

INTRODUCTION TO  
ASIAN CIVILIZATIONS  
Wm. Theodore de Bary, EDITOR

Sources of  
Chinese  
Tradition

VOLUME II

*Compiled by*

WM. THEODORE DE BARY

WING-TSIT CHAN

CHESTER TAN

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## EXPLANATORY NOTE

The sources of translations given at the beginning of each selection are rendered as concisely as possible. Full bibliographical data can be obtained from the list of sources in the clothbound edition. In the reference at the head of each selection, unless otherwise indicated, the author of the book is the writer whose name precedes the selection. Where excerpts have been taken from existing translations, they have sometimes been adapted or edited in the interests of uniformity with the book as a whole.

Chinese words and names are rendered according to the modified Wade-Giles system of romanization which has become standard in American sinological publications. An exception to this appears in the names of certain Neo-Confucian philosophers where the syllable *i* has been converted to *yi* in order to avoid possible confusion for the non-sinologist. Indic words appearing in the chapters on Buddhism as technical terms or titles in italics follow the standard system of transliteration found in Louis Renou's *Grammaire Sanskrite* (Paris, 1930), pp. xi-xiii, with the exception that here *ś* is regularly used for *ç*. To facilitate pronunciation, other Sanskrit terms and proper names appearing in roman letters are rendered according to the usage of Webster's New International Dictionary, 2d edition, Unabridged, except that here the macron is used to indicate long vowels and the Sanskrit symbols for *ś* (*ç*) and *ṣ* are uniformly transcribed as *sh*. Similarly, the standard Sanskrit transcription of *c* is given as *ch*.

Chinese names are rendered in their Chinese order, with the family name first and the personal name last. Dates given after personal names are those of birth and death except in the case of rulers whose reign dates are preceded by "r." Generally the name by which a person was most commonly known in Chinese tradition is the one used in the text. Since this book is intended for the general reader, rather than the specialist, we

have not burdened the text with a list of the alternate names or titles which usually accompany biographical reference to a scholar in Chinese or Japanese historical works.

W. T. DE B.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

### *China and the New World*

- 1839-1842 Anglo-Chinese (Opium) War.
- 1839 Lin Tse-hsü (1785-1850), Imperial Commissioner at Canton.
- 1844 First publication of *Illustrated Gazetteer of the Maritime Countries* by Wei Yüan (1794-1856).
- 1850-1864 Taiping Rebellion.
- 1861 Essay on reform by Feng Kuei-fen (1809-1874).
- 1862-1874 T'ung-chih reign. Rise of influence of Empress Dowager Tz'u-hsi. Suppression of Taiping, Nien, and Muslim rebellions. Calls for reform by Wang T'ao (1828-1897), Tseng Kuo-fan (1811-1872), and Li Hung-chang (1823-1901).
- 1894-1895 Sino-Japanese War.
- 1897 Publication of *Confucius as a Reformer* by K'ang Yu-wei (1858-1927).
- 1898 Peak of European scramble for concessions. The Hundred Days of Reform, ending in exile of K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao (1873-1929) and death of T'an Ssu-t'ung (1865-1898). *Exhortation to Learn*, by Chang Chih-tung (1837-1909).
- 1900 Boxer Rebellion.
- 1902 Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's journal, *A New People*, begun.
- 1905 *T'ung-meng hui* founded, Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), president; its manifesto on Three People's Principles issued.
- 1906 Traditional civil service examination abolished.
- 1911 Republic proclaimed.
- 1916 Failure of Yüan Shih-k'ai's attempt to restore monarchy. Ch'en Tu-hsiu (1879-1942), editor of *The New Youth*.
- 1917 Literary revolution proposed by Hu Shih (1891-).
- 1919 May 4 Movement.
- 1921 Chinese Communist Party founded.
- 1923 Debate on science and the philosophy of life. Reorganization of Kuomintang with Soviet help and advice.
- 1924 Sun Yat-sen's lectures on Three People's Principles.
- 1926 Beginning of northern expedition of Kuomintang.
- 1927 Mao Tse-tung's "Report" on the Hunan Peasant Movement.
- 1931 Japanese expansion in Manchuria.
- 1934 Suppression of Kiangsi Soviet and beginning of Long March of Communists. Launching of Chiang Kai-shek's New Life Movement.

- 1935 Establishment of Communist headquarters at Yen-an.
- 1936 Sian incident: kidnapping of Chiang Kai-shek followed by United Front of Nationalist government and Communist Party.
- 1937 Marco Polo Bridge incident, expanding into Japanese occupation of coastal China and Yangtze valley.
- 1938 Chungking made wartime capital.
- 1943 Chiang Kai-shek's *China's Destiny*. Beginning of Communist Party reform movement at Yen-an.
- 1945 End of Pacific War.
- 1949 Withdrawal of Nationalist government to Taiwan; founding of Communists' "People's Republic." Mao's "Dictatorship of the People's Democracy."
- 1957 The "Hundred Flowers" campaign launched by Mao Tse-tung's speech on "The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People."

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## CHAPTER XX

# THE OPENING OF CHINA TO THE WEST

The year 1839, which saw the opening of the Opium War between Britain and China, is the great turning point in China between old and new. It marks the end of China's long existence as an independent civilization, free to disregard what took place beyond the borders of the Central Kingdom, and its emergence into a world of rapid, irresistible change. The new China might be slow in coming and still constantly stalked by its past, but the outcome of this historic encounter was to insure that, eventually and inevitably, dynamic forces from the West would have a large part in shaping its future.

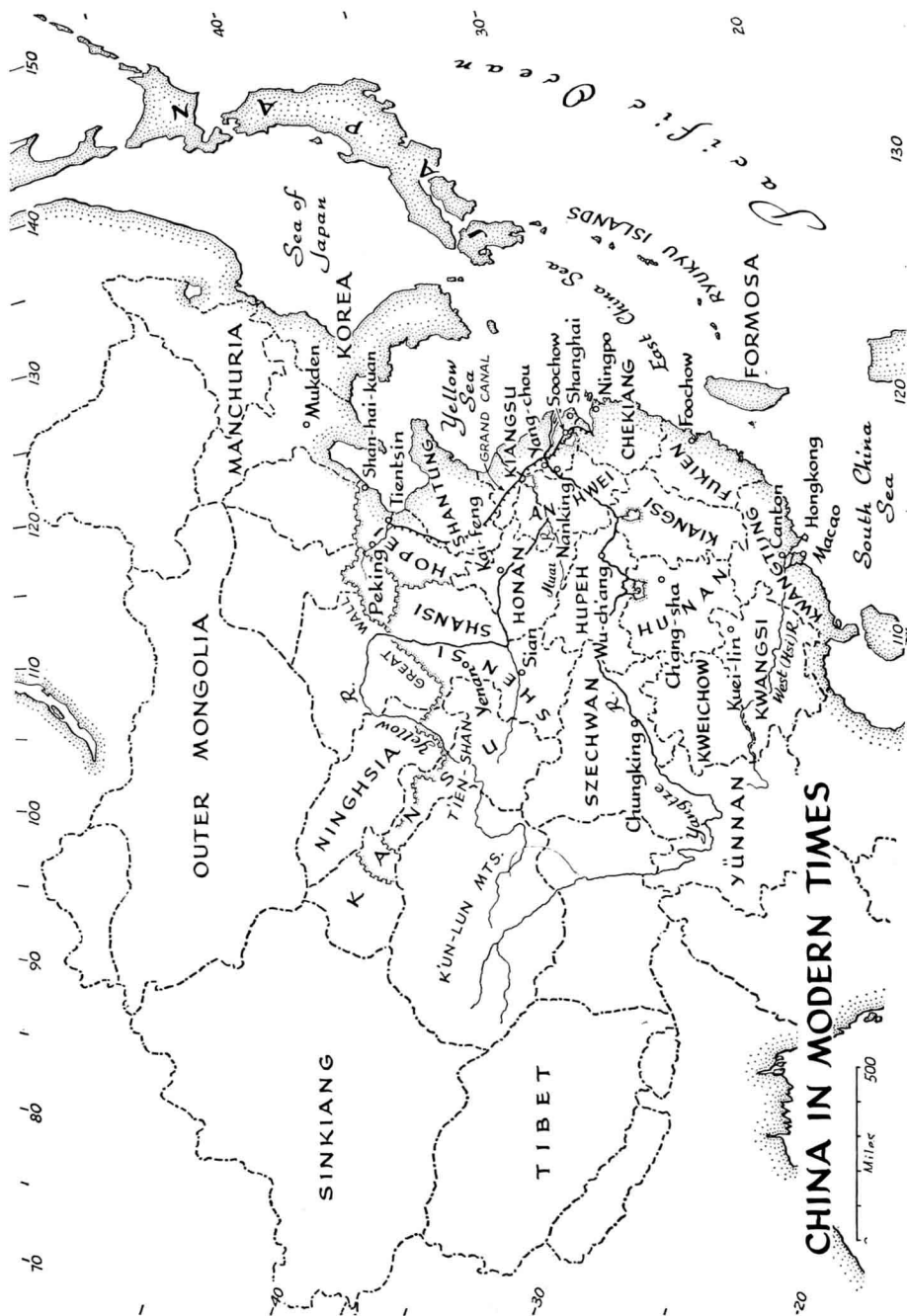
Up to this time, for almost three centuries since the first arrival of the Portuguese off South China, the Chinese court had succeeded in dealing with Westerners on its own terms. Trade was confined to a few ports where agents of the court could regulate it strictly and tax it heavily. This indeed was the traditional pattern of state control over commerce, whether foreign or domestic—a system designed to hold it under close supervision, to keep the merchant in an inferior status, to subordinate commerce to the interests of the state, and to obtain a maximum in revenue while assuming a minimum of responsibility on the part of the imperial bureaucracy for the actual conduct of trade (which was handled by licensed merchants in accordance with the age-old practice for state monopolies). Many of the disadvantages of such a system from the trader's point of view were not, therefore, disabilities specially imposed on foreigners and calculated to harrass them, but simply limitations inherent in the "regular" conditions of doing business in China. Chinese merchants, for their part, had long since learned to live with them. Westerners, especially British traders in the early nineteenth century, remained restive under these restrictions

and resentful of them. Imbued with the spirit of a rising English middle class, believing in free trade and the near-sacredness of property, they ran up against a regime which recognized neither of these as basic principles and a way of life in which the pursuit of profit was actually scorned as ignoble.

If the established pattern for foreign trade had such disadvantages for the merchant, it involved difficulties for the government as well. Burdensome taxes and restrictions were an invitation for enterprising and resourceful persons to engage in smuggling. Smuggling, moreover, could prove lucrative not only for the direct participants but for local officials as well, who could be bribed to keep hands off the illegal traffic. These factors help to explain why it should have proven so difficult for the government to put an end to the opium trade in spite of repeated bans on its importation and sale. The state was not merely in conflict with foreigners, who found opium from India and the Near East a wonder-drug in curing the chronic imbalance of trade with China, but with its own members whose self-interest led them to "squeeze" the traffic for their personal benefit rather than stamp it out for the good of all.

On the other hand, the "self-interest" of foreigners participating in the China trade was not wholly bound up with the marketing of opium, and it is possible that intelligent negotiation would have brought about gradual reduction in imports of the drug, while other articles, especially manufactured goods, took the place of opium in the trade. Unfortunately, the traditional conduct of foreign relations by the Chinese court was confined largely to tribute-relations with states looked upon as "vassals" of the emperor. There was no inclination to establish equal relations with the Western powers or to enter into negotiations which might lead to an abridgement of the emperor's absolute power to deal with foreigners as he would with his own subjects. For want of such a middle ground on which to meet, the means were lacking whereby to resolve the constant conflicts which arose in contacts between Chinese and foreigners over differing conceptions of justice and equity.

Under these circumstances a stalemate was no solution. The evils of the opium traffic were so far-reaching that the Chinese could ignore them only at great peril. Meanwhile the impossibility of China's maintaining its traditional isolationist policy made imperative the finding of a new *modus vivendi* with the West. Some sort of showdown was inevitable.



Here we shall concern ourselves less with the merits of the issues over which war eventually broke out than with the Chinese understanding of them and the effect on Chinese thinking of the events which followed. Instructive for this purpose are the cases of two Chinese leaders in the fields of government and scholarship: Lin Tse-hsü (1785-1850), Imperial Commissioner at Canton in 1839-40, and the scholar, Wei Yüan (1794-1856), who helped to interpret for Chinese minds the meaning of this fateful conflict.

## THE LESSON OF LIN TSE-HSÜ

Lin Tse-hsü, a native of the southeast coastal province of Fukien, was an exemplary product of the Chinese educational and civil service system. After winning the *chin-shih* degree in 1811, he rose rapidly through the official ranks and served with particular distinction in posts concerned with fiscal matters and public works, gaining a wide reputation for his competence, integrity and humaneness. By the late thirties, when opium smuggling became a pressing question, Lin had already established himself as an able governor and then governor-general of rich and populous provinces in Central China. In such a position a man less deeply concerned over the fate of his people might have been content to enjoy the measure of personal success which was already assured him. But Lin, having taken strong measures to end the traffic in his own sphere of jurisdiction, placed himself in the forefront of those who called upon the court for a full-scale assault on the opium menace. The result was his appointment as Imperial Commissioner at Canton with full powers to deal with the problem.

On his arrival in Canton in March of 1839, Lin demonstrated that he was a man of serious and inflexible purpose, not the type of official who could be wheedled, bribed, or stalled off. Within a few months he had taken such strong action against the Hong merchants and Western traders that existing stocks of opium had been destroyed and the cessation of the traffic was all but guaranteed by the foreigners. It was at this time that Lin addressed his celebrated letter to Queen Victoria demanding assurances of an end to the trade.

Were opium, then, the sole or chief issue between the Chinese and

British, there would presumably have been no cause for the outbreak of the first Anglo-Chinese War later that same year. To the British on the scene, however, Lin's uncompromising policies seemed not just firm or tough but arrogant and unreasonable. Though ready to make substantial concessions with regard to the drug traffic in order not to lose all opportunities for trade, for them the lure of profits did not suffice to overcome strong feelings in what they regarded as matters of principle. The lack of treaty relations meant that there was no established procedure for the administration of justice in incidents involving Chinese and foreigners. Commissioner Lin was determined that Chinese authorities should mete out punishment for crimes on Chinese soil of which foreigners had been accused. The British were equally adamant in refusing to turn over suspects, whose guilt was by no means established, to the mercies of Chinese officials whom they considered vindictive and inhumane. When Lin countered with the breaking off of all trade and expulsion of the British from China, full-scale hostilities broke out.

The Chinese, as is well known, were pitifully unprepared on land and sea to resist the force of British arms, and it was only a matter of weeks before the underlying weakness of Lin's "get-tough" policy became fully exposed. Officially disgraced, the erstwhile viceroy and commissioner was eventually banished to Chinese Turkestan. In the meantime, he had become fully persuaded of the need for strengthening China through the adoption of Western arms and methods of warfare, though he could make no progress in gaining acceptance of this view at court. Even when later restored to the official ranks, partly on account of his accomplishments in flood control and land reclamation work, Lin lacked any real opportunity to influence state policy in the direction of greater realism and reform. The lesson he had learned in Canton remained largely his own. It would be decades more before the court could be moved by further misfortunes to take such warnings to heart.

## LIN TSE-HSÜ

### *Letter to the English Ruler*

In this celebrated letter to Queen Victoria (1839), Lin argues against the opium trade with all the moral earnestness of the Confucian scholar and lofty condescension of one speaking for the imperial court. On its own terms, of



course, Lin's argument is unanswerable. Yet his tone indicates how unready the Chinese were to deal with the British as diplomatic equals or to negotiate outstanding differences on other scores.

Intransigent as he appeared, Lin nonetheless compelled admiration. His likeness appeared later in Mme. Tussaud's Wax Museum in London, and the distinguished British consular official and sinologist, H. A. Giles, said of Lin: "He was a fine scholar, a just and merciful official, and a true patriot."

[From Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, pp. 24-27]

A communication: magnificently our great emperor soothes and pacifies China and the foreign countries, regarding all with the same kindness. If there is profit, then he shares it with the peoples of the world; if there is harm, then he removes it on behalf of the world. This is because he takes the mind of Heaven and earth as his mind.

The kings of your honorable country by a tradition handed down from generation to generation have always been noted for their politeness and submissiveness. We have read your successive tributary memorials saying: "In general our countrymen who go to trade in China have always received His Majesty the Emperor's gracious treatment and equal justice," and so on. Privately we are delighted with the way in which the honorable rulers of your country deeply understand the grand principles and are grateful for the Celestial grace. For this reason the Celestial Court in soothing those from afar has redoubled its polite and kind treatment. The profit from trade has been enjoyed by them continuously for two hundred years. This is the source from which your country has become known for its wealth.

But after a long period of commercial intercourse, there appear among the crowd of barbarians both good persons and bad, unevenly. Consequently there are those who smuggle opium to seduce the Chinese people and so cause the spread of the poison to all provinces. Such persons who only care to profit themselves, and disregard their harm to others, are not tolerated by the laws of Heaven and are unanimously hated by human beings. His Majesty the Emperor, upon hearing of this, is in a towering rage. He has especially sent me, his commissioner, to come to Kwangtung, and together with the governor-general and governor jointly to investigate and settle this matter. . . .

We find that your country is sixty or seventy thousand *li* from China. Yet there are barbarian ships that strive to come here for trade for the