Herbert Spencer. The evolution of a sociologist*, London: Heinemann, 1971, pp. 151-152.

corporate whole, in the cosmic struggle - the ethical process."³⁰ For Huxley, competition was only dominant in the primitive "state of nature". Human intervention had led to the construction of a "state of art", protecting mankind from the antagonism of the cosmic process.³¹ Yan Fu paraphrased Huxley: "the reason why those who want to form a group suppress competition within that group is so that they can withstand the natural forces without the group."³² Even among the lower orders, Huxley detected the fundamental principle of group cohesion which exerted such a strong influence on his Chinese interpreters: "Within it [the beehive], the struggle for existence is strictly limited. Queen, drones, and workers have each their allotted sufficiency of food; each performs the function assigned to it in the economy of the hive, and all contribute to the success of the whole co-operative society in its competition with rival collectors of nectar and pollen and with other enemies, in the state of nature without."³³

The Huxleian dichotomy between the "artificial" and the "natural" society reinforced the nei-wai opposition, or inner-outer dualism, so characteristic of Chinese

³⁰ T.H. Huxley and J. Huxley, *Evolution and ethics*, London: Pilot Press, 1947, p. 54.

³¹ See J.G. Paradis, *T.H. Huxley. Man's place in nature*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978, pp. 142 ff.

³² Yan Fu, *Tiyanlun* (tr. of T.H. Huxley, *Evolution and ethics*), Peking: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1981, p. 33.

³³ T.H. Huxley, *Evolution*, p. 47.

social philosophy. The writings of Yan Fu and other leading reformers conveyed an image of an internal state of art opposed to an external state of nature. Spencer's idea of inter-group competition was combined with Huxley's concept of intra-group cooperation to form a social policy of group cohesion that adequately fitted the needs of the time.

In the comments Yan Fu intermingled with the translation of Huxley's text, the basic concern with race was evident. The terms "group" and "race" were interchanged,³⁴ the simian origin of mankind was expounded at length³⁵ and the imminent racial extinction of the red and black races was announced.³⁶ Yan Fu even perceived the power to colonize and open up new territories as indicative of the "inferiority or superiority of a people's race".³⁷ The influence of these comments was considerable. One radical writer, for instance, used Yan Fu's exposition of man's simian ancestry to boost his own theory on the sub-human origins of the Manchus. The author, writing in the radical magazine *Jiangsu*, compared the difference that had existed between the first man and the primates to the chasm separating civilized people from "inferior races of

³⁴ Compare *baozhong jinhua* at p. 5 with *baogun jinhua* at p. 12; see *baozhong* combined with *hequn* at p. 16, etc., in Yan Fu, *Tianyanlun*.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

nomads". The writer urged the Chinese to distance themselves from these inferior races and to join the civilized nations in their advance towards the Pure Land (jile shijie, a translation for the Buddhist Sukhavati).³⁸

The revolutionaries completed the transition from group to race. The concern of the intellectuals at the beginning of this century was the preservation of the race by national grouping.

Radical students and the preservation of the race

Nationalism was perceived as a key to racial survival by the Chinese students studying in Japan during the first decade of this century.³⁹ The number of

³⁸ "Renzu" (Ancestors of mankind) in *Jiangsu* 3 (June 1903), pp. 141-143.

³⁹ This section probes the racial perception of the radical students by focusing mainly on two periodicals, the *Tides of Zhejiang* (*Zhejiangchao*), and the *Jiangsu* (*Jiangsu*). Other periodicals, of course, also included many articles pertaining to the notion of race. The *Jingshi wenchao* (Literary tides of statecraft) had a special section on race in each issue ("Renzhongbu") from April 1903 onwards. The *Juemin* charted the history of human races (*Zhong Guang*, "Renzhongshi" (History of human races) in *Juemin* (Awake the people) 8 (July 1904)); a periodical founded by Hunanese students listed the various origins of mankind and investigated human races ("Wanguo zhongzu yuanshi biao" (Table of the origins of the various nations' races), "Geguo renzhong leikao" (Study of the types of human races), in *Hunan tongshu yanshuobao* (Hunan journal of popular speeches) 12 (September 1903)); one of the main vernacular journals narrated the life of the Yellow Emperor, human races, and the racial struggles since ancient times ("Renzhong" (Human races), "Huangdi zhuan" (Biography of the Yellow Emperor), "Pangu yilai zhongzu jingzheng de dashi" (General trend of racial struggles since Pangu) in

students in Japan increased steadily after 1900 to exceed ten thousand by 1906. Though most students initially grouped according to their province of origin, they were quick to develop a strong feeling of national identity and group loyalty.⁴⁰ Reeves, an American military attaché in Peking, observed that the officers who had returned from their studies in Japan exhibited a certain "clannishness" that transcended the usual provincial loyalties.⁴¹

The concept of nationalism was couched in terms borrowed from the Japanese. *Minzuzhuyi*, from the Japanese *minzokushugi*, exerted a lasting influence upon the political terminology of the Chinese students. The term literally meant "racism", and expressed a nationalist vision based on race.⁴² The overlap of meaning of the term *minzu*, signifying both race and nation, eased the emergence of a nationalism characterized by a strong

Zhongguo baihuabao (The China vernacular), from no. 1 (December 1903) onwards); many other examples could be given.

⁴⁰ For an introduction to the influence of Japan on Chinese radicals, see M.B. Jansen, "Japan and the Chinese Revolution of 1911" in D. Twitchett and J.K. Fairbank, eds., *Cambridge history of China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, vol. 11, part 2, pp. 339-374.

⁴¹ M. Gasster, *Chinese intellectuals and the revolution of 1911*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969, p. 56.

⁴² See R.A. Scalapino and G.T. Yu, *Modern China and its revolutionary process. Recurrent challenges to the traditional order, 1850-1920*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, p. 172.

racial consciousness.⁴³ The constant juxtaposition of

⁴³ The term *minzu* is usually rendered as "nation", or "people", but there is an area of overlap with "tribe" and "race". Lexicographic problems arose officially in the 1950s. In 1954, Fan Wenlan published a study postulating that the Han's *minzu* had taken shape as early as the Qin and Han periods. Fan's thesis was the starting point of a series of heated debates on the exact definition of *minzu*. It culminated in a conference in 1962 that examined the use of the term in the translated works of Marx, Engels and Stalin. It appeared that the German terms *Nation*, *Volk* and *Völkerschaft* as well as the Russian terms *natsia*, *narod* and *narodnost'* had all been translated by *minzu* (Zhang Lu, "Guanyu 'minzu' yici de shiyong he fanyi qingkuang" (About the situation of the use and translation of the term *minzu*) in *Minzu tuanjie* 7 (July 1962), pp. 34-39). It was thus implicitly recognized that the term embraced a biological as well as a political meaning. An ill-advised translator, however, had rendered Stalin's *narodnost'* by *buzu*, or "tribe". *Natsia*, or *minzu*, exclusively described a community that had already reached a certain level of capitalist development and of political awareness. The conferees finally agreed upon consistently employing the term *minzu* in all cases, thereby ascribing the nation status to all the minorities, whatever their stage of development (on this, see G. Moseley, "China's fresh approach to the national minority question" in *China Quarterly* 24 (December 1965), pp. 15-27; see also T. Heberer, "Probleme der Nationalitätentheorie und des Nationsbegriffs in China" in *Internationales Asienforum* 16, no. 1-2 (May 1985), pp. 109-124).

Another result of the conferees' terminological inquiry was to reveal a state of confusion existing between the terms *zhongzu* (race) and *minzu* (nation). Lin Yaohua, in a lengthy article analyzing the concept of *minzu*, quoted several contemporary historians who used both terms indiscriminately, and urged social scientists to be more attentive to terminology (Lin Yaohua, "Guanyu 'minzu' yici de shiyong he yiming de wenti" (About the problems of the synonyms and the use of the term *minzu*) in *Lishi yanjiu* 2 (February 1963), p. 175). His remonstrations, however, had little effect, as historians of the 1970s still used the terms interchangeably, which obviously have a large area of overlap (J.A. Fogel, "Race and class in Chinese historiography" in *Modern China* 3 (July 1977), p. 351).

Such confusion existed from the adoption by Liang Qichao of the concept of *minzu* from the Japanese (*minzoku*) before 1900 (see Jin Tianming and Wang Qingren, "'Minzu' yici lai woguo chuxian ji qi shiyong wenti" (The appearance of the term *minzu* in our country and the problems of its use) in *Shehui kexue jikan* 4 (1981), quoted in Wang Lei, "The definition of "nation" and the

guo, "country", to zhong, "race", in set phrases like "love the race and love the country" (aizhongaiguo), or "national boundaries and racial boundaries" (guojiezhongjie) also contributed to the infusion of racialist ideas into the Chinese nationalist vision. The guo, as one nationalist explained, was not merely a geographical expression: it had a definite racial connotation.⁴⁴ Even Yan Fu publicly declared that "the sentiment of patriotism is rooted in racial nature".⁴⁵

Racial survival lay at the root of the radical students' concern with group cohesion. The first issue of the *Tides of Zhejiang*, a nationalist journal published in Japan by Chinese students, stated that "those who are able to group their own tribe into an organized body able to resist other groups will survive."⁴⁶ In an era dominated by racial competition, the key to survival lay in the cohesive force of the group (qunli). Nationalism fostered unity, as it "erects borders against the outside

formation of the Han nationality" in *Social Sciences in China* 4, no. 2 (June 1983), p. 167). The Tongmenghui writers, who portrayed the Chinese as a distinct racial group in the beginning of the twentieth century, clearly identified race with nation.

⁴⁴ Yuanyun, "Sike zhenglun" (Four political views) in *Zhejiangchao* 7 (September 1903), p. 43.

⁴⁵ Zhang Nan and Wang Renzhi, *Xinhai geming qian shinian jian shilun xuanji* (Selected material on debates of the ten years preceding the 1911 Revolution), hereafter *XHGMQ*, Peking: Sanlian shudian, 1963, vol. 1, p. 110.

⁴⁶ Yuyi, "Minzuzhuyilun" (On nationalism) in *Zhejiangchao* 1 (February 1903), p. 3.

and unites the group inside".⁴⁷ A contributor to the journal *Yunnan* attributed the decline of the barbarian red and the savage black races to their ignorance of the racial principles of nationalism: a nation needed a "group strategy and group strength" (*quncequnli*).⁴⁸

World politics were expounded in terms of racial cohesion. India, for instance, had been conquered by the white race because its class system inhibited racial homogeneity.⁴⁹ Russians were a "crossbreed between Europeans and Asians and nothing else", claimed another polemicist. A cranial analysis and a detailed racial investigation revealed that the Russians had Asian blood running in their veins. Russia's racial heterogeneity was responsible for its inability to group.⁵⁰ The United States' naval superiority, on the other hand, was ascribed to its racial superiority: were not the Americans an inch taller than the English?⁵¹

Racial ideology gradually spread to infect most of the writings of the young radicals. Education, for instance, was unanimously seen as a means of uniting the

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Yunnan* 1 (August 1906), pp. 7-12.

⁴⁹ "Yindu miewang zhi yuanyin" (The reasons for the extinction of India) in *Zhejiangchao* 1 (February 1903), pp. 4-6.

⁵⁰ Feisheng, "Eren zhi xingzhi" (The Russians' nature) in *Zhejiangchao* 1 (February 1903), pp. 4-5, 2 (March 1903), pp. 77-79.

⁵¹ Taosheng, "Haishang de Meiren" (The Americans on the sea) in *Zhejiangchao* 6 (August 1903), p. 2.

race in its struggle for survival.⁵² An article entitled "Iron-blooded education" blamed the traditional education system for having lost its "racial nature" (zhongxing): excessive assimilation of alien races had led to the dilution of Han blood. A new iron-blooded education would have to develop a "racialist ideology" (zhongzu sixiang).⁵³ Ye Xuesheng echoed the educator's concern by deploring the excessively universalistic orientation of Chinese thought, which had to be replaced by a "racialist thought".⁵⁴ Another utopianist heralded that physical education would prevent the "withering of the race",⁵⁵ whereas an enthusiastic reviewer praised physical exercise as beneficial to "the strengthening of the race and the protection of the country".⁵⁶ Medicine was also viewed as instrumental in the racial revival of the Chinese.⁵⁷ Even sexual equality, a major blow against Confucian puritanism, was envisaged as a means of struggling against the white race: had not Gu Yanwu

⁵² See for instance Shulou, "Jiaoyuhui wei mintuan zhi jichu" (Education associations as a foundation for civil corps) in *Jiangsu* 1 (April 1903), pp. 13-19.

⁵³ Lincang, "Tiexuezhuyi zhi jiaoyu" (Iron-blooded education) in *Zhejiangchao* 10 (December 1903), pp. 64-66.

⁵⁴ Ye Xuesheng, "Zhongguo kaifang lun" (About the opening of China) in *Zhejiangchao* 6 (August 1903), pp. 1-12.

⁵⁵ Bolin, "Tiyu" (Physical education) in *Yunnan* 1 (August 1906), p. 40.

⁵⁶ Review of *Tiyuxue* (Physical education) in *Zhejiangchao* 4 (May 1903), p. 18a.

⁵⁷ "Xing yixue tong" (On promoting medicine) in *Hubei xueshengjie* 2 (February 1903), pp. 61-72.

written that "husband and wife both have a share of responsibility for the fate of the country"?⁵⁸

Despite the mounting tide of anti-Manchuism,⁵⁹ the white race remained in the limelight of the student journals. A characteristic biography of Coxinga, a popular hero of the radicals, was concluded with a panegyric to his racial achievements:

"The whites are the proud sons of heaven [a title normally reserved for "the descendants of the Yellow Emperor"]. They press on the blacks, and the blacks decline; they push down the reds and the reds are destroyed; they raze the browns and the browns die out. Now they display their devilish tricks and lie in wait for us yellows; they are on the watch for us yellow Han race. Some centuries ago, Genghis Khan was the only one who could resist them. I disdain to worship him: the Mongol race was the public enemy of the Han race. I disdain to worship him, and only adore Zheng Chenggong [Coxinga]. He was able to have the Dutch, the initiators of European power, hold back and give way. He was able to have the Manchus, after they enslaved the Han race, engage in battle."⁶⁰

The racial imagery the radical students instilled in their writings was not fundamentally different from what had been developed by the reformers. People were categorized according to a strict racial taxonomy. History became a battlefield for contending races;

⁵⁸ Jiangsu 4 (July 1903), p. 144.

⁵⁹ On anti-Manchuism before the 1911 Revolution, see Li Liangyu, "Xinhai geming shiqi de paiman sixiang" in *Nanjing daxue xuebao*, 1989, no. 2, pp. 67-77.

⁶⁰ Yalu, "Zheng Chenggong zhuan" (A biography of Zheng Chenggong) in *Jiangsu 4* (July 1903), pp. 70-71.

politics were an arena for struggling nations. Tales of white peril were counterbalanced by myths of yellow domination: one contribution assessed the possibility of a "yellow peril",⁶¹ another presented a translation from the Japanese proclaiming the imminent extinction of the white race and the advent of a yellow age of Great Harmony (*datong*).⁶² Speculations about a white peril (*baihuo*) or a yellow peril (*huanghuo*), however, remained variations on the more general theme of "racial peril" (*zhonghuo*).

An increased sense of racial pride distinguished the students from the reformers. Student writings consistently reported the humiliating treatments and derogatory pronouncements of which the Chinese were victims. Europeans, it was revealed, claimed that the Chinese race would soon degenerate into animals.⁶³ Japanese called them an "ignoble race" (*jianzhong*) and "inferior animals" (*liedeng dongwu*).⁶⁴ The Chinese queue was ridiculed: Westerners laughed at the Chinese "pigtailed", Japanese referred to them as

⁶¹ "Huanghuo yuce" (Forecast of the yellow peril) in *Jiangsu* 1 (April 1903), pp. 103-107, inspired from a Japanese article.

⁶² Review of *Weilai shijie lun* (About the future), tr. by Zhang Zhaotong, in *Jiangsu* 3 (June 1903), p. 20a.

⁶³ Zhongkan, "Zizhipian" (On self-government) in *Zhejiangchao* 6 (August 1903), p. 2.

⁶⁴ *Hubei xueshengjie* 2 (February 1903), pp. 135-136.

"chanchanbotsu".⁶⁵ The most notable event reported in the press was perhaps the students successful opposition to an Osaka Exhibition of the "Races of Man" in 1903. The exposition initially planned to group the "inferior races" of China, Korea, the Ryukyu Islands, India, Hawaii, Taiwan, and Java under the heading of "raw barbarian races" (*shengfanzhong*). Student outrage culminated into an official protest against the inclusion of China in the exhibition. "Although we Chinese are inferior, why should we have to be classified together with these six races", lamented one protester.⁶⁶

To boost the morale of the race, the radicals pointed at people who fared even less well than the Chinese. The Jew often compensated for the injured racial pride of the Han:

"Alas! How could I falsely pity the Jew? I cannot but pity the Jew. I do not pity the Jew of the past, I pity the Jew of the future. Jew! Jew! Tiny reflection of the prospect of our own country. The old Jew goes, the new Jew comes, but the misery of the new Jew surpasses the misery of the old Jew. Alas, when I write these words, the tear stains want to father traces of blood [sic], the traces of blood want to dry up in black marks."⁶⁷

⁶⁵ "Tong ding tong" (Sorrow calms the sorrow) in *Jiangsu* 3 (June 1903), p. 124.

⁶⁶ *Zhejiangchao* 2 (March 1903), p. 134.

⁶⁷ "Wuhu youtai" (Alas the Jew) in *Zhejiangchao* 7 (September 1903), p. 165; the reformers also lamented the Jews; see for instance "Youtairen zhi canzhuang" (The miserable condition of the Jew) in *Xinmin congbao* 20 (1903).

Clearly, Chinese interest in the fate of the "stateless" Jews was only justified if it could reflect the imaginary prospect of their own people. In reality, students actually "warned themselves to refrain from looking down upon the Jews".⁶⁸ Despite of and even hatred for the Jews remained a vivid sentiment for decades. Wu Zelin, an outstanding anthropologist active in the 1930s, recently recalled that he and his colleagues used to find the Jews "laughable, despicable, pitiable, admirable, enviable, and hateful".⁶⁹

The fact that race was more than just "a propaganda tactic", as claims a leading expert on the revolutionary movement,⁷⁰ becomes evident when one abandons the main body of political texts to venture into the short anecdotes and notes scattered about the student publications. A qualitative analysis of such seemingly inoffensive miscellany can provide illuminating insights into the radicals' mental world. A genuine interest in the biological processes of human evolution was reflected by short reports on new anthropological findings. A note entitled "A strange race of men", for instance, described

⁶⁸ J. Ch'en, *China and the West. Society and culture, 1815-1937*, London: Hutchinson, 1979, p. 160.

⁶⁹ S. Shapiro, *Jews in old China: studies by Chinese scholars*, New York: Hippocrene Books, 1984, p. 160. Compare this recent statement with the writings of Wu, presented in the next chapter.

⁷⁰ M. Gasster, "The republican revolutionary movement", in D. Twitchett and J.K. Fairbank, eds., *Cambridge history of China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, vol. 11, part 2, p. 497.

a tribe newly discovered in New Guinea. They were unable to walk and moved about by swinging from liana to liana. They had atrophied feet and resembled apes.⁷¹ One compiler established statistics on the comparative height of different nationalities.⁷² Another anecdote misinterpreted a traditional rite of passage of certain Africans: "We know that if a black's blood mixes with another race, its black colour will gradually diminish. They dislike the ugliness of blackness, and often smear their faces with white powder."⁷³ Many anecdotes described how foreigners humiliated the Chinese. Westerners regarded the Chinese as an inferior and uneducated race of slaves. But even the "black slaves" in the United States were lettered: was this not a shame for the civilized Han?⁷⁴ Patriotism was mobilized in these jottings to castigate those Chinese who betrayed the race. Chinese merchants in Yokohama who had applied for the Japanese nationality, for instance, were covered with opprobrium.⁷⁵

⁷¹ "Qiguai renzhong" (A strange race of men) in *Zhejiangchao* 9 (November 1903), p. 113.

⁷² "Shijie geguo bingshi shenti zhi changduan" (Comparative height of soldiers from different countries of the world) in *Youxue yibian* 3 (January 1903), pp. 276-277.

⁷³ "Heiren zhi baifen" (The black's white powder) in *Zhejiangchao* 7 (September 1903), p. 172.

⁷⁴ "Heinu xuexiao" (Schools for the black slaves) in *Jiangsu* 7 (October 1903), p. 168.

⁷⁵ "Hengbin Huashang ru Ribenji zhe sishi yu ren!" (More than forty Chinese merchants in Yokohama enter the Japanese nationality!) in *Jiangsu* 7 (October 1903), pp.

The descendants of the Yellow Emperor

The myth of blood was sealed by elevating the figure of the Yellow Emperor to a national symbol. Hailed as the first ancestor (shizu) of the Han race, his portrait served as frontispiece in many nationalist publications.⁷⁶ From the middle of 1903, the radical magazines started using dates based on the supposed birthday of the Yellow Emperor, initiator of the Chinese race. Liu Shipei's (1884-1919) first published article advocated the introduction of a calendar in which the foundation year would correspond to the birth of the Yellow Emperor. "They [the reformers] see the preservation of religion as a handle, so they use the birth of Confucius as the starting date of the calendar; the purpose of our generation is the preservation of the race, so we use the birth of the Yellow Emperor as a founding date."⁷⁷ Liu Shipei estimated that the Yellow Emperor had ascended the throne in his eleventh year. The Mongolian barbarians had destroyed the Song in 3993, the Manchus had entered Shanhaiguan in 4359, and the

152-157.

⁷⁶ For instance in *Jiangsu* 3 (1903), *Ershi shiji zhi Zhina* 1 (June 1905), *Minbao* 1 (November 1905), and others. The opening issue of the *Minbao* proclaimed that the Yellow Emperor was "the first great nationalist of the world"; *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Liu Shipei, "Huangdi jinian shuo" (About a calendar based on the Yellow Emperor) in *Huangdi hun* (The soul of the Yellow Emperor), 1904, p. 1, repr. Taipei: Zhonghua minguo shiliao congbian, 1968.

international expedition had entered Peking in 4611: all were foreign races that had forcefully occupied the territory of the descendants of the Yellow Emperor, the Han race.

The Yellow Emperor remained a powerful figure for many decades. Despite the historian Gu Jiegang's severe criticism of the mythical foundations of the figure of the Yellow Emperor in the 1920's,⁷⁸ he was still officially revered in 1941 as the founder of the nation and the initiator of the race.⁷⁹

Traditional ideas reinforced the concept of race. Confucian values of filial piety and ancestor worship paved the way for the cult of the Yellow Emperor. Racial loyalty was perceived as an extension of clan loyalty. The family, often corresponding to the clan in China, was seen as the unit of which the race was composed. The revolutionary Chen Tianhua (1875-1905) actively integrated traditional values into a pattern of racial solidarity in his influential pamphlets, read throughout

⁷⁸ Gu Jiegang, "Huangdi" (Yellow Emperor) in *Shilin zashi* (Miscellaneous historical studies), Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1963, pp. 176-184.

⁷⁹ Zhang Qiyun, "Huangdi zisun" (Sons of the Yellow Emperor, speech held during the National Festival of Grave Sweeping, 5 April 1941) in *Minzu sixiang* (Nationalist thought), Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1951, p. 1. One of the latest scholarly contributions to the myth of the Yellow Emperor is Qian Mu, *Huangdi* (The Yellow Emperor), Taipei: Dongda tushu youxian gongsi, 1944, recent reprint in 1987. The religion of the Yellow Emperor was formally established in Taiwan in March 1957 with government approval; see C. Joachim, "Flowers, fruit, and incense only: elite versus popular in Taiwan's religion of the Yellow Emperor" in *Modern China* 16, no. 1 (January 1990), p. 7.

the Yangzi valley:⁸⁰ "As the saying goes, a man is not close to people of another family [xing, surname]. When two families fight each other, one surely assists one's own family, one definitely does not help the foreign [wai, "exterior"] family. Common families all descend from one original family: the Han race is one big family. The Yellow Emperor is the great ancestor, all those who are not of the Han race are not the descendants of the Yellow Emperor, they are exterior families. One should definitely not assist them; if one assists them, one lacks a sense of ancestry."⁸¹ Kin terms were infused into a racial rhetoric that called forth emotional dispositions usually reserved for close relatives: "The racial feeling comes from the birth onwards. For the members of one's own race, there is surely mutual intimacy and love; for the members of a foreign race, there is surely mutual savagery and killing."⁸² Kin terms fostered the much needed bonds of association and loyalty among the group.

Zou Rong also regretted the absence of a strong racial consciousness (zhongxing) in China capable of uniting the people in their struggle against the oppressors. Zou Rong greeted the "peasants with

⁸⁰ On Chen Tianhua, see E.P. Young, "Ch'en T'ien-hua (1875-1905): a Chinese nationalist" in *Papers on China* 13 (1959), pp. 113-162.

⁸¹ Chen Tianhua, *Chen Tianhua ji* (Collected works of Chen Tianhua), Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1982, p. 82.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 81.

weatherbeaten faces and mudcaked hands and feet" as his genuine countrymen, the proud descendants of the Yellow Emperor.⁸³ Race was the catalyst of group homogeneity; it cleared the boundaries by binding the ingroup and demoting the outgroup: "When men love their race, solidarity will arise internally, and what is outside will be repelled. Hence, to begin with, clans were united and other clans repelled; next, clans of villages were united and clans of other villages repelled; next, tribes were united and other tribes were repelled; finally, the people of a country became united, and people of other countries were repelled. This is the general principle of the races of the world, and also a major reason why races engender history. I will demonstrate to my countrymen, to allow them to form their own impression, how our yellow race, the yellow race of which the Han race is part (and I refer you to the history of China) is able to unite itself and repel intruders."⁸⁴ It was the unchanging norm of race which distinguished "the kinsmen and fellow countrymen of our great Han race" from "barbarians",⁸⁵ in particular the Manchus.

The Manchus were to be excluded from the unsullied Han race: "What you, fellow countrymen, today call court, government or emperor are what we once called barbarians

⁸³ Tsou Jung, *The revolutionary army: a Chinese nationalist tract of 1903*, introduction and translation by J. Lust, Paris: Mouton, 1968, p. 72.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

(of North, South, East or West), Hsiung-nu or Tartars. These tribes, living beyond the Shanhaikuan, were not by origin of the same race as the illustrious descendants of our Yellow Emperor. Their land is foul land, they are of a furry race, their hearts are beast's hearts, their customs are the customs of the users of wool, their writing is different from ours, and their clothes are different from ours."⁸⁶ In order to accentuate the original difference between the Han and the Manchus, Zou divided the yellow race into two main branches: the "races of China", including the Han, the Tibetan and the Cochinese races, and the "races of Siberia", composed of the Mongolian, the Tungus and the Turkic races.⁸⁷ The main enemy was the white race:

"The yellow and white races which are to be found on the globe have been endowed by nature with intelligence and fighting capacity. They are fundamentally incapable of giving way to each other. Hence, glowering and poised for the fight, they have engaged in battle in the world of evolution, the great arena where strength and intelligence have clashed since earliest times, the great theatre where for so long natural selection and progress have been played out."⁸⁸

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

The National Essence Group and the idea of race

The nationalists had divergent interpretations of the origins of the human species. Liu Yazhi, for instance, believed that racial differences corresponded to various origins of mankind.⁸⁹ Most, however, pictured the Yellow Emperor as the progenitor of the Han race. One particular line of thought associated the Yellow Emperor with the Westerners. The National Essence circle borrowed extensively from the historian Terrien de Lacouperie to corroborate the belief in a common origin between Westerners and Chinese. In his *Western origin of the early Chinese civilisation*, Lacouperie had put forward a theory on the derivative nature of the Chinese race.⁹⁰ According to Lacouperie, a small number of families in possession of a comparatively advanced civilization arrived in China around the 23rd century B.C. These immigrants were the Bak Sings, who had originated in the vicinity of Elam and Babylonia and were directly connected with the Sumero-Akkadians. The Bak Sings were headed by the Yellow Emperor, whose name was similar to Kudur Nakhunti, the generic title of the kings of Susiana. The Yellow Emperor led his people to the southwest of today's Gansu, where he eventually founded the

⁸⁹ Liu Yazhi, *XHGMQ*, vol. 2, p. 813.

⁹⁰ The following is based on Albert Etienne Jean Baptiste Terrien de Lacouperie, *Western origins of the early Chinese civilisation from 2300 B.C. to 200 A.D.*, London: Asher, 1894.

Chinese Kingdom. The Baks were initially hemmed in by native states inhabited by the limin, but these were gradually forced into submission by conquest and by intermarriage until the final establishment of Chinese dominion on the two sides of the Yellow River. Apart from Herbert Spencer, the dominant Western influence on Liu Shipei's *Book of expulsion (Rangshu)* was Lacouperie. Liu had consulted Lacouperie's theory in a Japanese *History of Chinese culture* readily available to Chinese students in Japan.⁹¹ Important elements of the Western origin of Chinese civilisation were eventually translated by Jiang Guanyun and published from October 1903 to January 1905 in Liang Qichao's *New People's Journal*.⁹²

Terrien de Lacouperie's hypothesis about the Western origins of the Chinese race was also introduced in the first issue of the *National Essence Journal*. The periodical was dedicated to the preservation of the national essence (*guocui*) of the Chinese civilization, which was thought to be under threat of extinction. For the *National Essence* group, the Yellow Emperor represented the Chinese race, but it was underlined that "the race did not start with the Yellow Emperor".⁹³ Huang

⁹¹ Liu's views on race have been treated by Martin Bernal, "Liu Shih-p'ei and National Essence" in C. Furth, ed., *The limits of change. Essays on conservative alternatives in Republican China*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976, pp. 96 ff.

⁹² Jiang Guanyun, "Zhongguo renzhong kao" (Inquiry into the Chinese race) in *Xinmin congbao*, 38-39 (October 1903) to 60 (January 1905).

⁹³ *Guocui xuebao*, no. 6 (1904), p. 3b.

Jie introduced Lacouperie in his "Yellow History" and identified the Yellow Emperor as the father of the race, an offshoot of Western stock.⁹⁴ Lacouperie's theory exerted an influence until at least the 1930s.⁹⁵

Zhang Binglin was one of the more complex figures of the nationalists.⁹⁶ His philosophical approach, inspired

⁹⁴ See L.A. Schneider, "National Essence and the new intelligentsia" in Furth, *The limits of change*, p. 66.

⁹⁵ Jiang Youzhi's inquiry into the origins of the Chinese race was dominated by the influence of Lacouperie. Jiang elaborated on the Western origin of the Chinese civilisation to compare the Aryan invasion of India to the Yellow Emperor's conquest of China. Like India, China had been divided into four castes. Jiang divided the *limin*, allegedly conquered by the Yellow Emperor, into three castes: the "ten thousand people" (*wanmin*), the "ten thousand states" (*wanguo*), and the barbarians of the four directions (*manyirongdi*). Jiang also established a continuity between the Sumero-Akkadians, of whom the Yellow Emperor was a descendant, and the Finno-Tartar group, linguistically associated with the Mongolians, or the yellow race. The Semites, on the other hand, had overwhelmed the Sumero-Akkadians and engendered the Caucasians, or the white race. These speculations echoed Haeckel's theory, presented at the beginning of Jiang's study, according to which the Europeans and Africans descended from the African ape, whereas the Asians descended from the Asian apeman. See Jiang Youzhi, *Zhongguo renzhong kao* (Inquiry into the Chinese race), Shanghai: Huatong shuju, 1929. Compare Jiang's presentation of Haeckel with Hu Bingxiong's theory on the different origins of East and West. The Eastern monkey was big and had no tail, whereas the Western monkey was small and more "animal-like"; see Hu Bingxiong, "Lun Zhongguo zhongzu" (About the Chinese race) in *Dongfang zazhi* 4 (August 1908), pp. 361-385. Lacouperie's influence extended into the 1930's; Chen Xujing, who advocated for the wholesale Westernization of China, referred to the Western origin of the Chinese.

⁹⁶ One of the most useful introductions to the thought of Zhang Binglin is Wang Fansen, *Zhang Taiyan de sixiang (1868-1919) ji qi dui ruxue chuantong de chongji* (Zhang Binglin's thought from 1868 to 1919 and his attack on the Confucian tradition), Taipei: Shibao wenhua chubanshiye youxian gongsi, 1985. See also Chang Hao, *Chinese intellectuals in crisis: search for order and meaning, 1890-1911*, Berkeley: University of California Press,

mainly by Yogacara Buddhism and Daoism, questioned the objective reality of Western values such as progress and social evolution. As a politically engaged intellectual, his main contribution was a virulent vision of nationalism couched in terms of blood and soil.

Until 1898, Zhang's overriding concern was the confrontation between the superior white and yellow races.⁹⁷ Zhang only recognized the cultural value of the white race: he perceived Europe as another Middle Kingdom. The racial equivalence of Chinese and Western civilization was corroborated by Terrien de Lacouperie's theory of a common origin in the ancient Near East.⁹⁸ Following Terrien de Lacouperie, Zhang believed that mankind had originated from one race, but he radically inverted the Western perspective by suggesting that the

1987, and C. Furth, "The sage as rebel: the inner world of Chang Ping-lin" in Furth, *The limits of change*, pp. 113-150.

⁹⁷ See Kondō Kuniyasu, "Sho Heiren ni okeru kakumei shisō no keisei" (On the formation of Zhang Binglin's revolutionary thought) in *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō*, no. 28 (March 1962), pp. 207-224. From 1898 onwards, this concern was gradually superseded by a violent anti-Manchuism. As emphasized in the introduction, this study is not concerned with the Han perception of minorities in China. For an introduction to Zhang Binglin's anti-Manchu thought, see Onogawa Hidemi's "Zhang Binglin de paiman sixiang" (Zhang Binglin's anti-Manchu thought) in *Dalu zazhi* 44, no. 3 (March 1972), pp. 39-60. For a study refuting the importance of Zhang's racist and anti-Manchu thought, see Wong Young-tsu: *Search for modern nationalism. Zhang Binglin and revolutionary China, 1869-1936*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989; see also a review of this study by F. Dikötter in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 53, part 2 (June 1990).

⁹⁸ Zhang Binglin, *Qiushu* (Book of raillery), Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1958, pp. 41-56.

initial race had been yellow and had migrated to China with the Yellow Emperor. Zhang's perspective underlined the biological continuity of the yellow race and pointed at the derivative nature of the white race. The white race was as virtuous, intelligent and skilled as the yellow race: had not the ancients called Rome the Great Qin (Daqin)?⁹⁹

Zhang's concept of race was based on the traditional distinction between the civilized (wen) and the uncultivated (ye). Both the white and the yellow races were surrounded by barbarian tribes. He compared the backward tribes within China to the degenerate coloured races without China.¹⁰⁰ The culturalistic opposition between civilized Han and untamed Rong, derived from the Spring and autumn annals, was reinforced by Zhang's personal conception of evolution. Zhang opposed culturally evolved human beings (ren) to biologically degenerated animals (shou). Fashionable Western terminology was blended with traditional imagery to ease the formulation of a conceptual link between animals and barbarians: "The size of blood vessels is only big in animals, whereas the facial angle is only high among raw barbarians; this is what civilized races have in

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁰⁰ See for instance Zhang Binglin, "Menggu shengshuai lun" (About the rise and fall of the Mongols) in *Changyanbao* 9 (September 1898), p. 1a.

common."¹⁰¹ Barbarian tribes, unlike the civilized yellow and white races, were the biological descendants of lower species: the Di had been generated by dogs, the Jiang could trace their ancestors back to the sheep.¹⁰²

Zhang's strong interest in the Yogacara concept of man led him to adopt an evolutionary vision that emphasized the innate tendency of people to be morally good as well as evil. Refuting the unilinear approach of popular Lamarckism, he viewed evolution as a malleable phenomenon capable of both reversals and advances. Zhang admitted that all people had originally evolved from the primates, but they were unequal from the beginning. Four processes of increased differentiation determined the degree of evolution: "environmental differentiation had the skin colour change, sexual differentiation had the skeleton change, social differentiation had the customs change, contractual differentiation had the language change".¹⁰³ Race and culture, often separated in Western thought, were seen as mutually dependent in the process of transformation. "Differences between tribes exist as a result of the time of civilization, differences between the civilized people and the barbarians exist as a result

¹⁰¹ Zhang Binglin, "Lun xuehui you yi yu huangren ji yi baohu" (About the benefit of study societies for the yellows and that they should urgently be protected) in *Shiwubao* 19 (March 1897).

¹⁰² Zhang Binglin, *Qiushu*, p. 38.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

of a cultured or uncouth nature."¹⁰⁴ Cultural decrepitude would thus lead to biological degeneracy: "people who are indolent in the use of their intelligence will waste away and become macaques and long-tailed monkeys."¹⁰⁵

Sun Yatsen and the principle of nationalism

The dominant group of nationalists was the Tongmenghui led by Sun Yatsen¹⁰⁶. However obtuse the writings of Sun may be, it is imperative briefly to consider his principle of nationalism, as it would become official ideology for decades. His concept of nationalism (*minzuzhuyi*) exerted a lasting influence upon Chinese politicians. It embodied the racial perception elaborated by both reformers and revolutionaries.

Racial solidarity was central to Sun's concept of nationalism. Raising the spectre of racial extinction, "Sun Yat-sen made his appeal to an emerging national consciousness, strongest in its racial form of prejudice against foreigners; he appealed also to fear", Lyon

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁰⁶ It is not the intention of this paragraph to cover again the handful of Tongmenghui nationalists and other "1911 revolutionaries" whose writings and deeds have already been treated at considerable length elsewhere. It will suffice here to indicate the connection between race and nation in the writings of Sun Yatsen before leaving this chapter.

Sharman noticed.¹⁰⁷ Sun's claim that only nationalism could forestall racial destruction was a belief he shared with reformers and revolutionaries; it was also common to the Italian fascists. Both used a standard biological conception of race, perceived the country's population as the strength of the race, and rejected individualism and cosmopolitanism as inimical to the survival of the nation-race.¹⁰⁸

Like most reformers and radical students, Sun Yatsen portrayed the Han as a pure biological entity:

"Considering the law of survival of ancient and modern races, if we want to save China and to preserve the Chinese race, we must certainly promote Nationalism. To make this principle luminous for China's salvation, we must first understand it clearly. The Chinese race totals four hundred million people; of mingled races there are only a few million Mongolians, a million or so Manchus, a few million Tibetans, and over a million Mohammedan Turks. These alien races do not number altogether more than ten million, so that, for the most part, the Chinese people are of the Han or Chinese race with common blood, common language, common religion, and common customs - a single, pure race."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ L. Sharman, *Sun Yat-sen, his life and its meaning*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968, p. 288.

¹⁰⁸ See A.J. Gregor, "Nazional-fascismo and the revolutionary nationalism of Sun Yat-sen" in *Journal of Asian Studies* 39, no. 1 (November 1979), pp. 21-37.

¹⁰⁹ Sun Wen (Sun Yatsen), *Sanminzhuyi* (The three principles), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1927, pp. 4-5; this translation follows that of F.W. Price, *San min chu i. The three principles of the people*, Shanghai: China Committee, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1927, pp. 11-12.

A possible influence could be Edwin Collins, a British Jew, author of a pamphlet entitled *The Bible answers the race question*.¹¹⁰ Collins' pamphlet upheld the belief in the biblical curse on Ham and celebrated Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for having maintained the purity of the race. The Japanese concept of pan-Asianism might also have played a role in Sun's elaboration of the race-nation concept. During talks with Miyazaki Torazo in the autumn of 1897, Sun readily identified with the yellow race and concluded that with the help of the Japanese, his party would "save China's four hundred million people, wipe away the humiliation of Asia's yellow race, and restore the universal way of humanity."¹¹¹ Though the authenticity of this remark has been questioned, it remains that Sun wholeheartedly subscribed to the idea of a yellow union until 1910 and continued to be attracted by pan-Asianism even after Japan's annexation of Korea in that year. Most likely, however, Sun simply inherited the racial vision of the reformers; he expressed the racial perception dominant among his fellow revolutionaries in plain terms of nationalism.

Like many Chinese political activists, Sun's vision of world politics was dominated until the 1920s by the

¹¹⁰ J.Y. Wong, *The origins of an heroic image: Sun Yatsen in London, 1896-1897*, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 229-230.

¹¹¹ H.Z. Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen and the origins of the Chinese Revolution*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970, p. 144.

idea of a confrontation between the yellow and the white races.¹¹² In unison with the reformers, Sun declared that

"Mankind is divided first into the five main races - white, black, red, yellow, brown. Dividing further, we have many sub-races, as the Asiatic races - Mongolian, Malay, Japanese, Manchurian, and Chinese. The forces which developed these races were, in general, natural forces, but when we try to analyze them we find they are very complex. The greatest force is common blood. Chinese belong to the yellow race because they come from the blood stock of the yellow race. The blood of ancestors is transmitted by heredity down through the race, making blood kinship a powerful force."¹¹³

The yellow race had to struggle against the white race. In this international context of competition, the very idea of racial equality was rejected. T.C. Woo, a contemporary of Sun Yatsen, clearly explained the nationalists' vision of racial unity:

"It is the nations which have already attained their position of power and wealth and which have subject races under their control that preach a theory of pseudo-equality between races while maintaining their own undisputed positions. For China to advocate such a doctrine is suicidal. He [Sun Yatsen] used a comic illustration of a laborer who had a lottery ticket in his bamboo pole, and who, upon finding that his was the lucky number, threw his pole into the river in the midst of his excitement; but having thrown away his

¹¹² See Kobayashi Toshihiko, "Sun Yatsen and Asianism: a positivist approach" in J.Y. Wong, ed., *Sun Yatsen. His international ideas and international connections, with special emphasis on their relevance today*, Sydney: Wild Peony, 1987, pp. 15-37.

¹¹³ Sun Wen, *Sanminzhuyi*, pp. 4-5; Price, *San min chu i*, pp. 8-9.

pole, he did not have the wherewithal to obtain his fortune which was already in sight. He said the pole represents the doctrine of racial unity. Throw away this doctrine, you throw away the instrument to national power and wealth."¹¹⁴

Conclusion

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, the reformers perceived race as an extension of the patrilineal line of descent. Confucianism, however, continued to exert an influence as a religio-moral faith. Kang Youwei's movement for the "preservation of the faith", for instance, tried to promote Confucianism as a national religion by giving it an institutional legitimation. Despite the many attacks of the reformers on the traditional culturalist world view, Confucianism remained a powerful form of ethico-spiritual identity.

Race was only consecrated as the ultimate form of identity by the generation of nationalists at the beginning of this century. Nationalism was perceived as the key to racial survival by the radical Chinese students studying in Japan during the first decade of this century, and was sanctified as the ultimate political expression of the racial group by Sun Yatsen. In contrast to the reformers, who had expressed their ideas of socio-political renewal in a frame still

¹¹⁴ T.C. Woo, *The Kuomintang and the future of the Chinese Revolution*, London: George Allen, 1928, pp. 57-58.

dominated by a reference to the past, the nationalists successfully broke away from the culturalist tradition. They elaborated a new sense of identity that focused narrowly on the Han race, pictured as a perennial biological unit engendered by a mythological ancestor. Until 1915, however, the nationalist vision of blood and soil dominated the political arena only. The idea of race would reach a much wider audience with the New Culture Movement, which is the starting point of the next two chapters.

PART THREE

RACE AS SPECIES (1917-1949)

Introduction

Until 1915, Chinese discussions on racial matters remained confined to the political arena. Races were perceived as competing biological groups striving for survival. Even after the fall of the Manchu dynasty in 1911, writings on race merely elaborated on the themes expounded by the reformers and the revolutionaries. New developments, however, were generated by the New Culture Movement, which started around 1915 and lasted for several years. This movement advocated a critical re-evaluation of China's cultural heritage. Many young scholars, often educated in either Japan or the West, were determined to integrate foreign science and culture into the intellectual revolution of their country. They invited the youth to part with the stagnant elements of traditional culture and to accept foreign democracy, science and culture as the founding elements of a new order.

Spurred by this intellectual revolution, the notion of race made rapid progress, infiltrating most domains of intellectual activity. The most striking developments,

however, took place in the social sciences, especially in anthropology, ethnology, biology, human geography and demography.

This chapter discusses the perception of race in the social sciences from 1915 to 1949, though some political and literary writings will be mentioned. It attempts to analyze how a new perception of race emerged, which foreign ideas contributed to its shape and which traditional elements entered into its formation.

The evolution of barbarian species

Interest in the origin of species arose only at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹ The Western theory of the evolution of species, however, was not merely translated into Chinese. Intellectuals rapidly developed their own theories on evolution by integrating alien

¹ Huxley's *Evolution and ethics* had been translated by Yan Fu in 1900 only. *The New World of Translation* (*Xinyijie*), a monthly dedicated to the introduction of foreign ideas by means of translation, published an article concerning the biological evolution of species for the first time at the end of 1906. "About one origin for all species", translated from the Japanese, detected a common origin in man and ape, both species diverging only at a later stage of evolution (Wang Xiangze, "Shengwu yizu lun" in *Xinyijie* 3 (December 1906), pp. 103-109). A detailed exposition of the theory of evolution, translated from the English, complete with 349 illustrations, was only published in 1911; Wu Jingheng (Wu Zhihui), tr., *Tianyanxue tujie* (Illustrated explanation of evolutionism), Shanghai: Wenming shuju, 1911.

concepts into a native pattern of thought.²

One of the first creative evolutionists was Wu Zhihui, who published an article on the origins of mankind in the *New Century* of 1907.³ Wu did not contest the idea that mankind descended from the ape, but believed that the theory was incomplete: different races could only be the descendants of various animals. To support his own vision of evolution, he drew extensively upon the Chinese classics. The *Shanhaijing*, wrote Wu, frequently referred to half-human half-animal hybrids. The *Shuowen* explained that the dog radical appearing in the Di tribe's name was due to the canine origins of its people. A snake ancestry was suggested for the Min and Man barbarians. Factual observation corroborated Wu's theory: why would Muslims abstain from consuming pork if not out of respect for their forefathers? Anthropological evidence for the bestial origins of the barbarians was also provided by Wu, who observed with disgust that even in the contemporary world some barbarians still indulged in fornications with beasts. Everything outside the scope of the Han race was thus systematically mongrelized.

² Theories refuting the entire concept of evolution were of course widespread. See for instance Li Chunsheng's *Tianyanlun shuhou* (Postscript on the theory of evolution), Fuzhou: Meihua shuju, 1907. These views, however, will not be treated here as they are beyond the scope of this thesis. I hope to approach anti-evolutionist ideas and attitudes in a future study.

³ Wu Zhihui, "Renlei yuanshi shuo" (About the origins of mankind) in *Wu Zhihui xiansheng quanji* (Collected works of Wu Zhihui), vol. 1, pp. 145-155, Taipei: Zhongyang wenwu gongying she, 1969. Original published in *Xin shiji* (New century) 39 (1907).

Wu Zhihui published his views in 1907. A decade later, the scientific level of most anthropological inquiries was already too sophisticated to indulge in animal comparisons. As late as the 1930s, however, some authors still denied a human ancestor to other races. A clear example is the first Chinese contribution to the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, a study concerning the dog-ancestry of the aboriginal tribes of southern China. The author examined most documents pertaining to the dog-ancestor Panhu. After having subjected the material gathered to his "ethnological judgment", he concluded that Panhu was the common progenitor of the southern tribes, sharing the "Middle Kingdom" with the "Descendants of the Yellow Emperor". Descriptions of the "Dog-tribe" (Quanrong) were judged "honest and accurate".⁴

The underlying assumption of such interpretations was the unhumanity of the barbarian. Darker races were bastardized: they were not inferior elements on a fictitious scale of evolution, as many Western racial theories claimed; they were simply outside the scope of humanity, dehumanized elements engendered by the association of man and beast.

⁴ Chungshee Hsien Liu, "The dog-ancestor story of the aboriginal tribes of southern China" in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 62 (1932), p. 367.

In search of origins

With the concept of the evolution of species appeared the idea of original purity. Visions of a pure and vibrant race were projected into an idealized past to compensate for the nation's degraded position in the new world order created by the West. Science and myth wove a fabric on which the frustrated mind could visualize its fantasies. Wei Juxian, for instance, published an article inquiring into the origins of the Han race based entirely on mythology. Wei identified the Xia as the genuine descendants of the Yellow Emperor. The Xia were closely related to the Caucasians; many historical documents were produced to demonstrate that they had deep-set eyes, a high nose and a beard similar to the Aryans. "The Xia race's physical appearance, language, customs, and clothes are all similar to the Aryan race, of which those who are heavily bearded are Caucasians."⁵ The Yin, believed the author, descended from the Emperor Yan and had intermarried with the Xia to generate the actual Han race. Wei situated the Xia's place of origin on the Caucasus; they were a white and pure race. The Yin, however, were merely red-skinned barbarians from a part of China now known as Sichuan province. White and red had given birth to the yellow Hans. Wei Juxian maintained the myth of purity by locating the source of pollution in an

⁵ Wei Juxian, "Zhongguo minzu qiantu zhi shi de kaocha" (Study on the future of the Chinese race) in *Qiantu* 1, no. 10 (October 1933), p. 7.

alien group: southern barbarians had undermined the original purity of the divine descendants of the Yellow Emperor⁶.

Chinese scientists of international repute were also in search of purity. Li Chi published *The formation of the Chinese people, an anthropological inquiry* at the Harvard University Press in 1928. Li's point was to contest the idea that the Chinese had been an unchanging and homogeneous race. He started his anthropological inquiry by gathering all the data available with respect to Chinese skulls. He found that 14.41% were dolichocephalic, 42.12% mesocephalic and only 43.47% brachycephalic.⁷ Li also proceeded to measure noses, and discovered that the platyrrhine nose was a minor element in the make-up of the Chinese physical traits. Results were then distributed according to province. The next chapter reconstructed the routes along which city points had evolved in order to follow the historical movements of the "We-group". This painstaking exercise was carried out with the records of 4478 city walls; the building activity of different provinces at different periods

⁶ A circumspect comment on Wei's methodological approach appeared in the same journal five months later. The author, Wang Boping, cautiously pointed at Wei's abuse of mythology, his unhistorical methods of analysis and his partiality; see Wang Boping, "Zai lun Zhongguo minzu qiyuan wenti" (Again about the question of the origins of the Chinese race) in *Qiantu* 2, no. 3 (March 1934).

⁷ Li Chi, *The formation of the Chinese people. An anthropological inquiry*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1928.

could thus be charted. The following chapter relied on the assumption that Chinese surnames of the same origin denoted a blood-relationship. The term "We-group" came to signify the "Descendants of the Yellow Emperor": Li attempted to disentangle the original surnames created by the Yellow Emperor from the surnames of other tribes. He classified 4657 names on a basis of ethnic and geographical significance in 62 maps. Finally, Li Chi took the study of the migration of the descendants of the Yellow Emperor further by investigating the census figures appearing in the official dynastic histories of China.

The conclusion drawn from all the evidence Li Chi had so meticulously gathered was that the prevalent type of the original race was brachycephalic-leptorrhine. Dolichocephalic Tungus were responsible for diluting the divine race of the Yellow Emperor by intermarriage. Li Chi ended his inquiry on a note of hope: "in the future one may expect a continued leptorrhinization of the south and a rebrachycephalization of the north",⁸ a process by which the pure type of the Yellow Emperor would come to replace the inferior elements of China's racial composition.

Archeology was in search of evidence of human beginnings in China. Lin Yan, for instance, carefully examined all the theories that traced the origins of the "Chinese race" down to alien migrations, but rejected

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

them for lack of scientific proof. Like many of his contemporaries, he cited the Peking Man discovered at Zhoukoudian as proof that the "Chinese race" had existed on the soil of the Middle Kingdom since the very beginnings. Excavations supported his hypothesis, as they showed that migrations had only taken place within China. It was concluded that the country had been inhabited by "the most ancient original mankind" on earth.⁹ Modern archeology had to corroborate China's traditional ethnocentric theories. Science was infused into age-old myths to revitalize sinocentric beliefs that could provide a sense of continuity so essential in an age of anxiety.

Zhang Junjun's search for purity revolved around the concept of blood. The premise of Zhang's theory was that all the ancestors of the Han race had O type blood flowing in their vessels, a purity subsequently vitiated by racial mixing with inferior barbarians.¹⁰ Each province was analyzed and classified according to its blood type. The A type was predominant in the north, where the original O type had been bastardized by frequent barbarian invasions. In Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, however, the O type included more than 50%,

⁹ Lin Yan, *Zhongguo minzu de youlai* (Origins of the Chinese race), Shanghai: Yongxiang yinshuguan, 1947, p. 27.

¹⁰ Zhang Junjun, *Zhongguo minzu zhi gaizao* (The reform of the Chinese race), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 2nd ed. 1937 (1st ed. 1935), p. 19. See also his *Zhongguo minzu zhi gaizao, xubian* (Continuation to the reform of the Chinese race), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1936.

whereas the south hovered around 40%. The results of Zhang's inquiry into the Chinese blood composition demonstrated that the nation was a mixed association of an original race, preserved mainly in the region of the Yangzi River (Jiangsu and Zhejiang), and a variety of barbarian tribes.¹¹

The author's next step was to determine the race's level of intelligence. 15089 famous historical personages, supposed to be representative of China's I.Q., were classified by province. The majority, as one might expect, came from Jiangsu (2428) and Zhejiang (1974), ranking far above other regions (Hunan gained a third position with 1200 personages; at the bottom was Heilongjiang province with a pathetic dozen historical figures). From an historical point of view, the Yellow River region had been central until the Ming, whereafter the Yangzi had come to dominate the intellectual life of the Empire.¹² Zhang thus reconstructed the itinerary of the Han race: the first branch of healthy and superior (youxiu) Han, taught by the Gods, blessed by Heaven, had moved into the region of the Yellow River.¹³ Barbarian invasions, famine and internecine wars had led to migrations towards the region around the Yangzi River. During both phases, the original race had degenerated by

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-23. This chapter was originally published in the highly regarded *Dongfang zazhi* of 1934.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 25 ff.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

intermarrying with inferior races.¹⁴

Like other social scientists of the 1930s, Zhang Junjun had been inspired by the pioneering study of Liang Boqiang on the Han race's blood. Liang had taken the blood's "index of agglutination" as an indicator of blood purity. He maintained that the Han race was "purer" in the south, because it had never intermarried with barbarians. The index of Guangdong province, for instance, was the highest in the country.¹⁵

Not all social scientists agreed with the idea of degeneration by infusions of inferior blood. The historian Gu Jiegang emphasized the potential contributions of non-Han peoples through both cultural admixtures and intermarriage.¹⁶ Lin Yutang was a typical exponent of the theory of "blood infusion". With each foreign invasion, "a kind of phylogenetic monkey-gland grafting (sic) took place, for one observes a new bloom of culture after each introduction of new blood."¹⁷ The country's racial vigour was explained by the periodic infusion of regenerating blood, which had occurred with striking regularity in Chinese history. In Lin's eyes,

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹⁵ Liang Boqiang, "Yixueshang Zhongguo minzu zhi yanjiu" (Medical research on the Chinese race) in *Dongfang zazhi* 23, no. 13 (July 1926), pp. 93 and 98. Liang equated the "Chinese nation" with the "Han race".

¹⁶ L.A. Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China's new history*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971, p. 164.

¹⁷ Lin Yutang, *My country and my people*, New York: John Ray, 1935, p. 27.

the addition of foreign blood accounted for the race's long survival.

Skin colour and physical anthropology

Descriptive anthropology only appeared in the late 1910s. China's first comprehensive survey of human races was published in 1918. It was written by Chen Yinghuang, professor at Peking University, and is still considered a seminal work in China.¹⁸ In the preface, Chen carefully warned the reader against assumptions of racial superiority. All races contributed equally to mankind, he believed, whatever their skin colour or degree of evolution. His own definition of anthropology, however, blatantly contradicted the preface: "Anthropology studies all races, from the Chinese and the English down to the dwarf slave and the black slave."¹⁹

Chen's work is representative of most Chinese anthropological studies of the 1920s and 30s in its relentless effort to repudiate Western racial prejudice. Skin colour as a factor of racial differentiation was dismissed as a myth. Chen noted that the Caucasian skin

¹⁸ Chen's work has been republished eight times, and was reprinted in Taiwan in 1971 as part of a series of scientific books designed for the youth. The back cover of this reprint introduces Chen's work as the most illuminating work ever written on anthropology by a Chinese scientist. Chen Yinghuang, *Renleixue* (Anthropology), Taipei: Xueren yuekan zazhi she, 1971.

¹⁹ Chen Yinghuang, *Renleixue* (Anthropology), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, (1st ed. 1918) 1928, p. 5.

was rarely white; it was often stained by impure brown particles. A genuine white skin was only to be found among the northern Europeans, but even these turned dark under the tropics: their skin peeled and became freckled.²⁰ A Japanese scientist was quoted for having established that whites had spotted buttocks.²¹

A popular *Précis of human physiological health science* published in 1921 explained how the quantity of "pigment granules" in the epidermis accounted for the different colours of the human race.²² This explanation was adopted by a majority of writers critical of skin colour as a criterion for racial superiority.

The impermanence of skin colour was often underlined by anthropologists. In his *History of the progress of mankind and culture* (1926), Gong Tingzhang claimed that some blacks could be white, whereas south Europeans were manifestly of a dark type. Nordics revealed a slightly red complexion, ascribed to the blood vessels running underneath their skin.²³ The United States were witnessing an integral racial mutation: blacks were turning white, whereas the Caucasians were becoming "slightly red, the hair increasingly darker, the

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

²² Xue Deyu, *Renti shengli weishengxue tiyao* (*Précis of human physiological health science*), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1921, p. 14.

²³ Gong Tingzhang, *Renlei yu wenhua jinbu shi* (*History of the progress of culture and mankind*), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1926, p. 54.

cheekbones more protuberant and the under-jaw larger".²⁴

Zhu Xi, a specialist in the field of artificial parthenogenesis in Chinese frogs, also published a study on the ancestry of mankind. He distinguished ten shades of skin colour: pure white (no example was given), red-white (Scandinavians, North Germans, English), ash-white (Mediterranean), dark yellow (American Indians, Indo-Malaysians, Polynesians), yellow-brown (Malaysians), red-brown, black-brown (Australians), deep brown, black, and, last but not least, pure yellow, reserved for the Chinese.²⁵ The author further noticed that the American Indians were not genuinely red: they should be referred to as "American yellows".²⁶

Hair and physical anthropology

Though hair had been used in European physical anthropology²⁷ (Pruner-Bey's classic "Chevelure comme caractéristique des races humaines" was published in 1863), skin colour and headshape remained the prevailing criteria in most racial typologies. In the Chinese perception of race, however, pileous systems were a

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

²⁵ Zhu Xi, *Women de zuxian* (Our ancestors), Shanghai: Wenhua shenghuo chubanshe, 1940, p. 226.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

²⁷ See T.K. Penniman, *A hundred years of anthropology*, New York: International Universities, 1965, p. 84.

determining physical trait, the core of racial differentiations.

Professor Chen Yinghuang questioned the scientific credentials of skin colour, which he viewed only as a myth manipulated by arrogant Westerners. He started his anthropological survey by a detailed analysis of hair. Three pages were devoted to the classification of ten different beard types.²⁸

Chen carefully underlined that hair was the dominant feature of the ape-man. Modern man was covered with soft hair only during the seven first months as a foetus, whereafter it gradually disappeared. Some barbarians, however, had never evolved beyond the ape-man stage, and retained an overdeveloped pileous system: the wonu was given as example. Wonu, or "dwarf slave", was an age-old derogatory term applied to the Japanese. It was also an approximate phonetic transliteration of Ainu, the name of a minority from the Hokkaidō region. A hand-line drawing depicted a naked wonu, heavily bearded and covered with hair from top to toe.²⁹ The legend "dwarf slave" tended to convey the impression that the Japanese were shaggy, primitive dwarfs, hirsute creatures hovering somewhere on the border of man and beast.³⁰

²⁸ Chen Yinghuang, *Renleixue*, pp. 66-69.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁰ The association of pilosity with bestiality became a major feature of anti-Japanese war-time caricatures during the 1930s; see F. Dikötter, "La représentation du Japon et des Japonais dans la caricature chinoise (1923-1937)", MA thesis of the

Gong Tingzhang divided mankind into three stages of civilization. The lowest stage of evolution was reserved for the *shengfan*, or "raw" barbarians: they fed on raw meat, blood, grass and roots, and dwelt in the dark forests of the mountains.³¹ These barbarians were coated with thick hair, a feature that betrayed the beast. Gong also reproduced Chen Yinghuang's drawing of the "dwarf slave".³² He further noted that English and Chinese had patches of hair only on the chest and on the legs, a legacy from their forefathers who had benefitted from a developed pileous system against the harshness of the environment.

Wang Hualong, like most anthropologists, insisted on hair in describing the "white race": "Their headshape is like an egg, their nose is narrow and grand, they have a broad forehead, straight jaws, a small mouth, thin lips, soft and wavy hair; many have beards and whiskers."³³

In his *Human geography* (1924), Zhang Ziping selected hair as the most reliable criterion for racial classifications. Skin colour was not a genuine racial characteristic: some yellows were white, whereas

University of Geneva, 1985.

³¹ Gong Tingzhang, *Renlei*, p. 11.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 37.

³³ Wang Hualong, *Xinzhu renwen dilixue* (Newly written human geography), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1928 (1st ed. 1925), p. 34.

Europeans in Africa could have a "pure black colour".³⁴ Craniology was also debunked: the interracial variability of headshape was insignificant and did not allow for racial typologies. Hair remained the most dependable feature by which races could be identified. Zhang produced a drawing of the different hair textures corresponding to his fivefold classification of mankind.³⁵ Four years later, Zhang was to make an outstanding contribution to the science of evolutionary biology by classifying the curly-haired races and the straight-haired races as two distinct branches in the genealogy of organisms.³⁶ Aesthetic principles somehow guided Zhang's inquiry: straight hair was judged "more beautiful" than curly hair.³⁷

The emphasis on pileous systems in Chinese anthropology rested upon the often unexpressed assumption that the relative absence of hair was a sign of racial development. Lin Yutang, for instance, went so far as to search Chinese female underwear for evidence of racial superiority:

"A study of the hair and skin of the (Chinese)

³⁴ Zhang Ziping, *Renwen dilixue* (Human geography), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1926 (1st ed. 1924), pp. 32, 34.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³⁶ Zhang Ziping, *Renlei jinhualun* (The theory of human evolution), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1930, p. 84.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

people also seems to indicate what must be considered results of millenniums of civilized indoor living. The general lack or extreme paucity of beard on man's face is one instance of such effect, a fact which makes it possible for most Chinese men not to know the use of a personal razor. Hair on men's chests is unknown, and a moustache on a woman's face, not so rare in Europe, is out of the question in China. On good authority from medical doctors, and from references in writing, one knows that a perfectly bare *mons veneris* is not uncommon in Chinese women."³⁸

Racial prestige, it seemed, easily justified hair-splitting.

Zhang Zuoren also considered the absence of hair as the most striking feature of mankind. Like Chen Yinghuang and the majority of Chinese scientists of that period, Zhang was not a Darwinist but a neo-Lamarckian. The concept of recapitulation was central to this belief: embryological growth was thought to pass through the earlier stages of evolution, starting from the amoeba to ascend to the level of fish, reptile and finally mammal. The foetus gradually lost its hair after a period of seven months. Zhang noted that recession to a previous level was always possible, and gave a picture of a hirsute man "produced in Russia" as evidence.³⁹ Chinese examples were also provided: in 1921, a certain Miss Wang had given birth to a hairy baby, later exhibited in the

³⁸ Lin Yutang, *My country*, p. 26.

³⁹ Zhang Zuoren, *Renlei tianyan shi* (History of human evolution), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1930, p. 51.

Agricultural Experimental Ground of Peking.⁴⁰ Racial atavisms highlighted the fragility of the delineation between man and beast: behind the civilized man lurked a hideous animal. You Jiade also drew extensively upon the recapitulation theory of evolution. He described the "fine and long hair" covering the foetus as resembling that of a monkey: it normally fell out at the moment of birth.⁴¹

According to Stephen Jay Gould, recapitulation was "one of the two or three leading "scientific" arguments in the racist arsenal"⁴² of the nineteenth century. It believed that coloured people were inferior because they retained certain juvenile traits. In China, it corroborated the ancient association of hair with savagery.

Lin Yutang, who addressed an English-reading public in his *My country and my people* (1935), was aware of the misuse of recapitulation theory in Western science, and defended the Chinese by distinguishing between race and culture. The Chinese, according to Lin, were culturally old but racially young. Havelock Ellis, who had characterized the Asiatics as being racially infantile, was misleading: Lin preferred the term of "prolonged

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁴¹ You Jiade, *Renlei qiyuan* (Origins of mankind), Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1929, p. 7.

⁴² S.J. Gould, "Racism and recapitulation" in *Ever since Darwin. Reflections in natural history*, London: Pelican Books, 1980, p. 216.

childhood".⁴³

Race and odour

Odour was a vital racial characteristic. In a popular introduction to human races, Gu Shoubai wrote that negroes could be recognized by their odour. Blacks have a "protruding jaw, very thick lips, a narrow front" and emit an offensive reek.⁴⁴ Gong Tingzhang claimed that the slightest physical contact with the black man was enough for the olfactory organs to be repulsed by his "amazing stench".⁴⁵ Each race exuded its own peculiar odour: "Africans have a smell of rotten meat one can detect from a far distance. Browns from America also have a specific odour; they blame the whites for their bad smell."⁴⁶ Zhou Qichang, whose textbook on the origins of mankind was remarkably devoid of derogatory remarks by Chinese standards, did not refrain from commenting on the

⁴³ Lin Yutang, *My country*, p. 40.

⁴⁴ Gu Shoubai, *Renleixue dayi* (Main points of anthropology), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1924, p. 51. Gu Shoubai published a second slender volume on anthropology the same year (Gu Shoubai, *Renleixue* (Anthropology), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1924). Both studies were designed for the unspecialized reader and rapidly became popular works. Gu Shoubai was probably the most widely read anthropologist in China during the second half of the 1920s.

⁴⁵ Gong Tingzhang, *Renlei*, p. 1.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

"negroes' foul odour".⁴⁷ Even Lin Huixiang, a reputable professor of anthropology at the University of Xiamen, remarked that the Sudanese had "an unusual stink, perhaps due to their living conditions."⁴⁸

Craniology

The myth of skin colour, corner-stone of Western racial prejudice, was only dismantled in order to reconstruct native stereotypes and categorizations. Features of Western anthropological theory that did not accord with the Chinese framework of racial perceptions were eliminated. Phrenology, a Western belief that had no cultural counterpart in China, was never mentioned. Craniology was used only for methodological purposes: comparisons between Chinese and Westerners were studiously avoided, except when complimentary to the former.

Wu Dingliang, director of the Institute of Physical Anthropology, obtained 358 skulls at a public graveyard north-west of Kunming. He was struck by the high proportion of cases with metopism, a cranial anomaly consisting of a separation of the two lateral halves of

⁴⁷ Zhou Qichang, *Renlei de qiyuan he fenbu* (Origins and distribution of mankind), Shanghai: Dadong shuju, 1927, p. 49.

⁴⁸ Lin Huixiang, *Shijie renzhong zhi* (Records on the races of the world), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1933 (1st ed. 1932), p. 142.

the frontal bone. Wu noted that metopism was customarily attributed to a greater development of the frontal lobe, and generally associated with racial superiority. He then compared his findings with cases occurring among other races, found that all were of inferior rates, and concluded that the Chinese were "at least as superior as the Europeans".⁴⁹

Rare were those who, like anthropologist Zhang Liyuan, fully accepted the Western idea of a relation between intelligence and cranial capacity.⁵⁰ Zhu Xi, for instance, briefly mentioned cranial measurements but frankly doubted their accuracy.⁵¹ Chen Yinghuang quoted a Japanese anthropologist for skull comparisons instead of referring to Western craniologists.⁵²

Zhang Junjun accepted the idea that the cranial capacity of the Chinese race could be measured. Most Western sources, however, indicated that Chinese brains weighed slightly less than the average Caucasian brain, but Zhang did not believe that such small differences were sufficient to establish the inferiority of the Chinese race. He tabulated weights of both body and brain

⁴⁹ Wu Dingliang, "On metopism of Chinese skulls and its relation to the size of cranial measurements" in *Renleixue jikan 1* (Collected papers on anthropology), Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1941, vol. 2, pp. 84-86.

⁵⁰ Zhang Liyuan, *Renleixue dayi* (Main points of anthropology), Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguangshe, 1931, p. 19.

⁵¹ Zhu Xi, *Women de zuxian*, p. 228.

⁵² Chen Yinghuang, *Renleixue*, p. 88.

in order to obtain a figure indicating the relative brain capacity of different races: "The average body weight of our race is less compared to that of the Europeans, but the cranial weight, on the contrary, is almost the same, so the relative cranial weight of our people is superior to that of the Europeans. Thus one can deduce that the cranial coefficient of the Chinese race is very high, and one can conclude that the development of our race's cranial strength is not inferior to any other race!"⁵³

Zhang also challenged the validity of Western intelligence quotient tests. He reproduced a list including fifteen of the most significant tests (Goddard Binet, Stanford Binet, Army Beta, etc.), but contested their accuracy: the number of tested specimens was too small, a significant variation in age appeared in interracial comparisons and the tests all failed to take cultural differences into account.⁵⁴ Lu Zhiwei was quoted for having proved with the Binet and the Pintner-Paterson Performance tests that Chinese children were as intelligent as their American counterparts.⁵⁵ The conclusion of Zhang's inquiry was that the Chinese race belonged to the "superior category".

Tong Runzhi, writing in the *Eastern Miscellany*, was

⁵³ Zhang Junjun, *Minzu suzhi zhi gaizao* (The reform of the race's quality), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1943, p. 34.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-41.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42; Lu's results originally appeared in the *Shehui xinli zazhi* 2 (1931), pp. 402-408.

also worried about the intelligence level of the Chinese race. The white race scorned the Chinese, called them "yellow dogs" and proscribed intermarriage: but were the Chinese really as inferior as other coloured races?⁵⁶ A review of various IQ tests revealed the pathetic scores of both the black and the red races; Tong fully accepted the tests' results and ascribed a "feeble intelligence" to coloured people.⁵⁷ Achievements of Chinese children, however, were rarely inferior to those of American children, except when tests did not consider their cultural background. Moreover, most tests had been based on overseas Chinese, whose intellectual capacity did not reflect the vast potential of the Chinese mind. The intelligence of the Chinese race was thus very developed, but had not been properly utilized. Tong proposed the cultivation of talents, the spread of education and eugenic policies in order to exploit the hidden resources of the superior Chinese intellect.⁵⁸

Not all researchers indulged in comparative studies. For many, the superiority of Chinese civilization guaranteed the Chinese a unique intelligence. For Chen Jianshan, a popular writer on the idea of evolution, the

⁵⁶ Tong Runzhi, "Zhongguo minzu de zhili" (The intelligence of the Chinese race) in *Dongfang zazhi* 26, no. 3 (February 1929), p. 67.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-70.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-74.

ordinary European brain was smaller than the Chinese.⁵⁹ The author of a *Research on the human body* boldly postulated that the degree of civilization was the only criterion for the measurement of cranial capacity. "If we compare the cranial weights of different people, the civilized are a bit heavier than the savages, and the Chinese brain is a bit heavier than the European's."⁶⁰ Jiang Xiangqing, in a popular introduction to the science of body measurements for athletes, related civilization to body height and intelligence. Savages were on the whole smaller than civilized people. As a consequence, Chinese and Japanese were relatively taller than Europeans; "the sillier (yu), the smaller", was the author's conclusion.⁶¹ Class bias also made a short appearance in Jiang's work: the upper classes were assumed to be taller than the lower classes.⁶²

Ru Chunpu, a contributor to the Blue Shirts journal *Qiantu*, remarked that Japanese researchers had scientifically demonstrated that the Chinese and the Jews possessed the most developed mental capabilities of all

⁵⁹ Chen Jianshan, *Renlei naosui zhi jinhua* (The evolution of the human brains), Shanghai: Zhengzhong shuju, 1947, p. 76.

⁶⁰ Chen Yucang, *Renti de yanjiu* (Research on the human body), Shanghai: Zhengzhong shuju, 1937, p. 180.

⁶¹ Jiang Xiangqing, *Renti celiangxue* (The science of body measurements), Shanghai: Qinfen shuju, 1935, pp. 97-98.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 98.

racism.⁶³ Lin Yutang, China's crusader for racial rehabilitation, simply believed that the Chinese could only suffer from "an overdose of intelligence".⁶⁴

Wu Zelin, author of a book repudiating Western racist theories, was one of the few scientists who thought that comparative IQ tests were never entirely reliable, even when in favour of the Chinese.⁶⁵ According to Wu, no absolute differences in intelligence existed between races: each race had its own mental characteristics.

The darker races

The tension generated by the superiority-inferiority complex of the Chinese vis-a-vis Western racial arrogance was released in depreciatory descriptions of the coloured people. Contrary to Western racism, however, dark people were rarely associated with apes. Western anthropology was characterized by a

⁶³ Ru Chunpu, "Zhonghua minzu zhi you yige chulu" (There is only one way out for the Chinese race) in *Qiantu* 2, no. 3 (March 1934), p. 6.

⁶⁴ Lin Yutang, *My country*, p. 78; unlike many of his contemporaries, Lin did not believe that intelligence was only confined to the educated elite in China: "One rarely sees in the slums and factory districts that type of big, husky animal of a similar class in the West, distinguished only by his big jaw, low forehead, and brute strength. One meets a different type, with intelligent eyes and cheerful appearance and an eminently reasonable temperament"; *ibid.*, p. 80.

⁶⁵ Wu Zelin, *Xiandai zhongzu* (Contemporary races), Shanghai: Xinyue shudian, 1932, pp. 144-145.

fixation on the link between Negro and ape, corroborated by a flow of comparative studies which had started with Peter Camper in the 1770s. For Sir William Lawrence, to quote a major figure of British racial science, "the Negro structure approximates unequivocally to that of the monkey. It not only differs from the Caucasian model; but is distinguished from it in two respects; the intellectual characters are reduced, the animal features enlarged and exaggerated."⁶⁶ Belief in the graded series of races made the link even more compelling.

Western anthropology, however, had only given a lustre of pseudo-science to an ancient prejudice. Despite the Catholic doctrine of man's biological uniqueness, analogies between man and animal had existed for centuries. Popular mythology blurred the boundary between man and beast. According to Keith Thomas, the early modern period abounded with "missing links", half-man, half-animal. "It was also believed that offspring could be engendered by sexual unions between man and beast."⁶⁷ That the black was related to the ape in modern anthropology was the result of a lasting belief in the fragility of human separateness from nature.

The Chinese analogies between man and animal

⁶⁶ Nancy Stepan, *The idea of race in science: Great Britain, 1800-1960*, London: Macmillan, 1982, p. 15; for the common association of blacks with apes, see pp. 15-18.

⁶⁷ Keith Thomas, *Man and the natural world. Changing attitudes in England, 1500-1800*, New York: Penguin Books, 1984, pp. 134-135.

proceeded from a different perspective. A study of theriology, the belief that man participates in the nature of the animal which he resembles, can illuminate the difference. William Lessa notes that Chinese theriology seldom has a morphological validity, whereas animal comparisons in the West are all based on human-animal resemblance. "Neither descriptions nor the drawings of features which are associated in appearance with this or that animal species seem to bear much resemblance to these particular animals."⁶⁸ Whereas Western comparisons are suggestive, Chinese analogies are merely allegorical. Westerners downgraded the Negro on a fictitious biological scale which was absent in the Chinese culture. In the Middle Kingdom, one was lowered on a social scale. Since the early period of the Chinese civilization, the blacks had been ascribed the degrading status of the slave, a stigma far more evocative to the Chinese mind than any type of animal allegory.

In Chinese physical anthropology, Africans were simply referred to as the "black slave race" until the end of the 1920s. Gu Shoubai divided blacks into a "black slave race" (*heinu zhongzu*), a "little black slave race" (*xiao heinu zhongzu*) and a "standard black slave race" (*zhun heinu zhongzu*).⁶⁹ Gong Tingzhang reproduced a picture of a black in suit and tie; the caption was

⁶⁸ W.A. Lessa, *Chinese body divination, its forms, affinities and functions*, Los Angeles: United World, 1968, p. 138.

⁶⁹ Gu Shoubai, *Renleixue*, p. 51.

"black slave from Africa".⁷⁰ He commented that blacks and Australians had smaller brains and had only attained the level of civilization of Chinese "stupid peasants" (yunong), a remark that reveals how native prejudice was projected upon newly discovered peoples.⁷¹ Chen Jianshan, a popular evolutionist, classified the "black slave" together with the chimpanzees, gorillas and Australians as a branch of the propithecantropus.⁷²

A widespread textbook on zoology first published in 1916 included a paragraph on the differences between man and ape. It was noted that the "inferior races" (liedeng zhongzu) had a facial index almost similar to the orang-utangs. In order to account for the inequality of mankind, the author developed a theory on the different origins of races. The "black slave" had to be classified in the gorilla branch. Malaysians were descendants of the orang-utangs. The idea of a common source of mankind was categorically rejected.⁷³

⁷⁰ Gong Tingzhang, *Renlei*, p. 53.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 59. In an important article concerning antagonisms between Han Chinese and Muslims, Fan Yin reproached the Chinese for seriously considering the other races as "stupid people" (yumin); see Fan Yin, "Zhongguo jindai Han Hui de chongtu he ronghe 'zhongzu chengjian' de banfa" (About the clashes in modern China between Han and Muslims and the method of dissolving "racial prejudice") in *Beixin banyuekan* 3, no. 11 (July 1929), p. 20. On the idea of "stupidity", see the next chapter.

⁷² Chen Jianshan, "Shi renlei" (Explaining mankind) in *Minduo zazhi* 5, no. 1 (March 1924), p. 7.

⁷³ Chen Darong, *Dongwu yu rensheng* (Animals and life), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1928 (1st ed. 1916), pp. 8-13. The author thus echoed the "polyphyletic

The popular translator Lin Shu (1852-1924), one of the first to introduce Western literature into China, rendered Harriet Stowe's *Uncle Tom's cabin* as *Record of the black slave who laments to heaven*. Lin had translated the book to warn his countrymen that enslavement by the white race was "pressing up to our race".⁷⁴

Traditional barbarian imagery was projected onto the darker races. According to one of the earliest anthropological studies written in Chinese during the first decade of this century, the Burmese were lazy, the Siamese cowards, the Vietnamese frivolous and dishonest.⁷⁵ For Gu Shoubai, whose textbooks were designed for the general reader, blacks were racially inferior. Only the aborigines of Australia and South-America could be more barbarous.⁷⁶ Abyssinians ate meat from living horses, Australian aborigines were cannibals, Taiwanese barbarians went about decapitating people "when they are idle", Malaysians survived on mud and human flesh.⁷⁷

theory" first expounded by Carl Vogt in 1865. This theory identified a different anthropoid ape with each human race; see L. Poliakov, *Le mythe aryen. Essai sur les sources du racisme et des nationalismes*, Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 1987, p. 316.

⁷⁴ Lin Shu, tr., *Heinu hutian lu* (Record of the black slave who laments to heaven), Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1981, p. 206.

⁷⁵ Anonymous, *Renzhongxue* (Anthropology), no date, pp. 36-38; copy consulted at the Capital Library of Peking.

⁷⁶ Gu Shoubai, *Renleixue*, p. 51.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 65, 67, 68.

The Great dictionary of zoology (1923), the first reference work of its kind in Chinese, analyzed human races according to their hair-type. The "wooly-haired type" had "a rather long head, many protruding teeth, a quite low forehead, so that their face is inclined towards the back. This type of people have a shameful and inferior way of thinking, and have no ability to be brilliant in history". Australian aborigines were "the most inferior race on earth".⁷⁸ Liu Huru, in his treatise on human geography published in 1931 as part of the New Age Historical and Geographical Series, thought that most blacks "like to sing and to dance and love ornaments". Their customs, however, were judged "low and ugly", whereas their character was "ferocious". In New Guinea and Australia, blacks had a "vulgar and low intelligence": they fed on grass and insects.⁷⁹ Reports on black nationalism were all the more surprising because blacks had been "recognized by all as intellectually almost the most inferior race on earth".⁸⁰

When Japanese were not indirectly referred to as "dwarf slaves", their size was ridiculed: Zhou Qichang called these "yellow or darkish" people a "race of tiny

⁷⁸ Du Yaquan et. al. ed., *Dongwuxue da cidian* (Great dictionary of zoology), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1927 (1st ed. 1923), p. 15.

⁷⁹ Liu Huru, *Rensheng dili gaiyao* (General principles of human geography), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1931, pp. 47-48.

⁸⁰ "Heise renzhong de xin jiefang yundong" (The new liberation movement of the black race) in *Dongfang zazhi* 23, no. 23 (December 1926), p. 66.

men" (airenzhong).⁸¹ An early Anthropology dichotomized the Japanese into a "beautiful race" and an "ugly race", the latter characterized by a "fat body, large and square heads, protruding cheeks, slant eyes, a flat nose and a big mouth".⁸²

Racial taxonomy

Preoccupation with classification was characteristic of most anthropological treatises. "For the Chinese, to engage in scholarship meant to record and classify. Whatever the phenomenon, it was duly noted and put in one of the several compartments set up for classification purposes. Once this had been done, however, the scholar's job was done."⁸³ Although Shigeru Nakayama refers only to the inhibition of analysis in astronomy in ancient China, the same impression emerges from the endless lists of "races" Chinese anthropologists compiled, from the amateurish tabulations of Tang Caichang to the sophisticated inventory of professor Lin Huixiang. Anthropology described, ranked, and classified; it was not concerned with analysis. It integrated newly

⁸¹ Zhou Qichang, *Renlei*, p. 45.

⁸² Anonymous, *Renzhongxue*, p. 33.

⁸³ Shigeru Nakayama, *Academic and scientific tradition in China, Japan, and the West*, Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1984, pp. 58-59, quoted in Francesca Bray, "Essence et utilité: la classification des plantes cultivées en Chine" in *Extrême-Orient-Extrême-Occident* 10 (1988), p. 13.

discovered peoples into a Chinese cosmology dominated by a hierarchical vision inherited from Confucianism. Most of Western anthropology from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards was predicated on the belief that coloured people were inferior: the purpose of "science" was to discover why and how other "races" were "inferior". In comparison, Chinese anthropology was purely taxonomic: once a "race" had been classified, the job was done.

The basic fivefold racial classification system elaborated by the reformers at the end of the nineteenth century remained virtually unchanged in most writings of the 1920s and 30s. Many authors adopted a five-racial classification in their analyses of mankind. This system translated both the tense relationship with the West, perceived as one menacing unit, and the traditional contempt towards coloured people, vaguely amalgamated according to geographical criteria. White and yellow were engaged in a merciless struggle for supremacy over backward red, brown and black races.

Gu Shoubai briefly mentioned Blumenbach's fivefold system, already extensively used by the reformers after 1895, but preferred a racial classification according to continent: Asia, Europe, Africa and America.⁸⁴ Zhu Weiwei left out Americans but included the Australians as a

⁸⁴ Gu Shoubai, *Renleixue*, pp. 16-17.

specific branch of the homo sapiens.⁸⁵

Most other writers either quoted Blumenbach, or referred to another fivefold classification. The Great dictionary of zoology introduced Brinton's classification, presented as the five races of the five continents.⁸⁶ Zhou Qichang adopted Brinton's fivefold pattern after a review of the different systems of classification.⁸⁷ Zhu Xi quoted Huxley's division into Negroid, Australoid, Mongoloid, Xantochroid and Melanochroid races.⁸⁸

Li Xuezheng's presentation of the origins of mankind deserves special mention, as it highlights how age-old mental patterns intermingled with modern concerns. Li placed Asia at the centre of a plan representing the origins and development of human races. The centre was occupied by the "Mongoloids", whereas the first concentric circle drawn around this centre remained empty. The second circle belonged to the Nordics, the third to a tribe from the Canaries, the fourth to the "Negroids". Three more circles followed, dedicated respectively to the "Australoids", the Negrillos and the

⁸⁵ Zhu Weiji, *Shengwu de jinhua* (Evolution of organisms), Shanghai: Yongxiang yinshuguan, 1948 (1st ed. 1945), p. 72.

⁸⁶ Du Yaquan, *Dongwuxue*, p. 17.

⁸⁷ Zhou Qichang, *Renlei*, p. 29.

⁸⁸ Zhu Xi, *Women de zuxian*, p. 225.

Neanderthal man.⁸⁹ Li's graphical representation remarkably echoed the cosmological plan of *The Tribute of Yu*, which had divided the world into five concentric configurations more than two thousand years before.

Translations

Less than twenty major Western works related to physical anthropology were translated into Chinese from 1897 to 1949.⁹⁰ Many of these translations either played

⁸⁹ Li Xuezheng, *Yazhou zhongzu dili* (Racial geography of Asia), Shanghai: Zhengzhong shuju, 1947, p. 10.

⁹⁰ They were Zhang Mingding, *Renleixue xiaoyin* (R.R. Marett, *Mankind in the making*), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan; Lü Shuxiang, *Renleixue* (R.R. Marett, *Anthropology*), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1931; Ma Junwu, *Renlei yuanshi ji leize* (C.R. Darwin, *Descent of man*), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1932; Hua Rucheng, *Renlei zai ziranjie de weizhi* (T.H. Huxley, *Man's place in nature*), Shanghai: Shijie shuju; Yu Deling, *Renlei shengwuxue* (J.G. Needham, *Anthropobiology, speech delivered in China*), Shanghai: Zhongguo kexue gongsi, 1930; Jin Shuliu, *Ren yu dongwu* (W.M. Smallwood, *Man, the animal*), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan; Du Zengrui, *Renlei zhi jinhua* (G.A. Baitsell, *The evolution of man*), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan; Qian Bohan, *Renlei shengming de jinhua* (G.A. Dorsey, *Nature of man*), Shanghai: Beixin; *Conghou dao ren* (F. Engels, *Role of labour in the process of the humanising of the apes*), Shanghai: Taidong shuju; Wu Zhihui, *Huanggu yuanren* (J. McCabe, *Prehistoric man*), Shanghai: Wenming shuju; Yu Songli, *Shijie youzhi shidai* (E. Clodd, *The childhood of man*), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan; *Renlei de texing yu fenbu* (C.G. Seligman, *Characteristics and distribution of human races*), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan; Gong Te, *Shijie renzhong yu minzu* (J. Deniker, *Les races et les peuples de la terre*), Shanghai: Wenjiaoguan; *Huo jiqi* (A.V. Hill, *Living machinery*), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936; Huang Xibai, *Zhongzu yu lishi* (E. Pittard, *Les races et l'histoire*), Changsha: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1940; Ge Suicheng, *Renzhong dilixue* (G. Taylor, *Racial geography*), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1937; references from *Guoli tushuguan, Jin bainian lai Zhong yi xishu mulu* (Catalogue of Western works

down assumed biological differences between peoples or openly criticized the scientific foundations of racism. Qi Sihe referred to Marett, perhaps the most widely read anthropologist in Chinese translations, to debunk racist theories and colour prejudice current in China in the 1930s.⁹¹

The interpretation of a Western study of anthropology, of course, rested entirely with the reader. A recent note forgotten by a Chinese student in the pages of an anthropological study of the 1910s, found while researching in the Capital Library of Peking, claims that Taylor's *Racial geography* "advocates with all its force the superiority of the yellow race over the white race."⁹² Foreign works could easily be used in support of native theories of racial differences.

Foreign experts lectured on anthropology at several institutes of higher learning, notably Qinghua University and Lingnan University. The most prominent included E. Smith, W. Schmidt, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, and D. Black.⁹³

translated into Chinese during the last hundred years), Taipei: Zhonghua wenhua chubanshiye weiyuanhui, 1958, pp. 73-74; *Shangwu yinshuguan tushu mulu* (1897-1949) (Catalogue of books edited by the Commercial Press, 1897-1949), Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1981, p. 148.

⁹¹ Qi Sihe, "Zhongzu yu minzu" (Race and nationality) in *Yugong* 7, no. 1-2-3 (April 1937), p. 32.

⁹² The note referred to Ge Suicheng, *Zhongzu dilixue* (G. Taylor, *Racial geography*), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937, p. 284.

⁹³ See He Liankui, "Sishi nianlai zhi Zhongguo minzuxue" (Forty years of Chinese ethnology) in Li Ximou, ed., *Zhonghua minguo kexue zhi* (Records on science in the Republic of China), Taipei: Zhonghua wenhua chubanshiye

Many scientists were trained in Japan or the West. Returned students were active in propagating Western concepts of anthropology. Scholars like Fei Xiaotong, Wu Dingliang, or Lin Yaohua, for instance, would disseminate the theories of their particular schools.⁹⁴ While studying in the West, however, the Chinese were exposed to a broad array of anthropological concepts. The choice of a particular trend of thought was largely determined by the cultural background and the personal experience of the student. Students operated out of an intellectual tradition that constrained the exercise of choice within a certain framework.

Western influence was far from being unequivocally negative. Fei Xiaotong, for example, switched to anthropology at Qinghua University, studying under Pan Guangdan and Chen Da, two social scientists notorious for their belief in the virtues of hard-line eugenics, and Shirokogoroff, a Russian anthropologist who had settled in China after the 1917 Revolution.⁹⁵ Fei rapidly became interested in anthropometry. Armed with callipers and anthropometers, he roved Peking prisons in search of the biological measure of crime. It was only after 1936 under Malinowski in London that Fei would abandon

weiyuanhui, 1955, pp. 1-21.

⁹⁴ G.E. Guldin, "Chinese anthropologies" in *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology* 20, no. 4 (Summer 1988), p. 7.

⁹⁵ The following is from R.D. Arkush, *Fei Xiaotong and sociology in revolutionary China*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981, pp. 37-46.

anthropometry.

Interracial struggle

A predominant concern of many anthropological inquiries was racial warfare. Expanding the concept of *zhongzhan*, which had emerged at the end of the nineteenth century as an ideological alternative to the concept of economic warfare (*shangzhan*), struggle between races was perceived as the main feature of contemporary politics. Interest in alien races was only justified when it could contribute to the process of self-definition in a rapidly changing world. Zhou Qichang, at the end of his study on human races, worried whether the reader had really grasped the essence of his message: "Readers, do you understand the key of the problem? The crux of the matter is not struggle between states, but struggle between races! Have not the other three races already lost in the battle?"⁹⁶ Racial determinism explained the level of civilization reached by the white and yellow races, now fighting for world supremacy.

Like the reformers, many nationalist writers appealed for a pan-Asian union between the various yellow races, especially with the newly arisen Japanese. A contributor to the *Contemporary Critic*, for instance, underlined that racial survival would depend on cooperation between the Chinese and the Japanese. Only

⁹⁶ Zhou Qichang, *Renlei*, p. 61.

these two countries, along with some isolated islands, had not yet been seized by the white man. "Thinking from the point of view of racial survival, one cannot but hope that the Japanese, who have the same faces as we, will fully sympathize with us."⁹⁷ He sighed, however, at the thought that the Japanese had followed the ways of the "yellow-haired and blue-eyed" by forcefully occupying Shandong province and by beating up Chinese workers in the concessions.

Pan-Asianism became part of the Guomindang's official policy at the beginning of the 1930s. A "nationalist literature" movement was initiated to cover up the country's capitulation to the Japanese invaders. "Its writers", tells Lu Xun, "after studying the colour of different peoples, decided that those of the same colour should take concerted action: the yellow-skinned proletariat ought not to fight the yellow-skinned bourgeoisie but the white proletariat instead. And they took Genghis Khan as their model, describing how his grandson Batu Khan led yellow hordes into Russia to destroy its civilization, enslaving its nobles and common people alike."⁹⁸ Morbid visions of racial revenge were projected upon the figure of Batu Khan, magnified as the historical leader of the yellow race in the destruction

⁹⁷ Li Zhongkui, "Huangren hai you shengcun de yudi ma?" (Is there still a territory where the yellow race can subsist?) in *Xiandai pinglun* 3, no. 60 (January 1926), p. 148.

⁹⁸ Lu Xun, *Selected writings*, Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1980, vol. 4, p. 149.

of Western civilization. Huang Zhenxia's poem "Blood of the yellow race" is quite representative of this type of literature:

Hide, frightened European dogs!
Topple, Muscovite imposing high buildings!
Roll, Caucasian yellow-haired heads!
Fearful, the oil oozing from burning corpses,
The horror of putrid bodies strewn the ground;
The God of Death seizes white girls in frenzied
embrace,
Beauties are turned into fearsome skeletons;
Cannibals struggle like beasts in ancient palaces;
A foul stench wafts from coffins a thousand years
old;
There is sorrow on the faces of the Crusaders;
Iron hooves trample broken bones,
Camels utter wild howls;
God has fled; vengeful devils have raised the
scourge of fire.
The Yellow Peril is here! The Yellow Peril!
Asian warriors' bloody maws are devouring men;⁹⁹
etc., etc... (the entire poem is more than a hundred
and sixty pages long)

Military vocabulary undergirded the Chinese vision of racial warfare. Hu Huanyong wrote that the Chinese, who had "the longest history, the highest culture, the largest population, a great and proud country", were now "reinforced" by Japan and Turkey, "two yellow upcoming youngsters". Together, they would fight against the whites, whose "main camp" was situated in Europe.¹⁰⁰ An

⁹⁹ Huang Zhenxia, "Huangren zhi xue" (Blood of the yellow race) in *Qianfeng yuekan* (Vanguard monthly) 1, no. 7 (July 1931), p. 6; for this translation, I have mainly used Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang (tr.), Lu Xun, *Selected writings*, vol. 3, pp. 146-147.

¹⁰⁰ Hu Huanyong, *Shijie dili* (World geography), part of the Youth Elementary Knowledge Series, Shanghai: Zhengzhong shuju, 6th ed. 1947 (1st ed. 1942), pp. 43-44.

ABC of human geography broke down the white race thus: "Latins are the advance forces, Teutons are the central army, Slaves are the rearguard."¹⁰¹ For Wu Zelin, Asia was the "great barracks" of the yellow race.¹⁰² Such phraseology is not without affinity with black militant writings. Garvey and Dubois, for instance, considered the American negroes as the "advance guard" of the "black race" in its historical struggle against the whites.¹⁰³

Tao Menghe, professor at Peking National University and future director of the Institute of Social Sciences, produced tabulations showing the surface occupied by the white race on the five continents. The whites, "eternal rulers of all races", ruthlessly destroyed the feeble and weak races they encountered in the course of their expansion. Tao also anticipated a major tenet of the post-1949 period by amalgamating the coloured races into one group, opposed to the white race. A new era in racial warfare had started with the Abyssinian defeat of the Italian army in 1896: "This is only the first thunderclap of the coloured races' attack on the white race",¹⁰⁴ the biggest blow being the Japanese victory over the Russians

¹⁰¹ Li Zongwu, *Renwen dili ABC* (ABC of human geography), Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1929, p. 24.

¹⁰² Wu Zelin and Ye Shaochun, *Shijie renkou wenti* (Problems of the world population), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1938, p. 92.

¹⁰³ E.U. Essien-Udom, *Black nationalism. The rise of the black Muslims in the U.S.A.*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966, p. 40.

¹⁰⁴ Tao Menghe, "Zhongzu wenti" (Racial problems) in *Xiandai pinglun* 3, no. 63 (February 1926), p. 208.

in 1905.

Other researchers focused on the problem of population quantities. Wu Zelin and Ye Shaochun gave various statistics and tables on the comparative growth of the human races. The whites incessantly increased their numbers as a result of a favorable environment and a comfortable life, whereas the coloured all over the world decreased at alarming rates. "The Caucasian race expands every day, the coloured races will decline; if we look at the future, we actually cannot but shudder and fear."¹⁰⁵ The whites were "the turtledove occupying the magpie's nest", increasing on all the continents outside Europe.

Race in textbooks

Racial views crossed most political positions. From the fascist core of the Guomindang to the communist theories of Li Dazhao,¹⁰⁶ the idea of race preoccupied all sections of China's intellectual life. Race also infiltrated the educational system.

Race made its appearance in textbooks immediately after the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905. One of the first textbooks on human geography, compiled in 1907 from Japanese sources, introduced the

¹⁰⁵ Wu Zelin and Ye Shaochun, *Shijie renkou*, p. 84.

¹⁰⁶ See M. Meisner, "Class, nation, and race" in *Li Ta-chao and the origins of Chinese Marxism*, New York: Atheneum, 1970, pp. 188-194.

human species in a special chapter. A paragraph entitled "Each race's superiority or inferiority and its future" explained how the various gradations of skin colour between black and white corresponded to a certain degree of spiritual development: the "most superior white race" now dominated the world. The last sentence nonetheless designated the Chinese as the elect of nature, chosen to replace the whites in the future world.¹⁰⁷ A racial map gave illustrations of the most characteristic races of the world. The original Japanese map, however, showed a narrow-headed, flat-nosed, dreary Manchu as representative of the Chinese race. The illustration was judged offensive by the editors, who glued a sticker with a noble-featured Confucian over the original picture in every copy, saving the Chinese sense of racial honour¹⁰⁸.

Racial inequality was inculcated in youngsters at school. The opening phrase of a chapter dedicated to human races in a textbook for middle schools announced the young reader that "among the world's races, there are strong and weak constitutions, there are black and white skins, there is hard and soft hair, there are superior and inferior cultures. A rapid overview shows that they are not of the same level."¹⁰⁹ Among the five races, the

¹⁰⁷ *Rensheng dilixue* (Human geography), Shanghai: Qunyi shuju, 1907, pp. 147-149.

¹⁰⁸ The sticker can be discovered by slowly passing a finger over the map; the original picture becomes visible when the map is held against the light.

¹⁰⁹ Fu Yunsen, *Renwen dili* (Human Geography), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1914, p. 9.

young student was told, the whites were the most powerful, but the yellows were the most fertile, gradually spreading to all five continents.¹¹⁰ In primary schools, readings on race politics were part of the curriculum:

"Mankind is divided into five races. The yellow and white races are relatively strong and intelligent. Because the other races are feeble and stupid, they are being exterminated by the white race. Only the yellow race competes with the white race. This is so-called evolution (...) Among the contemporary races that could be called superior, there are only the yellow and the white races. China is [i.e. belongs to] the yellow race."¹¹¹

An *Essentials of world geography for school children* equated imperialist oppression with the white race, against which the four coloured races had to fight in order to survive.¹¹² Poems on racial self-determination were read daily, calling for national unity and help to the "weak and backward races".¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 15.

¹¹¹ L. Wieger, *Moralisme officiel des écoles, en 1920*, Imprimerie de Hien-hien, 1921, p. 180, in Chinese.

¹¹² Cao Bohan, *Shijie dili gangyao* (Essentials of world geography), Shanghai: Dongnan chubanshe, 1943, pp. 4-5.

¹¹³ *Anti-foreign teachings in text-books of China*, supplement to the International Gleanings from Japan, no. 16 (October 1932), Tokyo: Sokokusha, p. 12.

The superiority-inferiority complex

Western racist theories were only dismantled to rebuild a sinocentric world vision according to Chinese prejudice. Science and age-old stereotypes constantly intermingled to accommodate ethnocentric feelings of superiority. In the process of rewriting Western anthropology, the concept of racial struggle, of course, remained untouched. Chamberlain's theories, for instance, were castigated as a "mixture of low and shallow biology, partial and superficial historical research, and racial mythology". His views on racial struggle, however, would "enjoy a very long destiny", both in theory and in practice.¹¹⁴

The very idea of racial inequality was only rarely challenged. Few openly denied the existence of biological differences between peoples. Zhang Junli, for instance, excluded "common blood" as a reliable criterion from his definition of the nation. Since the Tang dynasty, he noted, the Han had intermarried with different tribes and had lost their racial purity.¹¹⁵ Qi Sihe criticized the use of the idea of "race" in Chinese social sciences, and underlined that it was a declining notion in the West.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Tao Menghe, "Zhang Bolun de zhongzushuo" (The race theories of Chamberlain) in *Xiandai pinglun* 5, no. 114 (February 1927), p. 189.

¹¹⁵ Zhang Junli, *Minzu fuxing zhi xueshu jichu* (Scientific foundations of national revival), Peking: Zaishengshe, 1935, pp. 10, 22.

¹¹⁶ Qi Sihe, "Zhongzu yu minzu", pp. 25-34.

The majority of social scientists, however, adopted a vision of racial hierarchy which was close to the Confucian idea of social order. They only contested the belief in white superiority. "In Shanghai, for instance, many of the most mediocre Englishmen equally despise noble-minded, erudite scholars. They believe that a race with a yellow skin and straight hair is absolutely not of their kind and can definitely not surpass their level of superiority!",¹¹⁷ exclaimed the author of a critical study on Western racist theories.

White racial arrogance had deeply shattered China's self-confidence. The Western assertion of yellow biological inferiority was all the more traumatic because so many Chinese had always taken their superiority for granted. The opening sentence of a patriotic book of the 1920s, for instance, was typical in claiming that "China is the greatest country in the world, the Chinese race is the most civilized on earth, its long history and the continuity and flourishing of its race cannot be compared to any other country in the world":¹¹⁸ this was only the reaffirmation of a long-standing belief in the uniqueness of the Middle Kingdom. Comparisons with other countries had been forced upon China. It was only with reluctance that it gauged its neighbours to reassess its own position in a new world order created without its

¹¹⁷ Wu Zelin, *Xiandai zhongzu*, pp. 2-3.

¹¹⁸ Mao Qijun and Liu Honghuan, *Women de zuguo* (Our fatherland), Shanghai: Duli chubanshe, 1945, p. 1.

consent. In 1939, Zheng Chang thought that the Chinese had failed to learn from the struggle of the "weak races" against imperialism because they harbored too many prejudices.¹¹⁹

The battle was biological: a mirage of yellow supremacy was opposed against the myth of white superiority. Not all the Chinese, however, were convinced. In the absence of a concept of equality, the prevailing sentiment of superiority was all too easily inverted, allowing a feeling of inferiority to creep into the Chinese mind. It was said that not only the whites, but even the inferior races despised the Chinese. In India, remarked one observer, people looked down on the Chinese and believed that they were all thieves.¹²⁰ Many writers compared the fate of the Chinese to that of the blacks and the American Indians. For one writer, "Chinese are less than black slaves" because Negroes in Africa struggled at least for independence.¹²¹ Such exercises in self-debasement undermined the confidence necessary to adapt to a changing world; they also generated a psychological tension often released in derogatory

¹¹⁹ Zheng Chang, *Shijie ruoxiao minzu wenti* (Problems of the feeble and weak races of the world), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1936, p. 1.

¹²⁰ "Yindu zhi huaqiao" (India's overseas Chinese) in *Qiantu* 2, no. 11 (November 1934), pp. 2-3.

¹²¹ "Ai tongbao zhi jiangwang" (Grieving for the perishing of the overseas Chinese) in *Dongfang zazhi* 1, no. 12 (December 1904), p. 88.

remarks on the darker races.¹²² Lu Xinqiu denounced the Chinese inferiority complex: "Naturally we cannot categorically state that the Chinese have a long history and civilization and that they are the most superior race of mankind, but it is not necessary to lower oneself". He reassured the insecure reader: "From a scientific point of view, the constitution of our body has also many superior points."¹²³ Another scientist wrote that "the Chinese are not an inferior race. The intellectual and physical strength of the Chinese people are not inferior to that of other races (...) We should resolutely not be too proud, but we need not have an inferiority complex

¹²² An early example can be found in an article entitled "The black slave also wants to treat the Chinese high-handedly", published in the November 1904 issue of the *Eastern Miscellany*. An indignant journalist reported how a black had sneaked into a train in Foshan. The negro had forced his way to the second class, physically assaulted the conductor, and called the Chinese "dog tails" (*gouwei*). In a sudden urge for sexual intercourse, he had then turned to the two females present in his compartment. His impulse, however, had been cut short by the rapid intervention of four valiant railway workers, who apprehended the offender and threw him off the train. (Presumably, this unfortunate black sailor, unaware of being in a second class coach, already paranoid about American segregation laws, had simply perceived the gesticulations of the ticket collector and the hostile attitude of the other travellers as racial harassment and had then started to shout "go away!".) The journalist explained that there were five races on earth: gold, silver, copper, iron and lead. The yellows were the noblest, the "proud sons of Heaven" (*tian zhi jiaozi*), not even equalled by the whites, let alone the blacks, "the most vile and ugly of all races"; see "Heinu yi yu qi wo huaren ye" (The black slave also wants to treat the Chinese high-handedly) in *Dongfang zazhi* 1, no. 11 (November 1904), p. 80.

¹²³ Lu Xinqiu, *Jinhua yichuan yu yousheng* (Evolutionary heredity and eugenics), Shanghai: Zhongguo kexue tushu yiqi gongsì, 1949, p. 42.

and despise our own creative ability."¹²⁴ Many social scientists endeavoured to prove Chinese superiority during the decades following the New Culture Movement.

Some Chinese heightened their racial consciousness while studying in the West. Students abroad often complained about the Westerners' paternalism and arrogance. Though some really suffered from racial discrimination, an element of self-victimization and self-humiliation often entered into the composition of such feelings. The lowering of self-esteem generated by unfavorable comparisons with the West easily led to the projection of superior feelings on their own race and culture as compensation for hurt pride. Wen Yiduo, a famous poet, is a typical example.

Wen Yiduo embarked in 1922 for the United States. Already on board, his courage shrunk as he felt increasingly apprehensive of racism in the West. In America, he felt lonely, nostalgic, homesick, and described himself as the "Exiled Prisoner". "Homesickness led him to over-idealize his country and prejudiced him

¹²⁴ Huang Wenshan, "Fuxing Zhonghua minzu de jiben yuanze" (To restore the fundamental principles of the Chinese nation) in *Minzu zhi shang lun* (About the nation going up), Hankou: Duli chubanshe, 1938, p. 52; see also Huang Wenshan's "Zhongguzhuyi lun" (About racism), in *Huang Wenshan xueshu luncong* (Collected studies on society), Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1959, pp. 225-254, originally published in 1942. It may be noted that Huang, professor at Lingnan University, was one of the ten signers of the notorious "Manifesto on the cultural construction on a Chinese base", published in 1934. The manifesto was critical of the westernizing tendencies of the New Culture and called for the study of the national cultural heritage.

against anything nonChinese", notes his biographer.¹²⁵ Wen wrote home: "For a thoughtful young Chinese, the taste of life here in America is beyond description. When I return home for New Year the year after next, I shall talk with you around the fire, I shall weep bitterly and shed tears to give vent to all the accumulated indignation. I have a nation, I have a history and a culture of five thousand years: what is inferior to the Americans?"¹²⁶ His resentment against the West cumulated in a poem entitled "I am Chinese", which fully supported his newly developed sense of racial identity:

"I am Chinese, I am Chinese,
I am the divine blood of the Yellow Emperor,
I came from the highest place of the world,
Pamir is my ancestral place,
My race is like the Yellow river,
We flow down the Kunlun mountain slope,
We flow across the Asian continent,
From us have flown exquisite customs.
Mighty nation! Mighty nation!" and so forth.¹²⁷

Finally, it could be suggested that the Chinese feeling of inferiority also partly derived from a sentiment of sexual inadequacy. As demonstrated in a previous chapter, sexual fear of the foreigner was an important element of popular anti-Christian propaganda

¹²⁵ Hsu Kai-yu, *Wen I-to*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980, p. 61.

¹²⁶ Wen Yiduo, *Wen Yiduo quanji* (Complete works of Wen Yiduo), Hong Kong: Yuandong tushu gongsi, 1968, vol. 1, p. 40.

¹²⁷ Wen Yiduo, "Wo shi Zhongguoren" (I am Chinese) in *Xiandai pinglun* 2, no. 33 (July 1925), pp. 136-137.

during the nineteenth century. Though an extreme form of prudery in Chinese writings makes it difficult to find any material pertaining to the relation between sex and race, the negative image of the Westerner in Chinese racial thinking during the nineteenth century was that of a hairy, meat-consuming, libidinous, tall, white devil against whom the innocent virgin should be protected. Mixed feelings of fear, disgust, secret admiration and envy led to an ambivalent attitude towards foreign sexuality that continued to prevail during the twentieth century. Aida, a Japanese professor of French, has suggested that his compatriots had inferior feelings about their appearance and were hypersensitive to it.¹²⁸ The same could be suggested for the Chinese. Hsien Rin has reported a revealing clinical case about a Chinese undergraduate who went to the United States to study engineering after the second World War. The student resided in a dormitory shared by many Americans. He rapidly developed feelings of inferiority and started disparaging himself, having the "feeling that he was short and weak as compared with American students, and that his genital organ was shorter than those of other students he observed in the shower room."¹²⁹ The student soon developed paranoia and had to be sent back to

¹²⁸ H. Wagatsuma, "Problems of cultural identity in modern Japan" in G. de Vos and L. Romanucci-Ross, eds., *Ethnic identity: cultural continuities and change*, Palo Alto: Mayfield, 1975, p. 311.

¹²⁹ Hsien Rin, "The synthesizing mind in Chinese ethno-cultural adjustment" in *ibid.*, p. 149.

Taiwan. Though this is clearly an extreme case, it indicates how some Chinese could be overwhelmed by a sense of physical inferiority in the presence of Westerners. It is hoped that further research will clarify this issue.

Conclusion

Native patterns of thought predetermined the acceptance or rejection of alien ideas. Western theory was only approved when it could be integrated into a Chinese mental framework and when there was a preexisting corresponding cultural element. Whereas the avowed aim of the New Culture Movement had been to depart from traditional ideas in order to import foreign values, it only succeeded in accommodating Chinese values to Western ideas. The new perception of race which arose after 1915 represented the outgrowth of a native system of thought in response to a new intellectual environment created by the West.

This new perception was dominated by ignorance and fear, two basic background factors accounting for prejudice. Ignorance took the form of stereotyped thinking and distorted information about different peoples in the social sciences. The Chinese inclination towards a descriptive form of writing, as opposed to an analytical form of reasoning, could also explain their fixation on the easily discernable physical

characteristics of foreign people. In the general context of racial warfare, fear of racial extinction, lack of security in the nation's abilities and fright of white supremacy dominated Chinese writings.

Such fear was also a major cause of the Chinese interest in eugenics, the pseudo-science of race improvement which is the subject of the next chapter.

6

RACE AS GENES (1915-1949)

Introduction

Chapter five focused on the perception of race as species. This chapter is entitled "race as genes": it analyzes the perception of race as a biological entity open to short-term alterations through artificial manipulations¹. Whereas the species was subject to long-term evolution through natural mechanisms of selection and adaptation, the genes could be controlled to a certain extent by human intervention. Eugenics created the myth of a superior race bred by the artificial control of the genetic structure of the population.

Interest in eugenics arose at the end of the nineteenth century in England, expanding rapidly to most industrialized countries. It reflected a concern about the biological standards of the race. Laissez-faire theories of modern civilization, it was argued, had blotted out the natural laws of selection: unfit people proliferated at the bottom of society. Insalubrious slums generated hordes of deficient elements that drained the

¹ Parts of this chapter have already been published; see F. Dikötter, "Eugenics in Republican China" in *Republican China* 15, no. 1 (November 1989), pp. 1-18.

race of its vitality. Visions of an infectious lumpen-proletariat submerging the fit elements of society plagued the upper classes. It was believed that breeding principles such as assortive mating and artificial selection could be applied to the human race in order to check further degeneration. "Positive eugenics", a term coined by the father of race improvement theories, Francis Galton (1822-1911), ensured that individuals with abilities above the average would breed at a higher rate than ordinary people. "Negative eugenics" restricted the reproduction of inferior elements. Those defined as having subnormal abilities would have to be physically prevented from perpetuating their infirmities. Hardline eugenicists assumed that intellectual capacity and behavioral traits were inherited and could not be enhanced by education. Those defined as being at the bottom of the mental scale became the main target of eugenic movements, who campaigned for their segregation or sterilization.

The first paragraphs of this chapter provide the historical roots of the eugenic movement that started in China after 1915. The main part of the text analyzes the perception of race as genes from 1915 up to 1949, though the focus will be on the 1920's and 30's.

Taijiao or prenatal education

Traditional notions preceding the eugenic movement

of the twentieth century are mainly confined to a popular practice called *taijiao*. Traditional medicine interpreted the conception of a child as the mixture of female blood with male semen. During pregnancy, menstrual blood was retained in the body of the mother to nourish the foetus. After parturition, yin blood was transformed into breast milk, believed to transmit the moral and physical qualities of the mother.² Diseased babies, as well as infants with monstrous features, were often eliminated in traditional China.³

Taijiao, or "prenatal education", was concerned with the influence of external influences on the development of the foetus. It assumed that the nature of the baby could be altered by emotional or physical shocks derived from the outside world. The *Lienüzhuan* thus prescribed some of the basic rules of prenatal education to the pregnant woman: "The eyes will see no evil colours, the ears will hear no evil sounds, the mouth will speak no evil words: this is the meaning of *taijiao*."⁴

² A.K. Leung, "Autour de la naissance: la mère et l'enfant en Chine aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles" in *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* 76 (January-June 1984), pp. 53, 56 and 64. On the same topic, see also C. Furth, "Concepts of pregnancy, childbirth, and infancy in Ch'ing dynasty China" in *Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 1 (February 1987), pp. 7-35, and C. Furth, "Blood, body and gender. Medical images of the female condition in China, 1600-1850" in *Chinese Science* 7 (December 1986), pp. 43-66.

³ Gudula Linck, *Frau und Familie in China*, München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1988, p. 64; D. Elisseeff, *La femme au temps des empereurs de Chine*, Paris: Stock, 1988, p. 17.

⁴ *Taiping yulan* (Song encyclopaedia), "Lienüzhuan", Taipei: Xinxing shuju, 1959, p. 1694 (360:8).

Interest in prenatal education spread among the upper classes during the Western Han (206-23 B.C.). That only the aristocracy could indulge in taijiao was indeed implicit in its very principles. Jia Yi (200-168 B.C.), who had written a treatise on this topic, explained a fundamental rule: "One must be cautious in marrying off one's children, and choose partners who have a sense of filial piety and fraternal duty, who always behave righteously. Thus one's posterity will be caring and filial; they will not dare to be loose or violent. Among the relatives, none will be bad; all the clans will assist them. Indeed, the phoenix gives birth to the idea of humanity and justice, the tiger and the wolf give birth to the rapacious and perverse mind: both are unequal, as each owes to his own mother."⁵ Only the aristocracy could pretend to breed a virtuous and filial offspring by means of prenatal education. Taijiao was of no avail to the lower classes of society, all sons of "tigers and wolves". The idea of a spiritual nobility that could be inherited only by a minority foreshadowed some of the worst principles of eugenics. The lore of taijiao, however, rapidly penetrated popular culture. Strange stories and tales about the influence of external impressions on the character of the foetus abound in Chinese literature. Belief in the virtues of prenatal education was so widespread at the beginning of this

⁵ Wu Shenyuan, *Zhongguo renkou sixiang shigao* (Draft on the history of Chinese population thought), Chongqing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1986, p. 70.

century⁶ that one of China's foremost geneticists had to refute it point by point in a short study published as part of a popular science series designed for the young public.⁷

Yuan Huang and blood purity

In the *taijiao* tradition, Yuan Huang deserves special mention. In 1590, he published a study entitled *Qisi zhenquan* (True notes on praying for a descendant), now considered one of the few works in traditional China directly related to eugenics.⁸

Yuan suffered from a fragile health and was left without offspring after many years of marriage. When a fortune-teller finally predicted that he would remain childless for the rest of his life, he resorted to the

⁶ The lore of *taijiao* flourished during the Republican era, and was often explicitly associated with eugenics. The *Eugenics Monthly*, for instance, accused Yan Enchun of having confused *taijiao* with eugenics in a study concerning family problems; *Yousheng yuekan* (*Eugenics monthly*) 2, no. 1 (January 1932), pp. 26-27. One popular treatise deplored the "lowering" of the population's physical health; see Song Xizhao, *Taijiao* (*Prenatal education*), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1914 (1st ed.), p. 1. This treatise was republished eleven times in less than a decade. Another introduction underlined how intelligence or stupidity and strength or weakness could be influenced by *taijiao* practises; Song Mingzhi, *Taijiao* (*Prenatal education*), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1914, p. 5. It is interesting to note that many of these treatises were adapted from the Japanese. Translation, it appears, could serve other purposes than only "modernization".

⁷ Chen Jianshan, *Taijiao* (*Prenatal education*), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1926.

⁸ Wu Shenyuan, *Zhongguo renkou*, p. 200.

incantation of Taoist magical formulae. He wrote his treatise after the receipt had proved its efficacy.

Yuan's work was mainly concerned with the explanation of all possible influences on the evolution of the foetus. Prenatal education was central to Yuan's theory. The nature and the moral character of the parents were considered a shaping influence on the growth of the embryo. An excessive preoccupation with one's own moral integrity as well as a cruel temperament could both lead to infertility. Too many fits of rage or too many desires would perturb the evolution of the foetus.

Yuan particularly emphasized the notion of blood. Pure blood had always been a cardinal concern of the aristocracy. It symbolized noble descent, vital in a country constantly invaded by "barbarians". Yuan established a correlation between the quality of the blood and the physical health of the baby. The *jing*, or vital substance animating all creatures, was produced by blood. "When the eyes are tired of looking, the blood is dissipated by looking; when the ears are tired of listening, the blood is dissipated by listening; when the mind is tired of thinking, the blood is dissipated by thinking."⁹ Abuse of alcohol and bad dietary habits also affected the blood. Its solidity or fragility (*jiancui*) thus became a determining factor in the physical health of the baby.

Yuan's focus on blood presents some similarities to

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

the eugenic theory of ancestral inheritance. Both insist that moral characteristics can be inherited by the offspring.

Theories on population quality

Writers concerned with the different aspects of population growth abound in Chinese history. Only a minority, however, were attracted by problems related to the physical health of the population. Such interest, however small, may have facilitated the appearance of eugenic theories in China at the beginning of this century. Ma Duanlin (1254-?), for instance, compared past and present in terms of population quality: "In ancient times, population was scarce; all were able and intelligent. In later ages, population was abundant; many were bad and lazy."¹⁰ This was one of the first attempts to gauge the population by standards of "intelligence" (zhi) and "stupidity" (yu).

Wang Shiduo (1802-1889) extended the notion of "stupidity" to all the lower classes.¹¹ The peasantry, he believed, was inherently of a poor nature (*fubing bao*); their vital energy was scattered (*qi fen*). Wang made a

¹⁰ Zhang Minru, *Zhongguo renkou sixiang jianshi* (Brief history of Chinese population thought), Peking: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 1982, p. 139.

¹¹ This part is based Wang Shiduo, *Wang Huiweng yibing riji* (Diary of Wang Shiduo), Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1967, pp. 97-160. For a detailed treatment, see F. Dikötter, "The limits of benevolence: Wang Shiduo (1802-1889) and the peasant population" (forthcoming).

radical distinction between the uneducated classes, mainly confined to the peasants, and the educated classes. His repugnance for the lower classes was reflected by the constant use of the character *yu*, "stupid" or "foolish". "The most stupid, the most unruly, the most unreasonable on earth are the peasants". Among the peasants, women were even more stupid than men, and mountain dwellers were more foolish than people from the plains. Wang's haughty attitude, however, was not based solely on the intellectual's contempt for illiterate people. Fear was at the roots of Wang's vision.

Wang had personally suffered from the Taiping rebellion. He left Nanking with mixed feelings of fear and hatred shortly after the rebels had taken the city in 1853. He explained the rebellion by a Malthus-like theory of over-population. Backward peasants had pullulated all over the country, had quickly overwhelmed the ruling classes and now threatened to dominate by the sheer force of brutality. Order and peace would be restored by strictly regulating their birth-rates. Wang repeatedly put forward ideas to drastically reduce the peasant population:

- 1) People found gambling, smoking opium, reading Song Confucianism, believing in spirits, practicing witchcraft or divination, stealing, fighting, begging, wandering, indulging in alchemy or following unorthodox teachings, as well as males marrying under the age of thirty, females marrying under the age of twenty-five,

poor people already having one child but remarrying, women having one child but taking another husband should be "instantly decapitated", "killed without pardon".

2) Laws concerning women should be more severely enforced. Thirteen would be considered the age of civil responsibility. Crime committed by a girl under the age of thirteen should implicate both parents. The death penalty should be enforced without delay.

3) Girls should be drowned in order to decrease their numbers. Poor people would not be allowed to have a girl, whereas the wealthy could give birth to one. Taxes should be imposed on the female population to implement a thorough infanticide policy: families with two daughters would have to pay double.

4) Girls of poor people would be drowned; sons that were physically abnormal, or did not have handsome features, should also be drowned. No more than two sons would be allowed.

5) Temples, nunneries, "institutes for virgin women" and "halls of chastity" should be constructed in large numbers. People should be encouraged to become monks or nuns, or to remain unmarried.

6) Abortifacient methods should be popularized. By regulation, women with one child would have to take a "cold medicine to abort".

7) Officials should welcome epidemic diseases.

Physical elimination of elements defined as subnormal, marriage restrictions applied to certain

social groups and the sterilization of some categories of people are all policies which Wang Shiduo shares with modern eugenics.

The incipient stage of modern eugenics

The first direct references to eugenics appeared at the turn of the century, a stirring period of intellectual ferment during which reform-minded scholars began to be attracted to Western ideas. Though no specific work on eugenics had been translated into Chinese, the idea of race improvement guided by science was broached by some reformers. Tan Sitong, for instance, briefly mentioned the science of race improvement in his "Study of humanity" (Renxue):

Nowadays, electricity is able to transmit heat and force without a wire and to take a photograph of the liver and the lungs. It can also test the material force of the brain: in the course of time, it must be possible to eliminate its heavy nature and to preserve its lightness, to decrease the body and to increase the mind. By also paying attention to the science of race advancement (*jinzhong zhi xue*), each generation will be superior to the other; through endless transformations, it will give birth to another race, which purely uses its intelligence and not its strength, having only a spirit and no body."¹²

Tan incorporated eugenics into his own cosmological philosophy, mainly derived from Confucian and Taoist

¹² Tan Sitong, *Tan Sitong quanji* (Collected writings of Tan Sitong), Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1981, p. 366.

teachings.¹³ Eugenics was merely a means to realize an ideal spiritual wholeness. By controlling the evolution of the race, the body could be dissolved and the mind transcended; spiritual unity with the cosmos could then be achieved.

Kang Youwei's eugenic thought was more realistic. According to his student Liang Qichao, Kang considered the "amelioration of the race" as the first requisite for an ideal society. The government should build pleasure hostels situated in agreeable surroundings where young people could meet. Pregnant women should then be led to a public pre-natal education hospital (*taijiaoyuan*), where qualified doctors would prescribe their food and supervise their activities. The disabled, the mentally diseased, and people suffering from an hereditary deficiency should be sterilized by medicament.¹⁴ Like many of his contemporaries, Liang himself manifested his admiration for the Spartans, who used to cast away babies considered unfit after examination.¹⁵

¹³ On the philosophical sources of Tan Sitong, see Chang Hao, *Chinese intellectuals in crisis: search for order and meaning, 1890-1911*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, pp. 79-84.

¹⁴ Liang Qichao, "Nanhai Kang xiansheng zhuan" (Biography of Kang Youwei) in *Yinbingshi wenji* (Complete works of Liang Qichao), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1941, 3, 6:78.

¹⁵ Liang Qichao, "Sibada xiaoshi" (Short history of the Spartans) in *Yinbingshi zhuanji* (Complete works of Liang Qichao), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1941, 4, 15:1-19. Liang also admired Wilhelm II for his concern about the racial health of the German nation; see *ibid.*, 3, 4:117.

Eugenics also caught the fancy of the revolutionaries. Zhang Binglin, for instance, mentioned that "the superiority or inferiority inherent in heredity is responsible for intelligence or stupidity; the purity or impurity of the blood is responsible for strength or weakness."¹⁶ He noted that elements belonging to a poor racial stock could be drastically improved by interbreeding for several generations with a superior strain of blood: "After eight generations, the inferior blood will be no more than 1/128th, which corresponds almost to a superior race."¹⁷

Periodicals sometimes alluded to eugenics. An article published in the *Eastern Miscellany* of 1905, for example, promoted medicine as the only science capable of improving the nation's genetic pool in times of racial warfare.¹⁸

At the turn of the century, Western eugenics had already anchored a vivid image of race improvement in the mind of some Chinese scholars. It was only after the New Culture Movement, however, that it would be approached in a systematic way.

¹⁶ Zhang Binglin, *Qiushu* (Book of raillery), Shanghai: Gudian wenzue chubanshe, 1958.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁸ Hai Huo (pseud.), "Yixue yu shehui zhi guanxi" (The relationship between medicine and society) in *Dongfang zazhi* 2, no. 4 (April 1905), p. 8.

The flourishing of eugenics

The New Culture Movement, which started around 1915 and lasted for several years, was a turbulent period of intellectual change. Eugenics and genetics¹⁹ were briefly introduced to the Chinese reading public by Chen Yinghuang, author of an influential anthropology. The last chapter of his work was dedicated to eugenics, a science "yet unheard of in China".²⁰ Professor Chen presented eugenics as a science capable of curing society by expelling its diseased elements: it was called *renzhong gailiang*, "improvement of the race", or *youshengxue*, "science of superior birth". Both terms became current afterwards, though the latter, still in use nowadays, was slightly favoured.

A textbook exclusively devoted to eugenics appeared in 1919, one year after the publication of Chen's study on mankind. The science of race improvement was a compilation of translated American works, mainly on heredity and genetics, but also including information on

¹⁹ On botanical and entomological genetics in Republican China, see L.A. Schneider, "Genetics in Republican China" in J.Z. Bowers, J.W. Hess and N. Sivin, eds., *Science and medicine in twentieth century China: research and education*, Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, 1988, pp. 3-30.

²⁰ Chen Yinghuang, *Renleixue* (Anthropology), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1928 (1st ed. 1918), p. 242.

eugenics.²¹ This work was of highly technical nature and did not include any suggestions for the application of eugenic principles in China.

A first call for the emulation of the Western concern with race appeared in 1919 in the reputable *The New Education*, edited by Chiang Monlin. The author, Xia Yuzhong, regretted that the material progress of modern civilization had not been followed by racial improvement. Natural selection did not operate any more in human society: "Society is still crammed with all the evil, the ugly, the false, the wicked, the scrambling, the base, the stupid, the brutish and the vexing elements of human race, filled with all the bad phenomena that could lead a superior person to commit suicide."²² Eugenists would differentiate between those elements that should be preserved and those that should be eliminated. Xia, however, admitted to his ignorance of the science of race improvement, and could only make some suggestions for its adoption in China. His suggestions included the foundation of eugenic laboratories on the provincial level and the establishment of a special village where people with perfect brains and ideal bodies could be bred in order to generate the future "model-race".²³

²¹ Chen Shoufan, *Renzhong gailiangxue* (Race improvement), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1928 (1st ed. 1919).

²² Xia Yuzhong, "Shuzhongxue yu jiaoyu" (Eugenics and education) in *Xin jiaoyu* 2, no. 4 (December 1919), p. 395.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 397-398.

Yuan Shunda, who drew upon Xia's article without acknowledgment, was also upset by the phenomenon of reversed selection. He treated the decreasing birth-rate of the "superior elements" with the utmost earnestness. Announcing a major tenet of Chinese eugenics, the author designated the intellectuals as the leading elements of the race. Pearson's statistics on differential birth-rates in England were rehearsed to substantiate the author's views. Yuan used the term "intellectual class" (zhishi jieji) to denominate the segment of the population with the lowest birth-rate, thus considering educated people as a specific social group with special privileges²⁴ (Zhou Jianren, a better informed eugenicist, had used the word "English intellectuals" while quoting the same statistics²⁵). Intelligence should breed, stupidity (yu) should wither, was the author's conclusion.²⁶

Early writings on eugenics were still dominated by the racial perception of the reformers: the world was interpreted in terms of racial struggle. In Chinese, the very term eugenics (youshengxue) evoked the Spencerian slogan "struggle for survival" (youshengliebai, literally

²⁴ Yuan Shunda, "Renlei shehui fan taotai zhi xianxiang ji qi jiujifa" (The phenomenon of reversed selection in human society and the method to relieve it) in *Dongfang zazhi* 18, no. 24 (December 1921), p. 37.

²⁵ Zhou Jianren, "Shanzhongxue yu qi jianlizhe" (Eugenics and its founders) in *Dongfang zazhi* 17, no. 18 (September 1920), p. 74.

²⁶ Yuan Shunda, "Renlei shehui", p. 43.

"the superior win, the inferior lose"), and sounded similar to "science of how the superior win". Hu Zongyuan's opening phrase to his article on the "fundamental reform" of the race was quite characteristic: "Some ethnologists claim that the intelligent races rule, the stupid (yu) races serve, the strong flourish, the weak perish."²⁷ As heredity determined the intelligence or stupidity of a race, explained Hu, a thorough reform of the nation's genetic resources was the first requisite for China's revival.²⁸

Some social thinkers also began to turn to eugenics at the beginning of the 1920s. The *Ladies Journal*, for instance, introduced its readership to the hardline eugenics of Davenport at the end of 1919,²⁹ and presented the Eugenics Laboratory of Sir Francis Galton as well as the Eugenics Education Society of Leonard Darwin.³⁰ Ding Wenjiang, to take a more notorious example, argued shortly before engaging in the Debate of 1923 that science, especially eugenics and ecology, could help to

²⁷ Hu Zongyuan, "Genben gaizao renzhong zhi wenti" (The problem of fundamentally reforming the race) in *Funü zazhi* 5, no. 3 (March 1919), p. 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁹ Dong Zhuli, "Renzhong gailiangxue zhi yanjiu fangfa" (C.B. Davenport, The research methods of the science of race improvement) in *Funü zazhi* 5, no. 12 (December 1919), pp. 1-8; 6, no. 1 (January 1920), pp. 6-10.

³⁰ San Wu, "Biren wo guan" (My point of view on contraception) in *Funü zazhi* 6, no. 12 (December 1920), pp. 1-7.

solve China's population problems by rational means.³¹

It was the *Eastern Miscellany*, a highly regarded and widely read periodical, which initiated the publication of the first comprehensive exposition of eugenic principles in 1923. It was co-written by Zhou Jianren,³² the brother of the famous writer Lu Xun, and Chen Changheng,³³ a specialist in population problems. The slim volume, entitled *Evolution and eugenics*, rapidly became a best-seller.

Chen Changheng established a correlation between the idea of progress and eugenics.³⁴ The unfolding of progress had always been hampered by racial degeneration. Most great civilizations like Babylon, Greece, Rome, Spain, Turkey, and soon China, had collapsed as a consequence of racial decrepitude. Eugenics would empower

³¹ Ding Wenjiang, "Zhesixue yu pudie" (Eugenics and clan records) in *Gaizao* 3 (1920-21), no. 4, pp. 37-44, no. 6, pp. 7-16; see also D.W.Y. Kwok, *Scientism in Chinese thought, 1900-1950*, London: Yale University Press, 1965, p. 114.

³² Zhou had already published an article on the principles of eugenics in the *Eastern Miscellany*. This article was later integrated in his *Evolution and Eugenics*; see Zhou Jianren, "Shanzhongxue de lilun yu shishi" (The theory of eugenics and its implementation) in *Dongfang zazhi* 18, no. 2 (January 1921), pp. 56-64.

³³ Chen Changheng, a forerunner in the field of population theories, would later erect both birth control and eugenics as the cornerstones of his "child bearing revolution" (*shengyu geming*); see chapter three of his *Sanminzhuyi yu renkou zhengce* (The Three People's Principles and population policies), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1930.

³⁴ Chen Changheng and Zhou Jianren, *Jinhualun yu shanzhongxue* (Evolution and eugenics), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1925 (3rd ed.) (1st ed. 1923), pp. 5-10.

man to direct the course of societal evolution.

Chen harped on the theme of racial extinction, a worry so characteristic of the decade that had followed the Sino-Japanese War of 1895. He described how Western states were actively engaged in eugenic policies and how they had succeeded in progressively raising the race's vitality.³⁵ Whereas races of the West became increasingly strong and vibrant, national subjugation and racial extinction (*wangguomiezhong*, a concise and often used epigram) menaced a Middle Kingdom in decay.

Zhou Jianren provided the reader with a circumstantial review of the philosophy of evolution and the history of eugenics.³⁶ He explained how statistics had established that not only physical characteristics, but also mental traits could be inherited: idiots could not have smart children.³⁷ A lengthy quotation from Karl Pearson, main disciple of Galton and founder of the science of biometrics, expounded the idea of the inheritance of criminal tendencies.³⁸

Zhou Jianren believed that the proliferation of "unfit" elements drained the race's resources and endangered society. He propounded the rapid restriction of their reproduction: "If one wants to restrict the reproduction of the unfit, one can only segregate them.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-16.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-54.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-58.

An active method would be to attempt to remove their reproductive capacity, only after which can they be released."³⁹

The following year, the Commercial Press published a study on heredity and eugenics written by Liu Xiong. Like Zhou Jianren, Liu represented the worse current of eugenics. He accepted the inheritance of intellectual capacity, the dichotomy between inferior and superior people and the ruthless application of negative eugenics to the "unfit". Liu maintained that it was the responsibility of eugenics to eliminate inferior elements in order to preserve the superior strain of the race.⁴⁰ Two themes of Liu's work should be noted, as they would become recurrent in most Chinese writings concerning race improvement:

1) The concept of class. In Liu Xiong's view, eugenics should be directed toward specifically defined classes. The racial health of the lower strata of society had to be raised in order to dissolve the class system which had prevailed in the past: only then could social harmony be achieved.⁴¹ Intellectuals were defined as a "class" (jieji), opposed to elements "without

³⁹ Ibid., p. 75.

⁴⁰ Liu Xiong, *Yichuan yu yousheng* (Heredity and eugenics), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, part of the popular science series "Universal Library", 1926 (1st ed. 1924), pp. 74-75.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 73.

intelligence" that propagated at the bottom of society.⁴² Whereas Chen Changheng was still dominated by the idea of racial extinction, so characteristic of the reformers' perception of race, Liu advanced a different vision: lower classes had to be elevated to the level of the superior caste. Racial uniformity within the nation instead of racial superiority among races would ensure the survival of the country; the focus was shifted from racial differences between nations to racial differences between classes.

2) The concept of individualism. "The limit of individual liberty is that it should not infringe upon others and that it should not harm the development of the race."⁴³ In the special paragraph Liu devoted to the interaction of individual and race, it was explained that individualism had to be restricted when it threatened the racial welfare of society. The foremost duty of the citizen was to contribute actively to the race: "When one assumes the task of protecting the race's superior characteristics, one cannot exclusively consider individual liberty and comfort."⁴⁴ The subordination of the individual to the group was a concern that often emerged in eugenic writings.

Until the middle of the 1920s, however, discussions on eugenics remained confined to a narrow group of

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

scholars preoccupied with racial struggle and the survival of the nation. It was only with Pan Guangdan that eugenics would become a household word in China.

Pan Guangdan and the popularization of eugenics

The first real attempt to popularize eugenics in China came from Pan Guangdan (1898-1967).⁴⁵ Pan Guangdan enrolled at Dartmouth College in 1922 to study zoology. Two years later, he proceeded to Columbia University to read for a higher degree. Though Pan had had one leg amputated after an athletic injury,⁴⁶ he was about to become China's most popular eugenicist.

Pan Guangdan became attracted to eugenics whilst studying in the United States. Upon graduation at Dartmouth, Pan and several fellow students founded the first eugenic organization of China. It was called "The Chinese Eugenics Institute" (*Zhongguo yousheng xuehui*), and conceived its purpose in drafting propositions for the enactment of eugenic laws in China.

⁴⁵ Pan Guangdan has recently been recognized as China's "pioneer" in the field of eugenics; see Li Chonggao, "Youshengxue de youlai yu fazhan" (The future and development of eugenics) in *Xing jiaoyu yu yousheng* (Sexual education and eugenics), Shanghai: Shanghai kexue jishu chubanshe, 1987, vol. 2, p. 200. It is, however, beyond the scope of this chapter to examine his entire work. It will only be attempted here to outline his eugenic thought on the basis of his most influential writings.

⁴⁶ H.L. Boorman, ed., *Biographical dictionary of Republican China*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1971, p. 61.

The following year, Pan wrote an introduction on the eugenic movement in the world. It described the general principles of eugenics and listed the most important eugenic institutions, complete with the name, address, foundation date and title of the main organ.⁴⁷

In this introduction, Pan called for the "citizenization" (*gongminhua*) of the movement, as eugenics could not be considered the responsibility of scientists only:⁴⁸ race improvement was closely related to the politics of the state. The emergence of the nation coalesced with the rise of the race.

Pan Guangdan also tackled the problem of race improvement in China. In *The eugenic question in China*,⁴⁹ the author described two mutually exclusive processes of selection: natural selection (*tianran xuanze* or *tianze*), the evolutionists' object of investigation, and cultural selection (*wenhua xuanze* or *huaze*), the concern of the eugenists. Cultural selection threatened to affect the race's vitality by blotting out the natural process by which weak elements were eliminated. In China, for

⁴⁷ Pan's introduction was originally published in the *Dongfang zazhi* 22, no. 22 (November 1925), "Ershinian lai shijie zhi yousheng yundong" (The eugenic movement in the world during the last twenty years), pp. 60-83. It was reprinted in Pan Guangdan, *Youshengxue* (Eugenics), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1933. The following refers to this edition.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁴⁹ Pan Guangdan, "Zhongguo zhi yousheng wenti" (China's eugenic problem) in *Dongfang zazhi* 21, no. 22 (November 1924), pp. 15-32, reprinted in Pan Guangdan, *Youshengxue* (Eugenics), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1933, the edition referred to here.

instance, 50.000 people died of tuberculosis every year. With the introduction of Western medicine, these people would survive, thus lowering the racial resistance of the nation.

The recent importation of Western culture dramatically interfered with the process of natural selection in China. The purpose of Pan Guangdan's short study was to analyze the effects of this new cultural influence on the Chinese race. The first section of Pan's study focused on different aspects of cultural selection in China before the country had opened to the West:

1) Familism (*jiazu zhuyi*), as opposed to Western individualism (*geren zhuyi*), was viewed as a positive factor in the preservation of the nation's racial health. The Chinese family stressed the duties of its members more than their rights. "Individual liberty and happiness have to recede into the background or to be sacrificed entirely in the struggle for survival of the race."⁵⁰

2) Chinese religions had never really opposed marriage. Confucianism was even considered compatible with racial order (*zhongzu zhi'an*), as it emphasized both filial duty and procreation.

3) The traditional matrimonial system had never interfered with the "hygiene" (*weisheng*) of the race, as the individual's role was minimized to ensure collective harmony. Low rates of divorce and arranged marriages were valued positively by Pan. Bigamy was not necessarily

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

negative, as it was only practiced by noble and rich families, whose blood was generally superior to that of the common people. Though he admitted that the concubinage system had a negative influence on the race's health, Pan Guangdan judged that the Chinese traditional marriage customs were altogether sound.

4) Population growth had so far remained free from any kind of cultural interference. The reproduction rate was high, but had always been counterbalanced by a strong mortality.

5) Rural life maintained the race's vitality. The urban style of life only stimulated a decadent individualism that made no contribution to the race.⁵¹

Pan Guangdan concluded that the negative influence of cultural selection had never been significant in China.

Western thought, however, had started to insinuate itself into Chinese intellectual life. Individualism and socialism both denied that the family could constitute the basic unit of the race. Individualism adopted an anti-family attitude that would ultimately endanger the perpetuation of the race; socialism indulged in egalitarian theories that could only lead to social unrest. Democracy, translated as *demokelaxiya* for the sake of mental distance, only differed from socialism in its economic and political principles. In the West, equality merely meant limited social mobility for outstanding people to the benefit of the mediocre. Only

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-85.

in China, where the hierarchy of classes was flexible, could talent easily reach the top.⁵²

Westernization had already affected social organization in the following ways: 1) medical hygiene blotted out the process of natural selection, allowing inferior elements to proliferate; 2) Western matrimonial practices emphasized romanticism, advocated a late marriage age, espoused ideals unattainable for many young Chinese, and excessively stressed the financial independence of the female partner; 3) higher classes, induced by individualism, tended to limit their offspring; 4) expansion of urban centres led to the dissemination of evil practices all over the country.⁵³

Pan Guangdan called for a critical re-evaluation of Western civilization. Foreign cultural penetration had upset the country's social organization and undermined its racial health. Cultural selection had disturbed a delicate balance that could only be redressed by eugenics.

In this early article, Pan Guangdan had exposed what would become the dominant themes of his thought: faith in the superiority of the intellectual class, distrust of Western individualism, and confidence in the family as the basic unit for the nation-race. Pan spent much of his time during the next two decades teaching and writing on the concepts of eugenics he had elaborated during this

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 90-92.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-103.

early period. His ideal of the family, for instance, was conceptualized in his *Chinese family problems* (1928). This study presented the results of a survey of readers of the magazine *Xuedeng* concerning marriage and family status. The introduction equaled family with *xuetong*, "stock", "breed", or "strain":⁵⁴ it constituted the biological unit of the race. The race should be bettered by improving its genetic inheritance, then only could it become an "instrument for struggle and survival".⁵⁵ Pan was opposed to birth control, late marriage, and female independence, pointing again at the positive aspects of the traditional marriage system.

His faith in the racial virtues of the intellectuals, shared by many eugenicists, was expressed among others in his work on blood kinship among Chinese actors. Largely inspired by Galton's aged *Hereditary genius* (1869) and Havelock Ellis's *A study of British genius*, it studied the clan records of famous acting families in order to demonstrate that the assortive mating intuitively practiced by a couple of families had produced a large number of famous actors. Actor families had succeeded in preserving the desirable genetic qualities: Pan believed that theatrical talent had been

⁵⁴ Pan Guangdan, *Zhongguo zhi jiating wenti* (Problems of the Chinese family), Shanghai: Xinyue shudian, 1940 (1st ed. 1928), p. 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

transmitted by the genes.⁵⁶

Nature versus nurture

Pan was an outspoken advocate of eugenics and crusaded many years for its adoption. Together with the Chinese Committee for Racial Hygiene, he initiated the publication of a *Eugenics Monthly*, which contained essays, short stories, and reviews.⁵⁷ The repercussions of eugenics in China, however, cannot be ascribed to the activity of one scholar. Many intellectuals of the late 1920s were actively engaged in the advancement of race betterment. Pan Guangdan's concern with the family was echoed by one of the most respected writers on family problems, Yi Jiayue. Yi believed that the family could strengthen the country's "racial organization" and was beneficial to the "struggle for survival".⁵⁸ Popular textbooks on heredity explained the principles of eugenics and the dangers of racial degeneration.⁵⁹ A

⁵⁶ Pan Guangdan, *Zhongguo lingren xueyuan zhi yanjiu* (Research on the blood relationship of Chinese actors), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1941.

⁵⁷ The *Yousheng yuekan* (Eugenics monthly) appeared from May 1931 to February 1932.

⁵⁸ Yi Jiayue, *Jiating wenti* (Problems of the family), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1920, p. 149.

⁵⁹ See for instance Chen Jianshan, *Yichuanxue qianshuo* (Elementary introduction to heredity), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1926, pp. 145-151, and Wang Qishu, *Yichuanxue gailun* (Introduction to heredity), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1926, last chapter.

hard-line ABC of eugenics was published in 1929,⁶⁰ an Introduction to the science of race improvement in 1932.⁶¹ The Student's Magazine urged university students to undertake eugenic research for the advancement of the race, the state, and the individual.⁶²

After 1930, the casual usage of eugenic arguments became increasingly common in scholarly circles. "Race improvement" and "racial hygiene" became the catchwords of the day. Marriage guides hoped that beautiful superior people would marry together to regenerate the race.⁶³ Medical journals initiated the study of "racial biology".⁶⁴ Doctor Jin Zizhi explained how the future of the nation was dependent on the physical condition of the race in his Racial hygiene.⁶⁵ One eugenicist even warned

⁶⁰ Hua Rucheng, *Youshengxue ABC* (ABC of eugenics), Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1929.

⁶¹ Qian Xiaoqiu, *Renzhong gailiangxue gailun* (Introduction to the science of race improvement), Shanghai: Shenzhou guoguangshe, 1932.

⁶² Wu Zhenzi, "Women wei shenme yao yanjiu youshengxue" (Why we should study eugenics) in *Xuesheng zazhi* 15, no. 9 (September 1928), pp. 31-36.

⁶³ Ma Chonggan, *Jiehun zhidao* (Marriage guide), Shanghai: Qinfen shuju, 1931, pp. 11-12. A popular guide for women emphasized how the "superiority" or "inferiority" of children depended entirely upon the parents; it described hereditary diseases as the germs of race betterment, menacing the race with degeneration and final extinction; see Zhang Jixiu, *Funü zhuan* (Special handbook for women), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937, pp. 52-61.

⁶⁴ "Minzu shengwuxue xulun" (Introduction to racial biology) in *Yixue* (Medicine) 1, no. 1 (July 1931).

⁶⁵ Jin Zizhi, *Minzu weisheng* (Racial hygiene), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1930, p. 1.

that masturbation would endanger the racial health of the nation.⁶⁶

By the middle of the 1930s, discussions on race improvement reached an enlarged readership when they started to appear regularly in daily newspapers. In 1935, a Hong Kong daily heralded the imminent breeding of "scientific babies" by eugenic methods.⁶⁷ The same year, eugenic laws were explained in the *Xinwenbao*.⁶⁸ The *Central Daily* devoted two pages to the "Question of race improvement",⁶⁹ whereas the *New China Times* introduced heredity and eugenics to its readers.⁷⁰ Pan Guangdan wrote on "Eugenics and racial health" in the *Peking Morning*:⁷¹ a month later, the same newspaper published a paper analyzing the eugenic content of Chinese proverbs⁷² and an article urging philanthropists to pay more

⁶⁶ Review in *Yousheng yuekan* 2, no. 2 (February 1932), p. 5.

⁶⁷ "Renzhong gailiang xiansheng jiang you kexue yinghai chuxian" (First signs of race improvement: imminent appearance of scientific babies) in *Xianggang Gongshang*, 18 January 1935.

⁶⁸ Du He (pseud.), "Youshenglü" (Eugenic laws) in *Xinwenbao*, 12 May 1935.

⁶⁹ "Minzu gaizao wenti" (The problem of race reform) in *Zhongyang Ribao*, 20 August 1935.

⁷⁰ "Yichuan yu yousheng" (Heredity and eugenics) in *Shishi Xinbao*, 11 January 1935.

⁷¹ Pan Guangdan, "Yousheng yu minjianzukurang" (Eugenics and racial health) in *Beiping Chenbao*, 3 March 1935.

⁷² "Zhongguo yanyu zhong de yousheng jianjie" (Eugenic views in Chinese proverbs) in *Beiping Chenbao*, 7 April 1935.

attention to questions of race improvement.⁷³

Not everybody, however, believed in the regenerating virtues of eugenics. One of the first criticisms appeared in 1925 in the *Contemporary Critic*. The journal reproduced an essay attacking the idea of equality. According to the author, Pei Fuheng, social classes corresponded to natural inequalities that were genetically determined. Only thorough eugenic policies could eventually realize "equality at birth".⁷⁴ An anonymous critic castigated Pei Fuheng's naive views on eugenics, denied that science could interfere with human genes, and rejected heredity's dominance over environment. The final phrase of his incisive comment was a quotation in English: "It takes all sorts of people to make the world",⁷⁵ a commitment to pluralism quite unusual in China at that period.

Most anti-eugenic arguments gravitated towards the question of nature versus nurture. Opponents to the myth of race improvement lambasted the crude biological determinism underlying eugenic theories. You Xiong, writing in *The Ladies Journal* of 1925, gave equal importance to heredity and environment. Environment, however, was far easier to manipulate than the genetic

⁷³ Shen Songnian, "Zhenzheng cishanjia ying zhuyi youshengxue" (Real philanthropists should pay attention to eugenics) in *Beiping Chenbao*, 19 April 1935.

⁷⁴ "Bu pingdeng lü" (Laws on inequality) in *Xiandai pinglun* 1, no. 38 (August 1925), pp. 7-8.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

structure of a population, and could have more repercussions on the fate of humanity.⁷⁶

Most attacks came from population specialists. In 1928, a heated debate engaged between Sun Benwen, a PhD of New York University and professor of sociology at Fudan University, and Pan Guangdan. Sun stood entirely on the side of nurture,⁷⁷ and refuted Pan's biological determinism. Four main arguments emerged from Sun's scathing criticism: 1) man could not be considered an animal; 2) cultural influence could not be reduced to a biological characteristic; 3) IQ tests could not indicate inherited intelligence; 4) wealth and position could not be indicative of inherent abilities.⁷⁸ Sun found it difficult to gauge "intelligence" and doubted whether qualities such as "superior" and "inferior" existed at birth.⁷⁹ As eugenics had proved capable only of eliminating the so-called "unfit" elements of society, Sun drily suggested calling it a "science of inferior birth" (*lieshengxue*, as opposed to *youshengxue*, "science

⁷⁶ You Xiong, "Liyong tianbing yu huanjing de youshengxue" (A eugenic science using inheritance and environment) in *Funü zazhi* 11, no. 7 (July 1925), pp. 1276-1278.

⁷⁷ Sun Benwen, "Zai lun wenhua yu youshengxue" (Again about culture and eugenics) in *Shehui xuejie* 1, no. 2 (February 1927), pp. 1-8.

⁷⁸ Ru Song, "Ping youshengxue yu huanjinglun de lunzheng" (Reviewing the controversy between eugenics and environment) in *Ershi shiji* 1, no. 1 (February 1931), p. 60.

⁷⁹ Sun Benwen, *Renkoulun ABC* (ABC of population theories), Shanghai: *Shijie shuju*, 1928, pp. 109-111.

of superior birth"). Despite his critical attitude, Sun Benwen still professed a belief in the future possibility of breeding people like cattle.⁸⁰

Chen Tianbiao, also a researcher in population problems, judged that nature and nurture played equally important roles, and frowned on the eugenicists' idea of a predominant heredity.⁸¹ Chen was nevertheless eager to subscribe to the idea of a marriage ban on people with contagious diseases, the mentally disturbed, the feebleminded and the maimed (*sic*); he also advocated increased eugenic activities in China.⁸²

Xu Shilian, a respected specialist of population theories, opposed eugenics (*youyexue*), the science of environmental improvement, to eugenics (*youshengxue*), the pseudo-science of racial improvement.⁸³ Xu was critical of the scientific basis of most eugenicists' claims, and controverted the idea that there existed a relationship between social position and intellectual capacity.⁸⁴ Xu's rebuttal of eugenics was mainly based on Herbert Jennings' *Biological basis of human nature* (1930), a study that had gained fame by exposing the fallacies of

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁸¹ Chen Tianbiao, *Renkou wenti yanjiu* (Research on population problems), Shanghai: Liming shuju, 1930, pp. 33-34.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁸³ Xu Shilian, *Renkoulun gangyao* (Essentials of population theories), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1934, p. 267.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 273-275.

eugenics. On the other hand, Chen Da, one of the most respected sociologists of the Republican era,⁸⁵ imperturbably drew upon Goddard's *Feeblemindedness* and Tredgold's *Mental deficiency*,⁸⁶ the epitome of eugenic bigotry. These works had been discredited in the West by a growing body of anti-eugenic research, but were still used by the author in order to sanction his vision of race improvement.

In the West, a number of scientific researchers had been critical of eugenics since the first world war. Leading scientists like J.B.S. Haldane, Julian Huxley, Lancelot Hogben and Herbert Jennings had turned against eugenics and denounced the race and class prejudice it cultivated. G.K. Chesterton's essays, collected in the early nineteen-twenties into his *Eugenics and other evils*, became a "staple of the anti-eugenic arsenal on both sides of the Atlantic".⁸⁷

Apart from some isolated specialists active in the field of social sciences, little reflected this trend

⁸⁵ See Yuan Fang and Quan Weitian, "Sociologist Chen Da" in *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1981), pp. 59-74; Chen invited Pan Guangdan to lecture at Qinghua University in eugenics and sociology; the *Eugenics Monthly* published a letter written by Chen in support of the spread of eugenics and the foundation of eugenic journals; see *Yousheng yuekan* (*Eugenics monthly*) 2, no. 1 (January 1932), p. 28. Incidentally, both Chen Da and Pan Guangdan were closely related to Liang Qichao, who also lectured at Qinghua.

⁸⁶ Chen Da, *Renkou wenti* (*Population problems*), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1934, pp. 201-202.

⁸⁷ D.J. Kevles, *In the name of eugenics. Genetics and the use of human heredity*, New York: Alfred Knopf, 1985, p. 120.

among Chinese scientists. In his *Race improvement* (1936), Yu Jingrang voiced his concern about the declining birth-rate of the higher classes,⁸⁸ but separated himself from eugenic policies. It was only in the re-edition of 1947, however, that the author publicly denounced ^Nnazi eugenics, sterilization policies, and marriage restrictions of the so-called lower classes.⁸⁹

Eugenic enthusiasm

Only a few authors were openly opposed to eugenics. A good many, however, gave free rein to their class prejudice in expounding the most utopian visions of race improvement.

Zhang Junjun's *Reform of the Chinese race*, first published in 1935, was an exercise in race dissection. The original superior Han bloodstream had been submerged by successive strains of worthless barbarian blood. Inter-marriage and migrations had led to the progressive degeneration of the Chinese race.⁹⁰ Zhang diagnosed the race's illness by analyzing its height, weight, infant mortality, life expectancy, vitality, alimentation, character and spiritual defects. When compared to other

⁸⁸ Yu Jingrang, *Renzhong gailiang* (Improvement of the race), Shanghai: Zhengzhong shuju, 1947 (1st ed. 1936), p. 44.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, preface.

⁹⁰ Zhang Junjun's racial theories are treated in chapter five, "Race as Species".

countries situated between the 20th and 33th parallel (Burma, for instance, was inhabited by small, black, treacherous and lazy people⁹¹), it appeared that the Chinese were quite superior in intelligence, but not in physical strength. Statistics revealed that at least 50% of 13485 students tested were in poor physical shape.⁹² To remedy to the feebleness of the race, the author prescribed a stable nation with a strong, central government.⁹³

Eugenics was central to the reform of the race: dysgenic marriages had to be proscribed, whereas selective mating with superior elements of other races should be encouraged. A "Draft for the Implementation of Shenxi's Race Reform" was appended to Zhang's study. It included a plan for an Institute of Race Reform, consisting of seventeen departments, each being in charge of a specific field related to the province's racial health: general investigation, propaganda, eugenics, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, intelligence quotient, epidemic prevention, health checks, narcotics, alimentation, segregation, sports, sanitation, engineering, leisure, convalescence and talent training. The eugenics department was responsible for enacting eugenic laws. It had to register and investigate

⁹¹ Zhang Junjun, *Zhongguo minzu zhi gaizao* (The reform of the Chinese race), Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1937 (1st ed. 1935), p. 169.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 195.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 226 ff.

marriages, including family pedigrees, and could be consulted on matrimonial matters. It rewarded spiritually and physically "healthy" marriages and encouraged "superior births". Finally, it was responsible for preventing "unhealthy" marriages. "Unhealthy" marriages comprised unions in which one of the partners was 1) feebleminded, 2) mentally disordered, 3) afflicted with a communicable disease, 4) physically weak, 5) tuberculous, 6) inclined towards crime. The department in charge of intellectual quotient tests was expected to differentiate citizens into "intelligent" (*shangzhi*) and "stupid" (*xiayu*) people, an absurd dualization characteristic of the author's rigid and categoric approach to eugenics. The very terminology Zhang applied revealed the direct influence of the classics: "superior intelligence (*shangzhi*) and inferior stupidity (*xiayu*) cannot be changed", said the *Analects*.⁹⁴

Zhang Junjun's list of genetically defective elements equalled the worst of Western eugenic theories in vagueness. The term "feebleminded" (*dineng*) was a widespread term used indiscriminately for almost any type of mental deficiency. "Mentally disordered" (*shenjingbing*), still a favorite term of abuse nowadays, was left undefined, whereas "physically weak" (*shenti xuruo*) was nothing more than a convenient term applicable to any kind of person judged deleterious to society. Criminality perceived as a biological flaw reflected the

⁹⁴ Lunyu (*Analects*), Yanghuo, 17:3.

popular belief in the inheritance of behavioral traits: social pathology was rooted in the genes, not in society. It is possible to discern an historical continuity with traditional beliefs. In imperial China, families with a psychotic member were often excluded from the marital pool, as society emphasized the hereditary basis of mental disease.⁹⁵

In the West, the gradual reification of the spiritual sphere of life had transformed intelligence into an entity that was thought to be measurable. Belief in the measurement of intelligence was translated by the use of a strict terminology for all the "levels" of intelligence researchers thought to have discerned. Chinese eugenics, in comparison, remained vague. Drawing upon the traditional distinction between uneducated peasant masses and a cultured elite, the simplistic dichotomy between stupidity and intelligence was sufficient to serve its purpose. Rare were those who made the effort to distinguish various levels of intellectual deficiency. Ke Xiangfeng, for instance, classified the unfit into morons (*benzi*), imbeciles (*daizi*), and idiots (*chizi*), all corresponding to a different IQ level. Ke was an exception: he advocated for the "rationalization" of all population problems, and wanted "rational"

⁹⁵ Keh-ming Lin, "Traditional Chinese medical beliefs and their relevance for mental illness and psychiatry" in A. Kleinman and Liu Tsung-Yi, *Normal and abnormal behaviour in Chinese culture*, Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1981, pp. 106-107.

criteria for the classification of inferior elements.⁹⁶

Zhang Junjun advocated drastic measures to prevent the procreation of the elements he had so vaguely determined: segregation, exile and castration. Exile was derived from the long standing tradition of isolating criminals by sending them to the edges of the kingdom, far away from the civilized centre. Castration was the most cruel form of sterilization. The large majority of eugenists who eventually came to envisage sterilization prescribed vasectomy, which left the patient sterile but did not affect his sexual desires. Castration, on the other hand, was no less than the sexual zombification of a victim. Perhaps Zhang remembered the eunuchs while drafting his eugenic plan.

The study was concluded with extracts of letters of admiration and support for Zhang's eugenic project. Shao Lizi, governor of Shenxi province from 1933 to 1936, endorsed Zhang's "Draft for the Implementation of Shenxi's Race Reform". Other enthusiastic supporters included Zhang Xueliang, once the most powerful warlord of the north of China, then deputy commander in chief of operations against the communists in the north-west, Pan Gongzhan, an influential journalist and publisher, member of the Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang and future vice-minister of information, Cai Yuanpei, founder and president of the prestigious Academia Sinica, Chen

⁹⁶ Ke Xiangfeng, *Xiandai renkou wenti* (Modern population problems), Shanghai: Zhengzhong shuju, 1934, p. 381.

Lifu, head of the organization department of the Guomindang, and other high ranking officials. Eugenic ideas were of course fostered by the Guomindang, whose own New Life Movement was partly inspired by a preoccupation with a "strong race and a strong nation".⁹⁷ The Japanese invasion, however, was soon to plunge the country in a prolonged war that would push race reform plans into the background.

Zhang Junjun cited Hitler and German eugenic policies as a positive example for China, a country much more backward than Germany.⁹⁸ He was not, however, the only eugenicist who came to envision extreme measures for the advancement of the race. Wei Juxian, a respected scholar from Shanxi and author of a substantial article on the origins of the Han people, believed that the race was doomed to imminent extinction if some thorough eugenic policies were not immediately adopted.⁹⁹ A

⁹⁷ Jiang Zhongzheng (Jiang Jieshi), *Xinshenghuo yundong* (The New Life Movement), Shanghai: Zhengzhong shuju, 1935, pp. 27, 41. Pan Guangdan's study on the New Life Movement and eugenics (*Xinshenghuo yu youshengxue*) was planned for publication in the same series, but never appeared, presumably because of the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937.

⁹⁸ Zhang Junjun, *Zhongguo minzu*, p. 268. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* had been translated three times in 1935 already. Many biographies of Hitler and books on national socialism were published until the 1940's. The reception and interpretation of German nazism and Italian fascism in China from the 1930s up to the 1970s would undoubtedly be a fruitful and revealing research topic.

⁹⁹ The following is based on Wei Juxian, "Zhongguo minzu qiantu zhi shi de kaocha" (Study on the future of the Chinese race) in *Qiantu* 1, no. 10 (October 1933), pp. 17-18.

eugenic laboratory (renzhong gailiangsuo) would have to be established in every county. Young men and women reaching marital age would be selected by a qualified doctor who would allow strong and healthy people to have sexual intercourse. Pregnant women would remain under medical control until parturition, a crucial moment as "weak" products would be eliminated, whereas superior babies could be awarded with the title of "model person" (mofan ren). A product bred without supervision should be entitled taotai ren, "elimination person": its reproduction would be strictly prohibited as soon as model men made up two thirds of the population.

Wei Juxian's egregious travesty of eugenics drew largely upon the ^N nazi experience.¹⁰⁰ National ^S socialism

~~17-18.~~

¹⁰⁰ Many newspapers, including specialized medical periodicals, regularly reported on German eugenic matters. The *Zhonghua yixue zazhi* (Chinese medical journal), for instance, published a detailed account of the 1935 Nuremberg Laws, forbidding any kind of union between a Jew and a German (*Zhonghua yixue zazhi* 21, no. 10 (1935), pp. 1176-1177). Though these reports were mostly published without commentary, they were obviously filtered by the journal's own interests. Two months later, the same medical periodical reproduced a proposition of the Association of German Doctors concerning the establishment of Matchmaking Centres (*hunyin jieshaosuo*). These centres would guide young people in their search of partners, as celibacy was viewed as harmful to the race (*ibid.*, no. 12, p. 1474). Such suggestion echoed the journal's concern with marital matters and celibacy in China. While selecting a piece of information, the reporter operated out of the same cultural tradition as the reader, and tacitly imparted his own meaning to the message. ^N

For Japanese reactions to nazi ^N racial policies, see J.P. Fox, "Japanese reactions to nazi Germany's racial legislation" in *Wiener Library Bulletin* 23, no. 2-3 (1969), pp. 46-50, based on German sources.

improvement. His article explained in detail how eugenic laws in Germany had decreed the "forceful elimination" of entire categories of people judged deficient, such as sex criminals, incurable patients, feebleminded people, people afflicted with hereditary diseases, etc... Wei only regretted the German lack of determination, as their laws were not always carried out in a "thoroughgoing way". Though such wavering could be tolerated in the German case, a much firmer hand would be required for China if it wanted to resist the cultural, economic and military invasions of other nations.

According to William Kirby, who studied the relations between Republican China and Germany, most Chinese admirers of national socialism actually had few objections to nazi racism. Anti-semitism received relatively little attention, whereas the German concern with race was openly given as an example to emulate.¹⁰¹ In the West, nazi eugenics barely received any criticism until the middle of the 1930s. It was the barbarousness of German policies that eventually led to a strong reaction, nourished by a long-standing and influential anti-eugenic coalition from both secular and religious

¹⁰¹ W.C. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984, p. 167. An analysis of the nazi press in China, along with the translation of an anti-semitic pamphlet, appears in F. Kreissler, *L'action culturelle allemande en Chine: de la fin du XIX^e siècle à la seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1989, pp. 98-112, 269. Kreissler's study, however, only concerns the German community in China; there is no attempt to explore the Chinese reactions to German racial theories.

backgrounds.¹⁰² Paul Popenoe, then a leading eugenicist, later admitted that Hitlerism had been the major factor in the decline of eugenics during the 1930s.¹⁰³ As a result, race and eugenics became rapidly declining concepts in Western scholarship after 1936.

The fortunes of Chinese eugenics, however, suffered less from the nazi experience. After 1945, Chinese eugenicists continued to toy with outdated genetic concepts such as the inheritance of behavioural traits. Hao Qinming, for instance, concluded his textbook on heredity written for use on the university level by a paragraph entitled "The urge for race improvement".¹⁰⁴ Idiots (*chiyu*), demented people (*kuangdian*), epileptics, those afflicted with "detestable" diseases, the malformed and those suffering from hereditary diseases should all be strictly forbidden to marry. Intervention of a coercive nature was not imperative for people presenting minor infirmities like deafness, dumbness, blindness and baldness (*sic*): education would convince them of the necessity of voluntary sterilization. Moral injunction also guided the idea of rewarding "superior" parents breeding "intelligent" children.

In Europe, works like Lionel Penrose's pioneering

¹⁰² D.J. Kevles, *In the name of eugenics*, p. 118.

¹⁰³ D.K. Pickens, *Eugenics and the progressives*, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968, p. 99, n. 44.

¹⁰⁴ The following is based on Hao Qinming, *Yichuanxue (Genetics)*, Shanghai: Zhengzhong shuju, 1948, pp. 207-209.

study on the mentally deficient of Colchester (1938) had taken the field far beyond the naiveties of eugenics. The simplistic belief in the inheritance of intellectual and behavioral characteristics could no longer be held by any serious scientist writing in the post-World War II era. Hao Qinming's compilation of undesirable elements included many ill-defined and archaic terms like "idiots", "demented" or "people with detestable diseases". The author also expounded a theory on the differential birth-rates of "idiots" and "intellectuals". Idiots rapidly proliferated and threatened to outreproduce the intellectuals, thereby upsetting the fragile balance of society. Only sterilization en masse could ward off the menace of racial cretinism. By focussing narrowly on the idea of popular stupidity, Hao Qinming's eugenic theories echoed Wang Shiduo's nineteenth century views on the "foolishness" of the peasants.

As an exercise, Hao Qinming's students were asked to draft a plan for the implementation of eugenic policies on the provincial level. They were also required to produce a letter advising the legislative court to legalize sterilization.¹⁰⁵

Another example is Hu Buchan's widely read *Eugenics and human heredity*, first published in 1936 and republished several times until 1959 without textual alterations. Hu Buchan gave a succinct description of the

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

various methods of race improvement.¹⁰⁶ The Spartan method of physically eliminating infants judged unhealthy was cruel and contradicted the spirit of eugenics. Neo-Malthusianism and *laissez-faire* policies were both categorically rejected by the author. Education of the population and marriage restrictions were invaluable methods of improving the nation's racial stock, but had only a limited scope of efficiency. Polygamy was effective with farm animals, but was immoral and illegal when applied to human society. There remained segregation and sterilization as the only reliable eugenic techniques.

Hu Buchan, whose textbook provided a balanced account of the intricate mechanisms of human heredity, resisted the temptation of defining those he held for "unhealthy". His class bias, however, came to light in a chapter concerning birth control. Hu deplored the intellectuals' declining rate of birth. Though he admitted that there was no definite criterion for determining the superiority of the higher classes and the inferiority of the lower classes, he argued that most statistics had clearly revealed a higher IQ among the former.

Hu's class bias rested on social anxiety. He was filled with apprehension when encountering the lower

¹⁰⁶ This section is based on Hu Buchan, *Youshengxue yu renlei yichuanxue* (Eugenics and human genetics), Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1959 (1st ed. 1936), pp. 175-178.

classes: "The streets are full with beggars, carrying each other on the back, tramping around hand in hand; it is true that the poorer, the higher their rate of reproduction."¹⁰⁷ Hu carried the contrast between China's social classes a step further by comparing them to Rome: the ancient city had declined because the pure blooded Romans had voluntarily limited their births, whereas slaves and foreigners had multiplied without restriction. The author thus explicitly equalled the intellectuals to pure blooded nobles, downgrading other classes to the status of lewd slaves.¹⁰⁸

Conclusion

During the decade following the Sino-Japanese War of 1895, the reformers had fostered the ideal of a yellow lineage struggling against the white race. The tension between ideal and reality inherent in such perception resulted in its demise by the revolutionaries. After 1903-1904, young Chinese activists questioned the equality of all yellow races and narrowed their perception down to the Han race. With the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty and the foundation of the Republic in 1911, however, dissatisfaction with China's newly created

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

¹⁰⁸ Elsewhere, the author generously extended the notion of pure blood (*chunxue*) to the entire Chinese "race", regardless of class distinctions. Westerners and Japanese, on the other hand, were all of "mixed blood" (*hunxue*); *ibid.*, p. 118.

self-image quickly reappeared. Foreign encroachments continued unabated; the fear of racial extinction remained the constant preoccupation of many intellectuals. Some found it necessary to reject the idea of a united Han nation and to focus on class differences within the race. The pressure of the superiority-inferiority complex felt by many educated Chinese was relieved by dichotomization: intellectuals were designated as the superior elements of the race whereas the lower classes were branded inferior. By transferring the myth of superiority from race to class, the intellectuals set themselves up as a privileged social group, holder of racial purity. The task of the eugenicists was to eliminate the inferior classes or to raise them to the level of the superior class: in both cases, the nation's purity would be recovered and its superiority regained. The popularity of eugenics among the educated classes thus reflected both their concern with national revival and their search of a new self-image. The adoption of its theory was facilitated by the Chinese distrust of individualism, disbelief in democracy, and absence of a religion disregarding bodily attributes in favour of a paramount spirit. The traditional hierarchy that sharply distinguished between educated scholars and uneducated peasants also contributed to its emergence during the 1920s.

Eugenics, however, remained narrowly confined to the realm of ideas. It never achieved organizational

expression, nor did it ever affect practical politics. Its defenders, as well as its critics, were ideologues, not scientists.

Eugenics, moreover, never worked. It was only after 1949 that the concepts of race and class would merge, giving the country a new sense of identity and a recovered national independence.

7

EPILOGUE

RACE AS CLASS (1949-?)

"In Africa, in Asia, in every part of the world there is racism; in reality, racial problems are class problems."¹

Racial theories and racial discrimination were expressly forbidden by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949.² The communists' distrust of the association of anthropology with imperialism and colonialism led to the suspension of the departments where it was taught by the end of 1949. "Bourgeois" social sciences like anthropology and sociology were finally proscribed in 1952.³ Propaganda under the supervision of reformed anthropologists attempted to rectify racist attitudes and

¹ Mao Zedong, "Mao zhuxi jiejian Feizhou pengyou fabiao zhichi Meiguo heiren douzheng de shengming" (Chairman Mao meets our African black friends and issues a statement in support of the American blacks' struggle) in *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily), 9 August 1963, p. 1.

² Ubukata Naokichi, "Chūgoku ni okeru jinshu sabetsu no kinshi" (On the prohibition of racial discrimination in China) in *Hikakuhō kenkyū* 6 (April 1953), pp. 40-46.

³ See R.K. Wu and C.H. Liu, "The history of physical anthropology in China" in *Homo* 35 (1984), pp. 127-134; Wu Rukang, "Antropologičia v Kitae" in *Sovietskaia Antropologičia* 3, no. 1 (1959), pp. 107-112.

to eliminate racial thinking from the humanities.⁴

Some anthropologists came under bitter attack after the anti-rightist campaign in 1957. They were accused of having used disrespectful anthropometrical methods that had insulted the national minorities; it was also suspected that many of their studies were meant to prove racist ideas of minority inferiority.⁵

Though the idea of racial exclusiveness became taboo, the underlying ideas that had led to its expression failed to disappear. The messianic idea of a universal mission of unification (the *datong*, or "One World" ideal) was now expressed in a phraseology based on the concept of class struggle, whereas the artificial dichotomization between Chinese and Westerners in biological terms of "race" was merely reformulated in social terms of "class". Eugenic theories were increasingly applied to social origins: one was "born red". During the Cultural Revolution, blood-lineage theories appeared to prove the biological inheritance of class attitudes. Traditional proverbs often invoked in eugenic circles during the 1920s and 30s resurfaced: "a

⁴ See for instance Zhou Jianren, *Lun youshengxue yu zhongzu qishi* (About eugenics and racial discrimination), Peking: Sanlian shudian, 1950.

⁵ G.E. Guldin, "Chinese anthropologies" in *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology* 20, no. 4 (Summer 1988), p. 9. On the relationship between anthropology and the minorities, see also G. Gjessing, "Chinese anthropology and New China's policy toward her minorities" in *Acta Sociologica* 2, no. 1 (1956), pp. 45-68.

phoenix begets phoenixes, a wolf begets wolves."⁶

Communist propaganda fostered the idea that Westerners only could indulge in racism, as the Chinese were now the leaders of the victimized "coloured" people in the historical struggle against "white" imperialism. The accusation of white racism became an important ingredient of anti-imperialist propaganda, which reached almost hysterical proportions during the Korean War⁷ and the Cultural Revolution. Louis Barcata reported a meeting with some Chinese intellectuals in 1967, and was particularly struck by a professor from Shanghai:

"Whatever his views on domestic issues, in foreign policy the professor stood by Mao unconditionally. He hated the Russians who, he claimed, behaved more like opponents than comrades. He regarded the Vietnam conflict as a "holy war", and as the prelude to an inevitable conflict between the races. For this professor, who had done some traveling in the world, and who had once gone to South Africa to study apartheid, the white man is the only creature on earth whose behavior is fundamentally warped, whose being suffers from a mechanical flaw; the white man is the "greatest source of discord in all creation".

The others who took part in the discussion agreed with him completely. I was taken aback by the very vehemence of their posture. These seven men saw the history of mankind as nothing but a sequence of brutal injustices inflicted by the white man on the colored peoples of the

⁶ See for instance Gao Yuan, *Born red. A chronicle of the Cultural Revolution*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987, pp. 84, 113, 119, 122, 209.

⁷ For example Choushi Meidi, *bishi Meidi, mieshi Meidi* (Hate American imperialism, disdain American imperialism, despise American imperialism), Shanghai: Wenhuibao, 1950, p. 39, reviewing racism against Blacks, Jews, Mexicans, Indians, Japanese, Chinese, Puerto-Ricans, Filipinos, and others.

world. These Chinese intellectuals were convinced that the coming world conflict would be ignited not solely by an ideological confrontation but by racial antagonism. It would be an epic struggle between the races -an Armageddon in which China would lead the exploited colored peoples in their battle against the powers of white reaction."⁸

In Africa, the Chinese initially tried to capitalize on a common racial identity, urging that "we blacks stick together" against the white race,⁹ an idea which was met with scepticism from the African side. Acting troupes endeavoured to propagate the idea of racial solidarity. This is a play in Rwanda in the early 1960s:

"A tableau depicted a black man sitting on a throne; a Chinese actor with a white mask then entered and knocked him off (groans from crowd). A Chinese with no mask entered, knocks the "white man" in turn off the throne, picks up the African from the ground and helps him back on to the throne (cheers from crowd)"¹⁰

Despite the communist imagery of racial harmony and unity of the underdog, the Chinese mainly adopted an aloof and exclusive attitude during their stay in Africa.

Blacks studying in China also complained about racism. Hevi, a student from Ghana in China in the early 1960s, gave testimony of the continuous discrimination

⁸ L. Barcata, *China in the throes of the Cultural Revolution*, New York: Hart Publishing Company, 1968, pp. 193-194.

⁹ A. Hutchison, *China's African revolution*, London: Hutchinson, 1975, p. 179.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 192, n. 3.

blacks had to endure in China. He perceived paternalism as an important form of racism: "In all their dealings with us the Chinese behaved as if they were dealing with people from whom normal intelligence could not be expected."¹¹ Frictions between African students and Chinese have increased since the reform program launched by Deng Xiaoping a decade ago, sometimes leading to violent clashes involving casualties on both sides.

Racial thinking in China has tended to reappear during periods of internal and external tension. During the Sino-Soviet rift, race made an honourable come-back with a communist party increasingly harping on the theme of biological differences between Russians and Chinese.¹² Racial hatred reached a peak during the Third Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference in February 1963, when the Chinese delegates vehemently insisted that the "white" Russians would never commit themselves entirely to the anti-imperialist struggle.¹³ When the Soviet Union later

¹¹ E.J. Hevi, *An African student in China*, London: Pall Mall Press, 1963, p. 187. Many racist incidents, like a professional doctor asking why his skin was still so black if he ever washed, led Hevi to the conclusion that the Chinese people were either supremely ignorant or supremely ill-intentioned; *ibid.*, p. 187.

¹² "Her insistence that the Soviet Union is not an Asian country and is thus unqualified for Afro-Asian leadership stops just short of open racism", noted Ishwer Ojha; I.C. Ojha, *Chinese foreign policy in an age of transition*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1969, p. 214. See also W.J. Parente, "Communism and the problem of race: from propaganda theme to polycentric factor", unpubl. PhD, Georgetown University, 1970.

¹³ H. Brahm, "Pekings Spiel mit der Rassenfrage" in *Osteuropa* 15 (November-December 1965), p. 816.

signed a treaty on atomic tests with the United States and the United Kingdom, the Chinese interpreted it as an affront against the coloured people of the world.

With the gradual rapprochement of the two super-powers nowadays, the idea of racial identity could again prove to be dangerously tempting in an isolated China.

AFTERTHOUGHT

The myth of race is hard to strangle. The discernable physical differences between population groups have led all too easily to sterile theories of biological determinism in both the West and China. Chinese racial theories were never translated into practise with the gruesome efficiency characteristic to certain Western countries, but they were based on the same prejudices. Although the idea of race is situated on the periphery of Chinese thought systems, it has shown singular resilience throughout history and has tended to drift towards the centre in periods of insecurity.

Racial prejudice, however, is but one of the aspects of the ethnocentric syndrome in human societies. To allow for any comparative study, the perspective adopted in this thesis should be broadened to include the cultural features of intergroup behaviour characterized by ethnocentrism in modern China. The defensive reactions against the intrusion of a foreign set of values should be examined. This should involve more than the examination of "conservative" attitudes in modern China: it should analyse the conceptual liquidation of foreign ideas perceived as a threat to the established mental universe in which people were expected to operate.

On the other hand, our understanding of racial

problems in the modern world would greatly benefit from more comparative studies with non-Western countries, especially with Japan, a country which has emphasized racial differences since the Meiji Revolution (1861). Such studies could clarify the common roots of racial perceptions in rice-growing cultures of the Far-East. Whereas the word race derives from the vocabulary of animal-breeding in most European languages, zhong ("seed", "to sow"), or shu in Japanese, belongs to the agricultural terminology.

Though it would certainly be premature to draw any broad conclusions on the basis of the foregoing thesis, the idea of race has obviously had an impact on all advanced societies, including China. It has vitiated the ideal of harmony and equality present in all complex civilizations, impeding societies to break free from prejudice and to transcend their insularity. It has reinforced fear and ignorance. As wrote Yang Lien-sheng, racism should be "spelled out in order to be dispelled".¹⁴

¹⁴ Yang Lien-sheng, "Historical notes on the Chinese world order" in J.K. Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese world order: traditional China's foreign relations*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968, p. 27.

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abbreviations

- DFZZ Dongfang zazhi
FNZZ Funü zazhi
XDPL Xiandai pinglun
YBSWJ Liang Qichao, Yinbingshi wenji
YBSZJ Liang Qichao, Yinbingshi zhuanji
YPZZ A Ying, Yapian zhanzheng wenxue

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GLOSSARY

aizhongaiguo	愛種愛國
airenzhong	矮人種
baigui	白鬼
baihuo	白禍
baizhong	白種
bang	棒
Bao Shichen	包石臣
baozhong	保種
baozhongcunwen	保種存文
benzi	笨子
Bi Gongchen	畢拱辰
Bixie jishi	辟邪紀實
biyan yinu	碧眼夷奴
biyanwuxu	碧眼烏鬚
Binchun	斌椿
bingzhan	兵戰
Bo Yang	柏楊
Cai Yuanpei	蔡元培
cengqi	層期
Changyanbao	昌言報
Chen Changheng	陳長衡
Chen Da	陳達
Chen Darong	陳大榕
Chen Jianshan	陳兼善
Chen Lifu	陳立夫
Chen Liang	陳亮
Chen Lunjiong	陳倫炯
Chen Tianbiao	陳天表
Chen Tianhua	陳天華
Chen Xiang	陳相
Chen Yinghuang	陳映璜
chiyu	痴愚
chizi	痴子
chunyu	蠢愚
Chunqiu	春秋

chunxue 純血
 Confucius 孔子

 dahuang 大荒
 datong 大同
 Datongshu 大同書
 Daqin 大秦
 daizi 呆子
 daoyi 島夷
 Deng Mu 鄧牧
 Deng Xiaoping 鄧小平
 Di 狄
 didu 帝都
 difu 帝服
 dineng 低能
 diqi 地氣
 dianfu 甸服
 dingwei 定位
 Ding Wenjiang 丁文江
 dōbun 同文
 dōshu 同種
 Dongxi yangkao 東西洋考
 Du Yaquan 杜亞泉
 Du You 杜佑
 Duan Chengshi 段成式
 duomin 墮民
 duoyuan 多元

 fagui 法鬼
 fangui 番鬼
 Fang Xiaoru 方孝孺
 fei lishi de zhongzu 非歷史的種族
 fei renlei 非人類
 feiwo zulei qi xin bi yi 非我族類其心必異
 Fei Xiaotong 費孝通
 fenlei xiedou 分類械鬥
 Feng Guifen 馮桂芬
 fubing bao 賦稟簿

 gerenzhuyi 個人主義
 geyi 格義
 Gezhi huibian 格致彙編
 gengzhan 耕戰
 gongminhua 公民化
 Gong Tingzhang 宮廷璋

Gongyang 公羊
 gouwei 狗尾
 Gu Huan 顧歡
 Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛
 Gu Shoubai 顧壽白
 Gu Yanwu 顧炎武
 guinu 鬼奴
 guizhong 貴種
 guo 國
 guocui 國粹
 guojiezhongjie 國界種界
 Guomindang 國民黨

Haidao yizhi 海島夷誌
 Haiguo wenjianlu 海國聞見錄
 Hailu 海錄
 Han 漢
 hanhua 漢化
 Han Yu 韓愈
 Hao Qinming 郝欽銘
 He Chengtian 何承天
 hequn 合群
 He Xiu 何休
 hezhong 合種
 heigui 黑鬼
 heinu 黑奴
 heinu zhongzu 黑奴種族
 heisi 黑廝
 Hirayama Shū 平山周
 Hong Liangji 洪亮吉
 hongmaofan 紅毛番
 hongyi 紅夷
 houfu 侯服
 Houhanshu 後漢書
 Hu Buchan 胡步蟾
 Hu Han 胡漢
 Hu Huanyong 胡煥庸
 huren 胡人
 Hu Zongyuan 胡宗瑗
 huaxia zhi guo 華夏之國
 huanchang 換腸
 huangfu 荒服
 huanghuo 黃禍
 Huang Jie 黃節
 huanglan 黃藍

huangse 黃色
Huangshu 黃書
Huang Zhenxia 黃震遐
huangzhong 黃種
huangzu 黃族
Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲
Huainanzi 淮南子
huibai 灰白
hundun 混沌
hunxue 混血
hunyin jieshaosuo 婚姻介紹所

jifu shenhei 肌膚甚黑
jile shijie 極樂世界
Jiaren qiye 佳人奇遇
Jia Yi 賈誼
jiazuzhuyi 家族主義
jiancui 堅脆
jianmin 賤民
jianqi 間氣
jianse 間色
Jianzhen 鑑真
jianzhong 賤種
Jiang Xiangqing 蔣湘青
jieji 階級
Jin 晉
Jin He 金和
Jinshu 晉書
jinzhong zhi xue 進種之學
Jin Zizhi 金子直
jing 精
jingshi 經世
Jingshi wenchao 經世文潮
jingqi 精氣
jiuxing yuhu 九姓漁戶
juezen 絕畛

Kang Youwei 康有為
Kashiwabara Bantarō 柏原文太郎
kuangdian 狂顛
kunlun 崑崙
kunlun cengqi 崑崙層期

laihua 來化
Lang 郎

Laozi 老子
 lehu 樂戶
 lei 類
 li 鬲
 Li 黎
 Li Chunsheng 李春生
 Li Dazhao 李大釗
 Li Gui 李圭
 Li Hongzhang 李鴻章
 Liji 禮記
 limin 黎民
 Li Xuezheng 李學曾
 Li Yu 李漁
 Li Zhongkui 李仲揆
 Li Zongwu 李宗武
 Li Zubai 李祖白
 lian 臉
 Liang Boqiang 梁伯強
 liangmin 良民
 Liang Qichao 梁啟超
 Liangshu 梁書
 liangzhong 良種
 liedeng dongwu 劣等動物
 liedeng zhongzu 劣等種族
 Lienuzhuan 列女傳
 lieshengxue 劣生學
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 miezhong 滅種
 miezu 滅族
 Min 閩
 minzu 民族
 minzokushugi 民族主義
 minzuzhuyi 民族主義
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 Panhu 槃瓠
 Pei Fuheng 裴復恆
 Pingzhou ketan 萍洲可談

qi 氣
 qifen 氣分
 Qisi zhenquan 祈嗣真詮
 qishi 歧視
 Qiawa 卡瓦
 Qianhanshu 前漢書
 Qiang 羌
 qinshou zhi guo 禽獸之國
 Qing 清
 qingbai 清白
 qingjie 清潔
 qinglei 清類
 Qingyibao 清議報
 Quanrong 犬戎
 qun 群
 quncequnli 群策群力
 qunli 群力
 qunxue 群學

Rangshu 讓書
 ren 人
 ren 仁
 renli 人鬲
 renyan 人言
 Renxue 仁學
 renzi 人自
 ren zhi rong jiehei 人之容皆黑
 renzhong 人種
 renzhongbu 人種部
 renzhong gailiang 人種改良
 renzhong gailiangsuo 人種改良所
 renzhong gailiangxue 人種改良學
 Rong 戎
 Ru Chunpu 茹春浦

Sanpolun 三破論
 Sanshouguo 三首國
 Shanhaijing 山海經
 Shang Yang 商鞅
 shangzhan 商戰
 shangzhi 上智
 Shao Lizi 邵力子
 shenjingbing 神經病
 shenqi 神氣
 shenqu 神區
 shen ru heiqi 身如黑漆
 shenti xuruo 身體虛弱
 shengfan 生番
 shengfanzhong 生番種
 Shengwuji 聖武記
 Shiba Shiro 柴四郎
 Shijing 史經
 Shiwubao 時務報
 shizu 始祖
 shou 獸
 shufan 熟番
 Shujing 書經
 Shuoqun 說群
 Shuowen 說文
 sihai 四海
 siyi 四夷
 Song 宋
 suifu 綏服
 Suishu 隋書

Sun Benwen 孫本文
 Sun Yatsen 孫逸仙

 Tai Baixian 太白仙
 taijiao 胎教
 taijiaoyuan 胎教院
 Taiping guangji 太平廣記
 Tan Sitong 譚嗣同
 Tang 唐
 Tang Caichang 唐才常
 Tao Menghe 陶孟和
 taotairen 淘汰人
 tianfu 天賦
 tianming 天命
 tianqi 天氣
 tianran xuanze 天然選擇
 Tianxia jinguo libingshu 天下郡國利病書
 tian zhi jiaozi 天之驕子
 Tiehan xinshi 鐵函心史
 Tōa Dōbun Kai 東亞同文會
 tong 銅
 Tongdian 通典
 Tong Runzhi 童潤之
 tongwentongzhong 同文同種
 tongzhong 同種
 Tufan 吐蕃

 wai 外
 Wanguo gongbao 萬國公報
 Wanguo shiji 萬國史記
 Wang Dahai 王大海
 Wang Fuzhi 王夫之
 wangguomiezong 亡國滅種
 Wang Hualong 王華隆
 Wang Kaiyun 王_凱運
 Wang Mang 王莽
 Wang Qingren 王清任
 Wang Shiduo 汪士鐸
 Wang Yan 王衍
 Wang Zhongyang 汪仲洋
 Wei Juxian 衛聚賢
 weisheng 衛生
 Wei Yuan 魏源
 wen 文
 wenhua xuanze 文化選擇

Wenxian tongkao 文獻通考
 Wen Yiduo 聞 一 多
 wonu 倭奴
 wu 物
 wucai 五菜
 Wu Dingliang 吳定良
 wujin 五金
 wuguan 五管
 wuwei 五味
 wuxiang 五香
 wuxing 五行
 Wu Zelin 吳澤霖
 Wu Zhihui 吳稚暉

 xi 哲
 xiren 西人
 Xixia 西夏
 xiayu 下愚
 Xia Yuzhong 夏宇眾
 Xiangxue xinbao 湘學新報
 xiao heinu zhongzu 小黑奴種族
 xiedou 械鬥
 xieqi 邪氣
 Xie Qinggao 謝清高
 Xinminshuo 新民說
 Xinshiji 新世紀
 Xinwenbao 新聞報
 Xinyijie 新譯界
 xing 姓
 xingchou 腥臭
 xingfeng 腥風
 Xiongnu 匈奴
 Xu Jiyu 徐繼畲
 Xu Shidong 徐時棟
 Xu Shilian 許仕廉
 Xue Deyu 薛德煜
 xuetong 血統
 Xunzi 荀子

 yacui 亞粹
 Yamada Ryōsei 山田良政
 Yan 炎
 Yan Fu 顏復
 Yan Shigu 顏師古
 yang 洋

yanggui 洋鬼
yangguizi 洋鬼子
Yang Guangxian 楊光先
yaofen 妖氛
ye 野
Ye Shi 葉適
yeren 野人
Ye Xuesheng 葉血生
Yi 夷
Yidi zhi guo 夷狄之國
Yi Jiayue 易家鉞
yimin 遺民
Yimuguo 一目國
Yi Nai 易鼐
Yixialun 夷夏論
yiyuan 一元
yin 陰
Yin 殷
Yinghuan zhilue 瀛環志略
Yingzhao 英招
Yingya shenglan 瀛涯勝覽
Yongle 永樂
yongxiabianyi 用夏變夷
Yongzheng 雍正
you lishi de zhongzu 有歷史的種族
youshengliebai 優勝劣敗
youshengxue 優生學
You Jiade 游嘉德
You Xiong 幼雄
youxiu 優秀
Youyang zazu 西陽雜俎
youyexue 優業學
youzhong 優種
yu 愚
Yu Jingrang 于景讓
Yuqian 裕謙
Yu Zhengxie 俞正燮
Yuan 元
Yuan Huang 袁黃
Yuan Shunda 袁舜達
Yung Wing 容閔

Zeng 曾
Zeng Guangquan 曾廣銓
Zhang Binglin 張炳麟

Zhang Deyi 張德彝
 Zhang Junjun 張君俊
 Zhang Junli 張君勵
 Zhang Xie 張燮
 Zhang Xinglang 張星痕
 Zhang Xueliang 張學良
 Zhang Zhidong 張之洞
 Zhang Ziping 張資平
 Zhang Zuoren 張作人
 Zhao Rugua 趙汝適
 zhe 緒
 Zheng Chang 鄭昶
 Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功
 Zheng He 鄭和
 Zheng Xuan 鄭玄
 zhengqi 正氣
 Zheng Sixiao 鄭思肖
 Zhibao 直報
 Zhigang 志剛
 zhishi jieji 知識階級
 Zhongguo 中國
 Zhongguo yousheng xuehui 中國優生學會
 zhonghuo 種禍
 zhongqu 中區
 zhongxing 種性
 zhongzhan 種戰
 zhongzheng 種爭
 zhongzu jingzheng 種族競爭
 zhongzu qishi 種族歧視
 zhongzu sixiang 種族思想
 zhongzu wu bie 種族無別
 zhongzu zhian 種族治安
 zhou 洲
 Zhou 周
 Zhou Jianren 周建人
 Zhou Qichang 周其昌
 Zhou Qufei 周去非
 Zhufanzhi 諸蕃誌
 Zhu Weiji 朱維基
 Zhu Xi 朱洗
 zhuxia 諸夏
 Zhu Yu 朱彧
 zhun heinu zhongzu 準黑奴種族
 zise 紫色
 zitangse 紫膛色
 Zou Rong 鄒容
 zu 族
 Zuozhuan 左傳