The Foundations and Stages of Chinese Economic History.

By
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Vorbemerkung. *Dr. K. A. Wittfogel befindet sich im Auftrag des Instituts für Sozialforschung und des Institute of Pacific Relations auf einer längeren Studienreise in China, um dort Vorarbeiten für den zweiten Band seines* 1931 *vom Institut für Sozialforschung herausgegebenen Werkes „Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas" zu leisten. In dem nachfolgenden Aufsatz weist Dr. Wittfogel auf eine Reihe wichtiger sachlicher und methodischer Probleme der chinesischen Sozialgeschichte hin, die er im zweiten Band seines Buches ausführlich zu behandeln gedenkt.* Die Schriftleitung.

I. The Importance of Chinese Economic History.

Three great streams of historical development have determined the economic aspect of the present-day world. Most modern nations — those of central and western Europe, America, Japan — are in the stage of advanced capitalism, monopolistic in structure and are now in a state of crisis. In eastern Europe and central and northern Asia, in the Soviet Union, is arising a new socialist order of economic, social, political and cultural life.

The remaining territories, which are of enormous extent in respect to size and population, are substantially under the economic and political control of the first named group of nations, either as colonies, dependencies, mandated territories or spheres of interest. Some of these regions are occupied by disintegrating primitive societies which perform an entirely subservient economic function and, because of the low status of their productive powers, play no part in the determination of the process of modern history.

It is another matter as far as those great pre-capitalist societies which today, under the impact of imperialism, are undergoing a fundamental transformation of their material and cultural patterns of life are concerned. Our analysis deals with the economic history of China, not only because a fourth of the world's population is crowded within its confines, but also in view of an essentially qualitative consideration. China represents — this is the thesis which we have endeavoured to prove in a series of earlier works and to the demonstration of which the present essay is devoted — a

distinct expression of that type of oriental or „Asiatic" agrarian society which includes a number of historically noteworthy social organisms namely ancient Egypt, Babylon, the Inca empire and India until its transformation by English imperialism.

Scientific investigation of the dynamics of modern capitalist society has taken as its starting-point the analysis of an especially representative form of this society, England. Once the main outlines of capitalist development have thus been ascertained, the manifold variations which have manifested themselves in other countries can be understood by a scientific analysis of the various empirical circumstances[1]).

Now, while there are a number of fundamental analyses of the history and crisis of capitalist economy, as well as of the dynamics of the young socialist Soviet world, far less attention has been paid to methodologically adequate investigation of the vital principles of the great oriental agrarian societies, whose historical importance increases yearly. A detailed exposition of research in this field, other than our own, is postponed to a future date. We have already ventured a critical examination of the principles upon which this research is based[2]). In the following pages, however, we shall attempt to draw up a factual outline of the material foundations and motive forces which have determined the economic development and social history of China.

II. The Question of Sources.

The economic and social history of China is, apart from the latest changes, essentially the history of the transformation of the original Chinese feudalism. Since the type arising out of feudalism has of late been frequently described as „feudal" or, at any rate, „semi-feudal", it becomes necessary to define clearly the features of Chinese feudalism as it actually existed.

Before one can answer this question, however, an account must be given of the nature of the available source material.

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[1]) We have developed the principles of our economic historical method in several writings. Cf. especially Wittfogel, Die natürlichen Ursachen der Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik, Vol. 67, 1932, pp. 466-492, 579-609, 711-731. See also the methodological considerations which introduce all main sections of Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, Vol. I, Leipzig, 1931.

[2]) See, among others, Wittfogel, Das erwachende China, Wien, 1926 (contra Erkes); Probleme der chinesischen Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik, Vol. 57, 1926 (contra Mabel Ping-Hua Lee); Voraussetzungen und Grundelemente der chinesischen Landwirtschaft, loc. cit., Vol. 61, 1929 (contra W. Wagner); Die Grundlagen der chinesischen Arbeiterbewegung, Grünbergs Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung, Vol. 15, 1930; G. Wegener, China, Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik, Vol. 66, 1931; also Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, Vol. I (contra Richthofen, Conrady, R. Wilhelm, etc.).

For the period of decay of Chinese feudalism there are, besides many disputed texts, a number of sources, varying greatly in value, but the authenticity of which is generally accepted. It is quite the contrary with those sources which deal with the origin and high tide of feudalism in China. Today[1]) — apart from the latest

Period	Date	Sources
Pre-Hsia	? till about 1800 B. C.[2])	Shu Ching
Hsia.....	till 16th century	Shu Ching
Shang (Yin) ..	till 11th century	Shu Ching Shih Ching
Western Chou.	till 770 B. C.	Shu Ching Shih Ching Chou Li Yi Ching.
Eastern Chou.	till 225 B. C.	Historical works : Ch'un Ch'iu. Tso Chuan. Kuo Yü. Philosophical - political writings of the schools of Confucius, Mo Ti, the Taoists, the „legalists", the „ritualists" etc.[3]).

[1]) The great Han historian Ssu-Ma Ch'ien had at his disposal a number of other general and local sources on Chinese antiquity which have since been lost. (See É. Chavannes, Les mémoires historiques de Se-Ma Ts'ien, I, Paris, 1895, p. CXXXVI ff.). Our transcription of Chinese names follows the modern English usage. Names quoted in titles of books and articles are left in their original form. French transcription differs from German and English and the latter two are themselves often inconsistent, varying in different periods and among different schools. This explains why the same Chinese name often appears in several forms.

[2]) For the dating of the first dynasties we follow the careful attempted reconstruction of C. W. Bishop in his article, The Chronology of Ancient China, Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 52, 1932, pp. 242 and 246.

[3]) We do not enter upon any attempt to enumerate completely the writings bearing upon this, as it is not possible within the limits of our article, and not necessary for its purpose.

excavations, to be discussed immediately, and some previously known inscriptions — we possess the above tabulated historical documents on the era of the so-called first two dynasties, those of Hsia and Shang (later called Yin), and also on both phases of the Chou Dynasty. These documents, as the Confucian tradition maintained, were for the most part written within the periods which they describe, or soon afterward.

1. The Attack on the Authenticity of the Old Sources

In the past, Chinese historical science subjected a part of these sources to a criticism which was often extremely acute, but which after the final establishment of the bureaucratic state generally stayed within the bounds designated for it by this order. It was, in fact, only in connection with the shattering of the bureaucratic system that research into sources first shook the foundations of hitherto existing tradition. The spokesman of the reform movement of 1898, K'ang Yu-Wei, basing his argument on preceding critical works, declared that a number of the most important old writings, above all the Chou Li and the Tso Chuan, were forgeries dating from the period of the „usurper" Wang Mang (8-23 A. D.)[1]). The disciples of K'ang Yu-Wei, Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao and Chen Huan-Chang, as well as an entire group of younger Chinese scholars, pushed even further the attack begun by K'ang. More of the old sources were scrutinized and their authenticity questioned ; at the same time, the critics modified and limited the undiscriminating attacks made by K'ang Yu-Wei in his first sensational publications. But even with the subsequent modifications, the result remained impressive enough.

Little objection was made to several writings of the later Chou period, the Ch'un Ch'iu, the Lun Yü, Mo Ti and Mencius. Many books of this period, however, were regarded as valid only in part, while others were considered wholly spurious. One of the best known representatives of the younger textual critics, Hu Shih, rejects the Li Chi and Kwan Tzu completely[2]). V. K. Ting holds Lieh Tzu „largely spurious" ; it seems probable to him that the

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[1]) Cf. on this O. Franke, Die wichtigsten Reformschriften vom Ende des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale des sciences de St. Pétersbourg, 1902, XVII, No. 3, pp. 50 ff., 112 etc. ; also his Studien zur Geschichte des konfuzianischen Dogmas und der chinesischen Staatsreligion, Hamburg, 1920, pp. 36, 64, 70.

[2]) Hu Shih, The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China, Shanghai, 1922, Preface, p. 1.

Chia Yü is a „forgery"[1]). We are warned against the largest part of the Chuang Tzu and Hsun Tzu texts[2]). The Kuo Yü, the Shan Hai Ching and the Tso Chuan are assigned dates later than those given by tradition[3]). But after all, despite K'ang Yu-Wei's efforts, it is important that the Tso Chuan, by far the most significant historical work of the period of the Eastern Chou, is still acknowledged as a source for this period[4]). Therefore, although the source material for the period suffers considerable loss if the latest criticism proves itself justified, the untouched remainder still enables the analytical historian to discern the most essential outlines of the socio-economic and political order of the epoch.

Much more unfavorable is the situation as regards the preceding stages of development. Parts of Yi Ching are postdated to the third century B. C.[5]). Following the example of K'ang Yu-Wei, the Chou Li, the „ancient constitution of the Chou dynasty", which even in the distant past was hotly fought over for political reasons[6]), is today with great firmness pronounced a „forgery"[7]), and consistency demands its rejection as a description of the Chou period.

As for the pretended oldest five songs of Shih Ching, which have as their subject the life of the Shang period, the recent critics have established that they were written not in Shang times but in the middle of the western Chou dynasty or, indeed, even after 770[8]). Characteristically, Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao when writing on this period does not bother with the cultural indications given in these songs

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[1]) V. K. Ting, Prof. Granet's „La civilisation Chinoise", The Chinese Social and Political Science Review, Vol. 15, 1931, pp. 266 and 275.

[2]) Hu Shih, loc. cit., p. 1.

[3]) Ting, loc. cit., p. 266 and 175. Idem, How China Acquired Her Civilization, Symposium on Chinese Civilisation, ed. by S. H. Chen Zen, Shanghai, 1931, p. 11.

[4]) Cf. Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao, History of Chinese Political Thought, London, 1930, p. 26; Hu Shih, loc. cit., p. 46. See likewise Ku Chieh-Kang's autobiographical preface to his Symposium on Ancient Chinese History (Ku Shih Pien), translated and edited by A. W. Hummel under the title The Autobiography of a Chinese Historian, Leyden, 1931, p. 111. Karlgren, the greatest western authorithy on Chinese philology, confirms this statement in a series of independent investigations, as the result of which he dates the Tso Chuan — and the Chou Li! — in the fourth century B. C. (B. Karlgren, On the Authenticity and Nature of the Tso Chuan. Göteborgs Arsskrift, 1926/27. Vol. III. Idem The Early History of the Chou Li and Tso Chuan Texts. Bulletin of the Museum of the Far Eastern Antiquities. Stockholm. Nr. 2. 1930.)

[5]) Ting, loc. cit., p. 275.

[6]) É. Biot, in his introduction to the translation instigated by him of the work (Le Tscheou-Li, trad. par Éd. Biot, Paris, 1851, pp. xvi ff. and xxii ff.), gives a description of the political background of the editing and re-editing of the book which shows clearly the political nature of the Chou Li debates.

[7]) Ting, loc. cit., p. 275.

[8]) Ku Chieh-Kang, Autobiographical Preface, p. 96, note 2; Ting, How China Acquired Her Civilization, p. 10.

but draws a picture of the nomadic character of the Shang times[1]), in sharp contrast to the description in the Shih Ching (tillage, millet sacrifice, cities, etc.).

The most severely criticized, however, apart from the Chou Li, is the Shu Ching, the so-called Book of History. For centuries parts of this book, like the other „classical" works, once burnt, lost and reconstructed, were regarded as less authentic than the twenty-eight „new" chapters, whose authorship was attributed to Fu Shang[2]). Criticism now goes much further. The „genuine" sections of Shu Ching, dealing with the Shang period, are dated after 770 like the Shang songs of the Shih Ching[3]). Equally late in origin — in part as late as the fourth century, according to the new viewpoint — are those „genuine" books of the Shu Ching which depict the events and conditions of the Hsia and pre-Hsia times[4]). In accordance with these findings, Hu Shih in drawing his picture of the pre-Confucian era, makes a point of not using the now dubious Shu Ching. Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao regards the Shu Ching as valid[5]), for the Shang period as well as for the Chou period. Yet he does not follow it even for this period, and his Hsia „nomads" are quite at variance with the accounts of the Shu Ching on the role of farming, pottery and water-works of the pre-Hsia and Hsia age. Ku Chieh-Kang and V. K. Ting also apparently feel that the statements of the Shu Ching relating to these times are historically worthless.

2. New Sources for Early Chinese History.

The latest Chinese source criticism, where it has been worked out to the end, has resulted in the discrediting of practically all written source material for the period of the origin and flourishing of Chinese feudalism. Western sinology, which in the preceding period generally adhered to the Confucian tradition[6]), now began

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[1]) Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao, loc. cit., p. 23.

[2]) See J. Legge's Prolegomena to the translation supervised by him of the Shu Ching : The Chinese Classics, Vol. III, 1, London, n. d. ; pp. 16 ff., and especially pp. 35 ff. Also É. Chavannes, Les mémoires historiques de Se-Ma Tsien, I, pp. CXIII ff,. where Chavannes, in dealing with Ssu-Ma Chien's research into sources, makes a detailed analysis of the various elements out of which the present Shu Chung arose.

[3]) Ting, How China Acquired Her Civilization, p. 10.

[4]) Ku Chieh-Kang, loc. cit., p. 80 ; Ting, loc. cit., p. 10.

[5]) Liang Ch'i Ch'ao, loc. cit., pp. 25 ff.

[6]) A. Conrady is one of the very few exceptions. His efforts toward an ethnological analysis of the early social history of China never, indeed, overstep the bounds of the Leipzig school of cultural historians (Wundt, Bücher, Lamprecht). Yet within the limits of this approach, he evolves certain elements of a socio-economic conception of history which were unique in sinology at the time of their origin, and even today are to be counted among the most important preliminary studies towards the creation of a scientific history of China.

in its own manner to make a clean sweep of early Chinese sources[1]). So unsatisfactory was the situation thus brought about that in China as well as in the West new methods were sought to regain at least part of the lost terrain.

Help came to historical science from an unexpected quarter. The search for raw materials for modern industry and the intensive geological activity arising from this — together with certain independent archaeological excavations stimulated by the geological work — led to a series of discoveries which shed quite a new light on the beginnings of Chinese history.

The discovery of an early type of primitive man, the Sinanthropus, at Chou Kou Tien near Peking, important as it is to our knowledge of the origin of man[2]) and to prehistoric research[3]), is of little interest for our present purpose. Whether this Sinanthropus or homo pekinensis[4]) is physically or culturally a predecessor of the modern Chinese is an open question[5]). The numerous findings from the later palaeolithic age, made during the past century in the northwest boundary regions of China, in the Ordos territory and near Manchuli[6]), though representing a considerable

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[1]) The reaction of the latest developments in source revision in China upon western sinology cannot even be hinted at in this place. The dissolution of the traditional views came about in the „West" in a complicated way, defined and differentiated by its contemporary social background.

[2]) H. Breuil, Le feu et l'industrie lithique asseuse à Chou-Koutien, Bulletin of the Geographical Society of China. Vol. II, 1931. No. 2, p. 154.

[3]) G. Elliott Smith, The Ancestry of Man, Bull. Geol. Soc. China, Vol. 9, 1930, No. 3, p. 192. Similarly Sir Arthur Keith, New Discoveries Relating to the Antiquity of Man. New York, 1932 p. 294.

[4]) Reports on the history of the discovery of Sinanthropus are given in a number of articles in the Bulletin of the Geological Society of China, in the Memoirs of the Geological Survey of China, and in the Palaeonthologia Sinica published by the same institution. Cf. above all : Davidson Black, The Lower Molar Hominide Tooth from the Chou Kou Tien Deposit, Pal. Sin. 1927, Ser. D, Vol. VII, Fasc. I, where Black gives the name of „Sinanthropus" to the newly discovered type of primitive man (p. 21). See also, W. C. Pei, An Account of the Discovery of an Adult Sinanthropus Skull in the Chou Kou Tien Deposit. Bull. Geol. Soc., Vol. 8, 1929. No. 3, p. 203 ff. ; D. Black, Evidence of the Use of Fire by Sinanthropus, Bull. Vol. 11, 1931, No. 2, p. 107 ff. ; W. C. Pei, Notice of the Discovery of Quartz and other Stone Implements in the Lower Pleistocene Hominid-Bearing Sediment of the Choukoutien Deposit, Bull. Vol. 11, 1931, No. 2, p. 109 ff. Final summaries : A. Keith, New Discoveries, etc., pp. 245-294 ; Teilhard de Chardin and W. C. Pei, The Lithic Industry of the Sinanthropus Deposits in the Chou Kou Tien, Bull. Geol. Soc. China, Vol. 11, 1932. No. 4, pp. 315-358.

[5]) Davidson Black, Teilhard de Chardin, C. C. Young and W. C. Pei, Fossil Man in China. Geological Memoirs, Peiping Series A, No. 11, 1933, p. 109, 133, 144.

[6]) Teilhard de Chardin and F. Licent, On the Discovery of a Paleolithic Industry in Northern China, Bull. Geol. Soc. China, Vol. 3, 1934. No. 1, p. 45 ff. E. Licent, Teilhard de Chardin and Davidson Black, On the Presumably Pleistocene Human Tooth from the Sjara-Osso-Gol (South Eastern Ordos) deposits. Bull. Vol. 5, 1927, Nos. 3-4, p. 285 ff. Summing up : Black, Teilhard, Young and Pei, Fossil Man in China, loc. cit., p. 137. Through the courtesy of Dr. L. C. Goodrich of the Chinese Department

anthropological advance, are likewise of little relevance for our purpose.

We first tread on historical ground with the early and late neolithic finds in Mongolia[1]), in Manchuria[2]) and in Northern China, at Kansu[3]), and above all in Honan (Yang Shao)[4]). The peasant-like dwellers of Yang Shao are „proto-Chinese". Their material production — hoe culture (Hackbau), pottery, beginnings of textile handicraft[5]) — foreshadow several important features of the later cultural evolution of China[6]).

Of still greater historical importance, if possible, are the findings of bones and bronzes which were unearthed during the last decades near An Yang (Honan)[7]). Finally, we come upon written docu-

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of Columbia University (New York) we have received a late report from Davidson Black, in which he announces that new excavations in Chou Kou Tien, supervised by W. C. Pei in 1933, unearthed a deposit of human remains and artifacts, which seem to be of late palaeolithic origin.

[1]) E. Licent and P. Teilhard de Chardin, Note sur deux industries agricoles du néolithique de Chine. L'Anthropologie, Vol. 35, 1925, p. 63 ff. Teilhard de Chardin and C. C. Young, On Some Neolithic (and possibly palaeolithic) finds in Mongolia, Sinkiang and West China. Bull. Geol. Soc. China, Vol. 12, 1932, No. 1, p. 83 ff. (with a map showing the total extent of the find).

[2]) Black, Teilhard, Young and Pei, Fossil Man in China, loc. cit., p. 139. Also A. S. Lukashkin, New Data on Neolithic Culture in Northern Manchuria, Bull. Vol. 11, 1931, No. 2, p. 171 ff. J. G. Andersson, The Cave-Deposit at Sha Kuo Tun in Fengtien, Pal. Sin, 1923, Series D, Vol. I, fasc. 1, Davidson Black, The Human Skeletal Remains from the Sha Kuo Tun Cave Deposit in Comparison with those from Yang Shao Tsun and with Recent North China Skeletal Material, Pal. Sin, Ser. D, Vol. I, fasc. 3.

[3]) J. G. Andersson, Preliminary Report on Archaeological Research in Kansu, Memoirs of the Geological Survey of China, 1925, Series A, No. 5. D. Black, A Study of Kansu and Honan Aeneolithic Skulls and Specimens from later Kansu Prehistoric Sites in Comparison with North China and other Recent Crania. Pal. Sin. 1928, Ser. D, Vol. VI, fasc. 1.

[4]) Andersson, An Early Chinese Culture. Bull. Geol. Surv. China, 1923, No. 5, Part 1. T. J. Arne, Painted Stone Age Pottery from the Province of Honan, China. Pal. Sin. 1925, Series D, Vol. I, fasc. 2. Summaries : Black, etc. Fossil Man in China, pp. 142-152. A complete survey of the latest archaeological discoveries in China is given by Andersson in his book, Children of the Yellow Earth, London, 1934.

[5]) Andersson, An Early Chinese Culture, loc. cit., p. 26.

[6]) Ting, How China Acquired her Civilization, loc. cit., p. 11. Andersson, Preliminary Report, loc. cit., p. 41 ff. Idem, Children of the Yellow Earth, p. 200 ff. and 336 ff. Arne, Painted Stone Age Pottery, loc. cit., p. 33. O. Franke, Geschichte des chinesischen Volkes, Vol. I, Berlin and Leipzig, 1931, p. 48 ff. O. Menghin, Weltgeschichte der Steinzeit, Vienna, 1931, p. 256 ff., 289 ff., 319, 323.

[7]) F. H. Chalfant, Early Chinese Writing, Memoirs of the Carnegie Museum, Vol. IV, No. 1, Pittsburgh, 1906. Samuel Couling, The Oracle Bones from Honan, Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1914, p. 65 ff. John C. Ferguson, Recent Books by a Chinese Scholar, ibid., 1919, p. 122 ff. Couling calls attention to the prominent role which the Chinese archaeologist Lo Chên-Yü played in the deciphering of the deposit of An Yang. Cf. also É. Chavannes, La divination par l'écaille de tortue dans la haute antiquité chinoise d'après un livre de M. Lo Tschên-yu, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (JRAS), 1911. Idem, The Honan Relics. A new investigator and some results. JRAS, 1921.

Basing himself upon the work of Lo Chên Yü, as well as on the investigations

ments. There appear names of rulers, which are known to us through traditions preserved in written documents. The union with existing historical sources is made.

3. Results.

The further the interpretation of skeletal remains and the revelation of Yang Shao culture progressed, the more untenable became the position of a criticism moving along purely philological lines. A number of statements on the origins of Chinese agrarian society from recently disputed texts received a surprising confirmation in the palaeolithic finds in North China. Even a list of Shang kings, lately regarded skeptically, which Ssu-Ma Ch'ien in preparing Shih Chi took from a „late source" (Chaou and Han !), was proved authentic[1]). „The inscribed oracle bones discovered at An Yang in North Honan", declares V. K. Ting, „supply us with authentic material about the Shang dynasty, and the available evidence indicates that the list of kings as given in Shih Chi is substantially correct."

The same late sources from which Ssu-Ma Ch'ien took the list of Shang rulers also contained a list of Hsia kings, i. e., a list of a dynasty which had been pronounced decidedly dubious by the modern school of textual criticism. What weight is to be given to this part of the late source of Ssu-Ma Ch'ien ? Ting does not hesitate to answer : „As a similar list of kings of Hsia is also given in the same book the probabilities are that it represents something more than a mythical tradition. In fact we need not doubt the existence of the Hsia dynasty[2])."

The importance of the admission just cited is extraordinary. Apparently sources which were written in the Chou or Han periods contain relevant information on conditions and events of the pre-Chou or pre-Shang periods ! The formal philological method, though it may fix the final date of a given source, is not the ultimate criterion in determining its factual value. The deliberate or unintentional identification of the age of the latest known

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of the Japanese sinologist, Tadasuke Takata, the English scholar L. C. Hopkins in a long series of articles attempted to analyze parts of the Yin-bones inscriptions. (Hopkins, Chinese Writings in the Chou-Dynasty in the Light of Recent Discoveries, JRAS, 1911 ; The Sovereigns of the Shang Dynasty, JRAS, 1917 ; The Royal Genealogies on the Honan Relics and the Record of the Shang Dynasty, Hirth Anniversary Volume, London, 1923 ; Pictographic Reconnaissances, JRAS, 1917-1928, with an index of the analyzed characters in the concluding article ; finally, his The Human Figure in Archaic Chinese Writing, JRAS, 1929 and 1930.)

[1]) Cf. Chavannes, Les mémoires historiques de Se-Ma Ts'ien, Vol. I, p. CXLI.

[2]) Ting, How China Acquired her Civilization, p. 10.

version of a source with the age of the material it contains is a fundamental methodological error, which instead of safeguarding and increasing valuable old materials of knowledge, tends rather to call them in question and to destroy them. A purely philological treatment of sources thus leads to a reductio ad absurdum. Although philological labor is indispensable and although the achievements of modern sinological philology are and will continue to be most necessary, the work of philology can never be more than preparatory and auxiliary so far as historical research is concerned. The actual decisions are of another nature. Only a historical analysis based on categories of material fact can answer the questions on which all purely philological attempts within and outside of China must necessarily founder.

Recognition of this fact has in recent times increasingly led to the opening up of new paths, both within China and outside. There are nowadays numerous attempts at objective evaluation of controversial material by resort to evolutionist, functionalist and diffusionist sociology, as well as to the methods of folklore and comparative mythology[1]).

A critical analysis of these attempts is not in place here, but this much is evident : we need not feel ourselves bound by formal philological criticism the inadequacy of which is becoming recognized more and more even by its own initiators. In the account which follows we shall work mainly with „verified" sources. However, problematic materials will be judged, so far as possible, by the methods of comparative economic history, within whose scope they belong.

III. The Stages of Development in Chinese Economic and Social History.

1. Historical Stages in the Settling of China.

Whatever may have taken place in the Yangtze valley and south of it during the second millennium and the first half of the first millennium B. C., this region was not the cradle of Chinese civilization. It originated in the north, in the basin of the Huangho, and, as both written tradition and archaeological discoveries testify, not in the Northeast — in the alluvial plains of

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[1]) Cf. Ku Chieh-Kang, Autobiographical preface, p. 100, 113 ff., 152 ; Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao, loc. cit., p. 26 ; Chen Huan-Chang, The Economic Principles of Confucius and his School, New York, 1911, I, p. 35, note ; V. K. Ting, How China Acquired her Civilization, p. 18.

North China — but in the north central region and perhaps the northwest, in the territory of the modern provinces of Shansi, Shensi, Honan and perhaps Kansu.

The action of the loess streams, which heighten and change their channels from year to year, made permanent habitation and agricultural activity in the eastwestern plain possible only if the streams were held within their banks by dykes of great size, a fact generally recognized by geographers[1]). It removes any factual basis from a viewpoint, according to which the first development of Chinese agrarian society took place just where nature presented the greatest obstacles, insurmountable indeed by neolithic implements. Having discounted this view — which has few adherents[2]) — we must regard the expansion into the northern plain as the second, and qualitatively extremely important, step in the economic, social and political evolution of China.

The third step, the organization of the central Chinese territory, occurred only at the end of the feudal epoch and took place in several stages. Elsewhere we have at length analyzed those natural factors which in the northeastern plain necessitated a specific kind of public works (embankments), as well as the„ orientai" conditions of soil and climate, which in the rice growing regions of Central and South China led to the construction of irrigation works on a large scale[3]). The history of the settling of China is therefore essentially bound up with the development of the instruments and forms of organization of social labor and of the state, determining it and being in turn determined by it. Apart from the present phase of development, which exhibits completely new phenomena, a scientific economic history of China must constantly bear in mind the processes of settling, upon which the economic history is based.

2. The First Differentiation of Chinese Agrarian Society.

An analysis of early Chinese history finds abundant sources of evidence upon which to base a description of the original forms of economic activity : excavations and written historical traditions,

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[1]) For the views of the earlier geographers see F. V. Richthofen, China, Vol. I, Berlin, 1877, p. 356 ff. On the latest researches cf., among others, L. H. Dudley Buxton, China, the Land and the People, Oxford, 1919, p. 221 ff., as well as G. B. Cressey, China's Geographic Foundations, New York & London, 1934, p. 159 ff.

[2]) H. Maspero, Les origines de la civilisation chinoise, Annales de Géographie, 1925, p. 154 ff. Also his La Chine antique, Paris, 1927, p. 21 ff.

[3]) Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, I, p. 189-266.

old songs, traditional religious and profane customs[1]). Millet as the chief food[2]), hemp as probably the first textile plant[3]), hunting and clearing of land done by the men[4]), extensive hoe-culture[5]) and possibly pig-raising[6]) done by the women[7]), collective forms of

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[1]) The evolutionary process analyzed by us remains comprehensible even if we exclude „survivals" as auxiliaries to knowledge. But the fundamental scepticism with which Malinowski regards such a use of survivals (article on Culture in Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. IV, p. 624) is untenable. A cultural element can indeed „outlive its functions", that is, its original function, and can continue to exist, exercising changed functions — perhaps of lesser importance — in a changed social milieu. Within a deeply traditional culture, customs which have lost their original significance nevertheless may continue to operate with a new, derived importance, that of maintaining the prestige of the ruling class. Malinowski has well pointed out the inadequacy of the survival theory of naive evolutionists. But instead of criticizing it constructively from the standpoint of a superior concept of development, he starts from an actually anti-evolutionary standpoint, and destroys exactly those elements of accurate knowledge which the naive survival theory does contain.

[2]) During the Shang period, „the" harvest is the millet crop, as the inscriptions teach us. (Hopkins, Pictographic Reconnaissances, JRAS, 1926, p. 474.) The little Hsia calendar mentions millet and wheat. (Cf. Li Chi, translated by R. Wilhelm under the title of Li Gi, Jena, 1930, p. 235, 238 and 240. Confucius emphasizes the value of the „Little Hsia-calendar" ; within his time the calendar seems still to have existed. Lun Yü, XV, X, 2. Legge, Chinese Classics, I, p. 297. Likewise Ssu-Ma Ch'ien, chap. II, Chavannes, loc. cit., I, p. 171.) The role of millet in the great sacrifices is so unambiguously represented in all old texts, from the Shih Ching to the Book of Etiquette, — the I Li — that there can be no doubt cast upon the importance of this plant even as far back as the beginning of tradition. This remains unchanged by the discovery of a grain of rice in a Yang Shao shard (cf. on this the report of G. Edman and E. Söderberg in Bull. Geol. Soc. China, vol. 8, No. 4, 1929, p. 363 ff.). Since according to the oldest calendar reports, the climate has not been essentially different, from the earliest times to the present, and because the soil relations would have changed still less, rice, even if it were known in early times could only have been sown in enclaves. As old funeral customs show — later cowrie-shell money and rice were placed in the mouth of the dead — it was an object of value (I Li, ed. by J. Steele, London, 1917, p. 50). Rice was never a food for the masses in the north, as far back as we can pursue history. (Cf. Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, I., p. 72 ff.)

[3]) Andersson, An Early Chinese Culture, loc. cit., p. 26. There is remarkable coincidence between this archaeologically supported view and old sacrificial and mourning customs. (I Li, II, p. 9 ff., and 183 ff.)

[4]) Andersson, An Early Chinese Culture, p. 29. Also his Archäologische Studien in China. Reprint from Vol. LIV of Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft Wien, 1924, pp. 66 and 70. The square axes described here, which would be too weak for clearing forests of the European type, are eminently suited for clearing of bushes on the thinly wooded loess territories of northwest China. On ground-clearing, see Shih Ching, III, I, 7. Legge, Chinese Classics, IV, 2., p. 339 ff.

[5]) Andersson, An Early Culture, p. 26.

[6]) Ibid., p. 32. There is no doubt that the pig was the oldest domesticated animal. Who reared it ? We do not possess any direct proofs as yet. The fact that pork is served at the marriage ceremony by the young woman — at the ancestral sacrifice by a man — (I Li, I., 29, and II, 131) is perhaps ground for the belief that the woman had the duty of raising the first domesticated animal. The offering of game and of large, grazing domesticated animals during the sacrifices lay exclusively in the hands of the men.

[7]) Andersson's guess that the men in this phase of development were still „hunters" (An Early Culture, p. 29), that male and female activity thus were sharply differentiated, finds support from remarkable source. Davidson Black, on the basis of

labor, perhaps on the basis of the clan[1]) (sib) and matriarchal forms of the clan[2]) — these are some of the leading features of primitive Chinese society as revealed by the new deposits and the freshly interpreted historical sources.

The transition to more intensive forms of cultivation, perhaps already including the rudiments of irrigation[3]), the domestication of horses, oxen and sheep[4]), and the passing of the dominant forms of production into the hands of the male, which resulted in the development of a patriarchal system of kinship[5]) — all of these factors provided the socio-economic prerequisites for the rise of the state. This may have come about either in endogenous fashion, by the singling out of a native ruling class to perform general administrative, juristic, religious and special military duties ; or it may have happened exogenously through conquest, perhaps by

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his investigations of neolithic skeletal deposits, declares that the great difference ascertained by him between the male and female bones „would seem to indicate that a considerable specialisation of the respective work of the two sexes obtained among the Yang Shao people ". Black, „The human skeletal remains, etc." In so far as the woman participates at all actively in the old sacrificial rites, she brings vegetable gifts : millet, onions, wine, also rice. (Li Gi, Wilhelm ed., p. 264, 361. I Li, I, p. 32, II, p. 134, 140, 167, 174, ff., 183, 187, 190. Cf. also The I Ching trans. by J. Legge as The Sacred Books of the East, Vol. XVI, Oxford, 1882, Hexagram 54, p. 182.)

[1]) Cf. for this W. H. R. Rivers, Social Organization, London, 1924, p. 114 ; Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, I, p. 348 ff. Traces of clan communism have survived to the present day in the very lately colonized south China (Cf. M. Volin and E. Yolk, The Peasant Movement in Kwangtung, I, Canton, 1927, p. 52 ff.)

[2]) We give below data on remains of the mother-right tradition. On the importance of primitive hoe-culture by the woman for the evolving of mother-right relations, cf. E. Müller-Lyer, Die Familie, Munich 1912, p. 85 ff. ; H. Cunow, Zur Urgeschichte der Ehe und Familie, Ergänzungsheft No. 14 of Die Neue Zeit, Stuttgart, 1912, p. 41 ff. Also, stemming from utterly different presuppositions : F. Gräbner, Das Weltbild der Primitiven, Munich, 1924, p. 35 ; O. Menghin, Weltgeschichte der Steinzeit, Vienna, 1931, p. 498 ; R. Thurnwald, Die menschliche Gesellschaft. Bd II, Berlin u. Leipzig 1932, p. 194.

[3]) If in the central and western parts of China climatic conditions resembled those of today only approximately, irrigation must have been highly desirable for the production of normal harvests of millet and wheat. This is true even if we neglect the extremely problematic existence of a late neolithic cultivation of oryza sativa. (Cf. Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, I, p. 209 ff.)

[4]) The An Yang inscriptions report sacrifices of oxen (Hopkins, The Human Figure, JRAS, 1930, p. 105). One Shang ode mentions wagons — therefore, horses. (Shih Ching, IV, III, 3 ; Legge, Ch, Cl. IV, 2, p. 637.) The little Hsia calendar mentions horses and sheep. (Li Gi, p. 237 and 239.) If we may rely on the relevant passages in Shu Ching, the tradition of the „shepherds" can be traced much further back. (Shu Ching, Shun Tien, 7 and 16, cf. also 9, Legge, Ch. Cl. III, 1, pp. 34, 42 and 35.)

[5]) If, as modern anthropology establishes, it is the woman who usually makes the transition to the early forms of agricultural production, the division of labor resulting therefrom is changed „in most cases", when new tasks, like irrigation and terrace-construction or the yoking of domestic animals in the agricultural process, make the use of male labor power imperative. (Cf. F. Boas, article Anthropology in Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences. II, p. 83.)

nomads. But even if conquest by nomadic, patriarchal tribes took place, it did not determine the character of the society. It led rather to an intermingling of the two different modes of production, and the autochthonous agrarian economy predominated in shaping both the organization and the prevailing ideology of the resulting social order.

Certainly the old word for „duke" (which Legge translates as pastor)[1]) indicates the importance of cattle-breeding to the first Chinese ruling class. The word pa used so frequently during the Ch'un Ch'iu period for the „leader of the feudal states" really means „father's brother". But the latter word, as a matter of fact, is, according to Conrady, of later origin[2]). The ideograph for „clan" emphasizes descent from a female ancestor[3]). Early legendary history reports a female ancestry for the Chou, the Shang and the Hsia dynasties[4]), as well as an originally matrilineal succession[5]). And if the sheep and the bull are prominent in the solemn state sacrifices during the Chou period[6]), the great agricultural ceremony which the „Son of Heaven" performs[7]) likewise permits no doubt as to the central position which agriculture occupied in the actual economic structure as well as in the consciousness of the ruling class. Whether or not agriculture was predominant from the very start, it at any rate became so very early in the course of history.

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[1]) Chinese Classics, III, 1, p. 34 and passim.

[2]) A. Conrady, China, in Pflugk-Harttungs Weltgeschichte, Vol. Orient, Berlin (1910), p. 490.

[3]) See L. Wieger, Charactères chinois, 4th ed. Hien Hien, 1921, Leçon 79 F, p. 206.

[4]) Shih Ching III, II, 1. (Ch. Cl. IV, 2, p. 464 ff.) Shih Ching IV, III, 3 (loc. cit., IV, 2, p. 636). Annals of the Bamboo Books, Part III (Legge, Ch. Cl. III, 1, Prolegomena, p. 117).

[5]) Shu Ching, I, III, 12. (Ch. Cl. III, 1, p. 27.) The statements made about the ancestresses of the first three dynasties belong to those „reveries, extravagances and manifest falsities" against which the scholars of Tsin raised such indignant complaints when the Bamboo Books were discovered. (Cf. Legge, Prolegomena to Shih Ching, Ch. Cl. III, 1, p. 106.) Franke justly says concerning this ancient mother-right material that „much in the Chinese world of ideas speaks against it" (Geschichte, 1, p. 74). Correct. But this is evidence for, not against, the genuineness of the mother-right legends. The rise of these legends — perhaps not of all, but in all events the nucleus of them — goes back to a time when the status of woman was fundamentally different from what it later became. That there was such a time is indicated by both the documents cited by us (and other similar documents) and many old songs which were preserved in the Shih Ching collection.

[6]) Li Chi, IX, I, 1 and II, 2. (The Sacred Books of the East, vol. XXVII, pp. 417-428). Cf. also ed. Wilhelm. (Li Gi, pp. 255, 259.)

[7]) Li Chi, XXII, 5. (Loc. cit., vol. XXVIII, p. 239.)

3. The Transition to the Second Stage.

In this first stage of socially differentiated Chinese agrarian society, irrigation played a minor role at most; water-works certainly no essential part. Nothing, therefore, impeded the elaboration of a feudal organization. Society was organized in relatively small, decentralized states. The few ruling clans dwelt among their military followers in fortified settlements (towns), which they held as fiefs. The peasants of the surrounding villages, who were bound to the soil, were obligated to pay taxes directly to the ruling clans. There is ample proof that this was the form of social organization during the Chou period[1]). It existed, in its ripest development and even in a state of growing crisis, from the eighth century at the very least. There can therefore be no reason to doubt that the ruling class of the pre-Chou period, too, was feudally organized. The „noblemen" of whom the bone-inscriptions of the Shang period speak[2]) are quite plainly feudal retainers[3]). If in the Hsia society was already taking the form of a state, we must not lightly repudiate the evidence of the Shu Ching, which indicates that the organization of this state was, at least embryonically, of a feudal character[4]) — especially since such an early feudal phase is fully in harmony with our general knowledge of economic and social history.

Although the first two dynasties seem to have been clearly feudal, and the feudal structure of the Chou state is very pronounced, the old agrarian order early acquired a new feature — public water works — which at first affected but slightly the social and political organization. But in the course of a long development, full of contradictions, its importance grew until it led to grave convulsions which impressed a fundamentally new stamp upon the entire social order.

We do not know the particulars of this transition, and it is questionable how much we shall ever learn of it in detail. But we do know — and this is fully sufficient — the point of departure and the result, as well as the essential causes of the process. The beginnings of a socially differentiated agrarian history of China took place outside of the swampy plains of the vast northeastern river delta, although there may have been isolated cultural oases in the

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[1]) See Shih Ching, III, III, 5; III, III, 7; IV, II, 4. (Ch. Cl. IV, p. 537 ff., 621 ff.) Also the Tso Chuan, passim.

[2]) Hopkins, loc. cit., 1917, p. 806.

[3]) Shih Ching, IV, III, 5 (loc. cit., IV, 2, p. 643 ff.).

[4]) Shu Ching, II, IV, I, 8 (Ch. Cl. VII, 1, p. 85).

more elevated regions or round about in the hill districts of the East. During the later Chou period, however, when Chinese feudalism was in open crisis, a progressive advance is evident of the Chinese cultural area into the great eastern alluvial plain[1]). The subjugation of the northern part of this plain, formerly uninhabitable because of the ever-changing loess streams, would have been impossible without the construction of river dams of great magnitude. A technology first developed in small river valleys[2]) was now applied on a giant scale.

The history of the Chou period is filled with reports of so-called public works[3]) as well as of the activity of the directing Minister of Works[4]). The origin of this post goes back into the beginning of the Chou period, perhaps even much further. When the Chou state was founded, the Ministry of Public Works was one of the two ministries reserved for members of the ruling family[5]). The inscriptions of the An Yang bones indicate that the technique of embankment existed even during the Shang period[6]). An ode of the Shih Ching, dealing with life in the state of Chou during Shang times, speaks of public works and also of one Ssi Kung (Minister of Public Works) as their director[7]).

The value of the legendary tale of the „labors of Yü" consists in the fact that it gives information on the beginnings of public works in very ancient times — though in a quite legendary manner.

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[1]) We have hitherto avoided drawing upon the Yü Kung in our analysis, as its authenticity is particularly disputed in recent times. The view that the work must be „a post-fourth century production" (Ting, Prof. Granet's etc., p. 269) because it mentions Ssetchuan, presupposes a unity in the content of the Yü Kung which is not certain. At the time depicted by the Yü Kung, the largest part of the northeast plain must have been half or wholly waste (Shu Ching, III, I, III, 12 ff. Ch. Cl. III, 1, p. 99 ff. Cf., too, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas I, p. 279 ff.) Towards the end of the Chou period this area as well as that of the Yangtze states was no longer in the condition which the Yü Kung describes, not only in what relates to the „labors" but above all in connection with the yield of the soil. See note 3 on the development during the Chou period.

[2]) Cf. the highly instructive traditions about early waterworks in Shansi at the Fen : T'ae T'ae, as chief of the officers of the water „cleared the channels of the Fun and T'aou and embanked the great marsh, so as to make the great plain habitable" (Tso Chuan, Duke Ch'aou, Year 1, Ch. Cl. V, 2, p. 580).

[3]) The Tso Chuan continually tells of such public works, but, in accordance with the whole character of the writing, is really interested in them only so far as they are military and showy works. The statement in the Year 31 of Duke Seang (Ch. Cl. V, 2, p. 566) proves that the dyke technique was well known at the time of Tso Chuan. That, by means of this technique, already then giant canals and dykes were constructed, is shown in the 29th chapter of the Shih Chi of Ssu-Ma Ch'ien (Chavannes III, p. 522 ff.)

[4]) Cf. Tso Chuan, Ch. Cl. V, pp. 110, 186, 251, 258, 275, 282, 297, 310, 319, 388, 397, 409, 428, 439, 447, 469, 515, 548, 564, 599, 641, 667.

[5]) Tso Chuan, Duke Ting, Year 4, Ch. Cl. V, 2, p. 754.

[6]) Hopkins, loc. cit., 1917, p. 791.

[7]) Shih Ching III, I, 3 (Ch. Cl. IV, 2, p. 439).

We certainly do not need the document in order to prove the development of this institution in the course of feudal times. That such a development occurred is beyond all doubt. Moreover, it is quite impossible that the huge water-works attributed[1]) to Yü by the legend could at that time have actually been executed within a single generation. Even if the „labors of Yü" were very much smaller than tradition maintains, they must have been spread over a long interval — just as in the case of the preparatory labors for the Great Wall and the Great Canal. Yü and the saga spun about him remain, nevertheless, extremely noteworthy; for they do prove that the beginning and development of the system of public works in ancient China was felt to be the beginning of a new epoch of agricultural settlement and production and thus the beginning of a new function of the ancient Chinese state[2]).

4. The Dissolution of the old Agrarian Community

Closely connected with the crisis of feudalism in the Chou period, underlying and profoundly influencing it, is the crisis in the ancient Chinese agrarian community. In the study of this phenomenon too much attention has been devoted to the question of the geometric form of the village community. In discussing the possibility and form of a schematic „well-field system" (nine equal fields, with a well in the central field, about which were grouped the huts of the villagers), it was often forgotten that this question was by no means the only one or even the most important. A purely philological approach, which disregards all evidence save that from one or two sources (the Shih Ching and Mencius), which it then attempts to discredit by emphasizing their „lateness"[3]), is equally unsatisfactory and offers no assistance to the advancement of a material analysis.

During the fourth century B. C., Shang Yang, prime minister of the state of Ch'in, replaced by a new system the agrarian organization which had prevailed up to that time. In the new system the individual peasant families (no longer large families, but small ones), became permanent possessors of the land which they cultivated[4]). The existence of an earlier state-regulated „bound"

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[1]) Shu Ching III, I. (Ch. Cl. III, 1, p. 92 ff.)

[2]) Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, Vol. I, p. 282.

[3]) See Hu Shi Wen Ts'un (trend of thought reported by P. Demiéville in the Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient, XXIII, 1923, especially, p. 495). Besides, Hu Shih admits the historicity of the existence of a public field (p. 496).

[4]) Cf. Ssu-Ma Ch'ien, Biography of Lord Shang, trans. by J. J. L. Duyvendak. (The Book of Lord Shang, London, 1928, p. 18 ff.) Cf. besides the additional sources given by Duyvendak, loc. cit., p. 45.

system, up to the end of the Chou period, is therefore beyond doubt[1]).

The old agrarian order, which lasted certainly until the time of Shang Yang, must itself have been the result of a long and complicated development. Strange remains of tradition point to a prefamily condition of economic life[2]). Such a condition, as comparative anthropology has established, often appears in the beginnings of agrarian development in the form of an agrarian communism of the clan, generally combined with mother-right[3]). Because of its collective labor it was essentially different in its socio-economic structure from the „well-land" system which followed. In the latter the village land was periodically redivided among several large patriarchal families. Each of these families now constituted an economic unit whose members tilled the soil in common. Such a system constitutes an important form of transition from the original agrarian communism to full-grown private property and to the small family[4]). It is noteworthy that Shang Yang, when he dissolved the old bound community — thereby, certainly, only aiding a development which had begun long before his time — decreed also the breaking up of the great peasant family[5]).

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[1]) Cf. Tso Chuan, Ch. Cl. V, 2, pp. 447, 517, 558, 609, 671, 700, 773 and passim., also Shih Ching II, VI, 6 (Ch. Cl. IV, 2., p. 374 ff.) III, I, 3 (loc. cit., p. 438 ff.) Even if the passages of the Chou Li dealing with the agrarian relations of the Chou period were written, as Karlgren believes, no earlier than the fourth century B. C. — which does not exclude the possibility that they may reflect older institutions — the information conveyed in this work remains instructive enough. It is important to establish the fact that the statements of the Chou Li do not contradict the parallel dates in the Tso Chuan and Shih Ching but — apart from certain exceptions which cannot be discussed here — merely supplement them and make them concrete. Our view, moreover, does not need support from the Chou Li. It remains valid, even if we put this source completely aside.

[2]) Li Chi, VII, I (Legge, loc. cit., vol. XXVII, p. 364 ff. R. Wilhelm (Li Gi, p. 30 ff.) who in distinction from Legge, does not mention any public and common spirit, which is not found in the text). Couvreur's translation which introduces a „chef de l'empire" is utterly fantastic. (Li Chi, ed. Couvreur, Jo Kien Fou, 1913, I, p. 497.) Wilhelm's translation, „At the time when the great way ruled, the world was common property" conveys exactly the sense of the nine Chinese characters. It contains an idea which corresponds perhaps very little to the views later dominant in China, but corresponds excellently with certain findings of modern anthropology. Cf., moreover, the Lü Shi Ch'un Ch'iu, ed. Wilhelm, p. 346.

[3]) „Nevertheless, there are facts pointing definitely to the close connection between communal ownership and mother-right, on the one hand, and individual ownership and father-right on the other hand." (Rivers, Social Organization, p. 114.)

[4]) M. Kowalewsky's conclusions concerning this (Tableau des origines et de l'évolution de la famille et de la propriété, Stockholm, 1890) receive confirmation in important respects from recent investigations. Cf., besides Rivers (l. c.), R. Thurnwald, Die menschliche Gesellschaft. Bd. II, S. 26. See also F. Engels, Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats, 20th ed. Stuttgart, 1921, p. 42 ff. and p. 143.

[5]) The size of the average family is set at three adult males capable of working, in the Ta Tai Li Chi (Li Gi, ed. Wilhelm, p. 70). Shang Yang sought to destroy this type of large family. He issued an order „forbidding fathers and sons, elder

By the time of Chou the original, presumably clanlike character of the village family had already changed considerably. With the dissolution of the clan into large families the original organization gave way, at least in part, to regional organization. Even before Shang Yang, there was a tendency in various states toward uniting villagers, apparently no longer organized on a clan basis, into groups of five as administrative units[1]). This is an interesting sign of the transitional character of the village community of those days.

Because of the diversity of development in different areas, the form of the agrarian community at the end of the Ch'un Ch'iu period (eighth to fifth century B. C.) was not at all uniform. The study of material facts shows that there was no single type of village community, but rather a whole series of types which can by no means be reduced by philologists to a fantasy invented by Mencius. Mencius, who dealt with the well-land system, lived about 300 B. C. The Chou Li, which according to Liang Ch'i-Ch'ao and Chen Huan-Chang contains old materials at least in part[2]), describes two completely divergent forms of the old well-system[3]). The account given by Ku Liang, commentator on the Ch'un Ch'iu, likewise differs materially from that of Mencius[4]). A statement in the Tso Chuan relating to the well-system makes clear that this system prevailed only in flat country[5]). Thus, as was to be expected, the form of the village community varied greatly, both temporally and spatially. One feature, however, seems to be common to its various aspects. The payment rendered to the feudal lords was generally made in the form of labor, which was performed on a special „public" or „state" field[6]).

Why was there this change, toward the end of the Chou period,

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and younger brothers, from living together in the same house". „People who had two males or more (in the family — addition by Duyvendak) without dividing the household, had to pay double taxes." (Duyvendak, loc. cit., p. 18 and 15.)

[1]) Tso Chuan, Duke Seang, Year 31 (Ch. Cl. V, 2, p. 558), Duke Ch'aou, Year 24 (loc. cit., p. 700), Duke Ting, Year 9 (loc. cit., p. 773).

[2]) Chen Huan-Chang, loc. cit., I, p. 35. Lian Ch'i-Ch'ao, History of Chinese Political Thought, p. 27.

[3]) First form : Chou Li X, 8 ff. (ed. Biot, I, p. 223) Second form : Chou Li IX, 27 ff. and XV, 6 ff. (ed. Biot, I, p. 206 ff. and I, 340 ff.).

[4]) Ku Liang's representation is reproduced in Legge, Prolegomena to Ch'un Ch'iu (Ch. Cl. V, p. 68), Mencius, III, A, 3 and I, B, 5 (ed. Wilhelm with the title Mong Dsi, Jena, 1916, p. 51 and 16.).

[5]) Wei Yen, the marshal of Ch'u, „set about ... defining the meres ; marking out the higher lands and the downs ; distinguishing the poor and salt tracts ; enumerating the boundaries of the flooded districts ; raising small banks on the plains between dykes ; assigning the wet low grounds for pasturage ; dividing the wide rich plains into tsings..." (Tso Chuan, Duke Seang, Year 25. Legge Ch. Cl. V, 2, p. 517. Our italics.)

[6]) Little Hsia Calendar (loc. cit., p. 235) ; Shih Ching II, VI, 9 (Ch. Cl. IV, 2, p. 381). Besides the statement cited in note 5, the well-system is mentioned several

from collective labor in the public field to exaction of a land tax[1]) from individual families, or, speaking in economic terms, from labor rent to rent in kind ? We find the explanation in the Lü Shi Ch'un Ch'iu : it was because the public fields were cultivated less carefully than the private ones[2]). A form of taxation which was useful with extensive methods of cultivation proved no longer suitable in view of the increasing intensity of labor. New forms of taxation had to be found. They were found.

The material bases for the dissolution of the village commune were prepared by the increase in the productivity of labor through the introduction of metal implements[3]), and especially by irrigation, which was coming more and more into use also in north

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times in the same work under Duke Seang, Year 31 (loc. cit. 558). It is to be assumed that where the well-system existed it was linked with the institution of a special public field. The labor of the population (townsmen as well as countrymen) on the public fields is explicitly spoken of in the Tso Chuan, Duke Ch'aou, Year 18 (loc. cit., p. 671). The two commentators of the Ch'un Ch'iu, Kung Yang and Ku Liang, both speak of the „anciently" performed labor in the public field (Ch. Cl. V, 1, Prolegomena, p. 68 ff.). According to Ku Liang, wells and dwellings of peasants were situated on the public field, an assertion which finds its support perhaps in the Shih Ching songs II, VI, 6 (loc. cit., p. 375). Mencius speaks of the public fixing of boundaries as a reality, but, on the other hand, about the nine-field system as an earlier institution, whose re-installation he recommends — but not for the fields in the neighborhood of the city ! The public fields in his time evidently no longer had the form he recommended. He censures arbitrary drawing of boundaries as a device of evil officials to augment their pay ! When one remembers that during the time of Mencius the abolition of the old „boundaries" in the state of Ch'in was deemed an extraordinary innovation, which the other states by no means followed, it immediately becomes evident that Mencius' suggestions for reforms were far from being pure fantasies ; they rather set out from existing relations, which to be sure were visibly in complete disintegration. A very complicated description is that of the Chou Li, which for reasons of space we shall not treat of here. Maspero, who points out the independent nature of the Chou Li, and who likewise sees the variations among Kung Yang, Ku Liang and Mencius — which he seeks to explain, not as real variations but merely as philological variations of an unknown common source — Maspero, at all events, stresses at the same time emphatically that the well-system was undoubtedly an historical reality. (La Chine antique, p. 109, note.)

[1]) Ch'un Ch'iu, Duke Seuen, Year 15. There may be added to this the two commentaries already cited, as well as a remark of Tso Chuan evidently pointing to labor in the public field. (Ch. Cl. V, 1, pp. 327 and 320.) The new tax, after more than a hundred years, did not yet prove sufficient for the state of Lu, which imposed it. (Cf. Lun Yü, XII, 9, Ch. Cl. p. 255.) The state of Ts'i, in the sixth century, was not contented with 20 % of the yield. It laid taxes which left the population (peasant ?) only a third of the product of its labor. (Tso Chuan Duke Ch'aou, Year 3, loc. cit., p. 589.) We have already told how Shang Yang's re-ordering of the agrarian system was connected with a fundamental transposition to a tax imposable on families.

[2]) Lü Shi Ch'un Ch'iu, trans. by R. Wilhelm with the title Frühling und Herbst des Lü Bu We, Jena, 1928, p. 262.

[3]) The use of iron must have been widespread by the sixth century (Tso Chuan, Duke Ch'aou, Year 30, loc. cit., p. 732). Mencius mentions iron implements in tilling of fields (III, I, 4, Legge, Ch. Cl. II, p. 248). Eberhard claims, following recent Chinese investigations, that bronze implements were used in agriculture during the Chou period, although late and infrequently (W. Eberhard, Zur Landwirtschaft der Han-Zeit,

China at the end of the Chou period[1]). We cannot trace this trend in detail. We merely wish to establish that the development of public forms of labor (dyke and canal building), which originally grew up out of its private forms, now reacted in a decisive manner upon the private forms of agricultural production. Although irrigation was first employed, in the central and western sections of China, in an incidental and local manner, the development of public works in the northeast (at first mostly dykes) led to an irrigational agriculture supported by public canal construction, which eventually rose to be the ruling form of agricultural production[2]).

The end of the Chou period witnessed an ever expanding construction of canals, even in those northern regions which mainly produced millet and wheat. The economic and political importance of this canal construction is exhibited most clearly in the history of the state of Ch'in. This state, which changed its agrarian system earlier and in a more thoroughgoing manner than most of the neighbouring states, ultimately raised itself to be the master of all the „China" of those days. Ch'in was of course not the only state which moved in this direction. It was a time filled with attempts at transition to a new agrarian and social order. Ch'in achieved a more decisive transformation than its political rivals and thereby gained the advantage leading to victory in the final struggle for power over the empire. Ssu-Ma Chien's report on the end of the Chou period reflects the profound impression which the agrarian policies of the state of Ch'in made upon contemporaries and posterity[3]). The changing of the agrarian order, canal-building on a great scale, both linked with ruthless destruction of the old feudal social structure, enabled the young bureaucratic, centralized state to defeat the other states, which were still feudal, and to enter into the heritage of the Chou dynasty.

Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen, Berlin, XXXV, 1932. Ostasiatische Studien, p. 88.)

[1]) The Shih Ching is already acquainted with irrigation. Cf. II, VIII, 8, Ch. Cl. IV, 3, p. 417 : also IV, I, 5, loc. cit., p. 600 ff.) Ssu-Ma Ch'ien describes the extension of the system of canals at the end of the Chou period with continual reference to the importance of the constructions for irrigational purposes. (Chavannes, III, p. 522 ff.)

[2]) The result of this development is described by the Lü Shih Ch'un Ch'iu (ed. Wilhelm, p. 159). Also, in the framework of the rotation of the calendar : p. 28 and 81. Cf. too Li Chi (Legge XXVIII, p. 264 and 286) as well as the Chou Li — admitted to be authoritative for what appertains to the fourth century B. C. (Biot, I, p. 367.)

[3]) Ssu-Ma Ch'ien. Chap. XXIX (Chavannes, III, p. 523 ff.).

5. Changes in the Economic and Social Structure.

Hand in hand with the development of agricultural production, aiding it and being aided in turn, went a powerful development of handicraft and commercial activity. During the Chou period the idea had arisen that just as the peasant was bound to the soil from birth and as the feudal lord inherited his fief and posts of state, so handwork and commerce were likewise hereditary trades. But in actual practice this part of the old order, like the other two, had already been relaxed[1]). As production grows, commerce increases, developing its means of exchange (money)[2]) and its channels of exchange (markets and wholesale trade)[3]). In the second half of the Chou period we hear of merchants who have considerable wealth and stand in relations of a contractual nature to the feudal prince[4]).

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[1]) The fact that the dukes of the various feudal states were enthroned by hereditary succession — cf. Shih Ching III, III, 7, Ch. Cl. IV, 2, p. 546 ff. — needs no proof. It is true that at first the Shang and Chou rulers like the Carolingians and the Merovingians may have become rulers over the entire imperial territory by means of great military victories. There is much evidence for this. Still, corresponding to the economic-military structure of this „empire", there very soon set in a relapse into an agglomerate of single feudal states with relative independence. Respecting the inheritance of high state posts, in „old families", we possess data which reach back to the middle of the Shang period; if we trust the reports of the Shu Ching, very much earlier still. (Cf. Shu Ching, P'an Keng. Ch. Cl. III, 1, p. 229. For the Chou period cf. Tso Chuan loc. cit., p. 429, 551, 580, 683.)

The hereditary character of the non-noble classes must likewise have continued to exist until the time of the „Spring and Autumn Annals" (eighth to fifth centuries). In the year 582 we find the following praise of the state of Tsin; „his common people attend diligently to their husbandry; his merchants, mechanics and inferior employees know nothing of changing their hereditary employments". (Tso Chuan, loc. cit., p. 440.) A statement from the end of the sixth century implies that while non-official callings ought to be hereditary, they are in fact no longer entirely so. „Sons must not change the business of their fathers — husbandry, some mechanical art or trade." (Tso Chuan, loc. cit., p. 718.) The Lü Shi Ch'un Ch'iu speaks similarly (Wilhelm ed., p. 454) of the ties of the peasant to his land and of the merchant to his calling — now clearly as of an ideal.

[2]) The inscriptions of the Shang period take cognizance of shell-money (Hopkins, loc. cit., 1917, p. 382). We find in the eighth century and following that the variety of means of exchange has grown greatly. (See Tso Chuan, loc. cit., pp. 12, 191, 224, 253 ff., 282, 310, 427, 525.)

[3]) Primitive market traffic, perhaps still on a natural basis, is described in the Yi Ching. (Hexagram 21, Legge, p. 383.) The Tso Chuan knows highly developed market relations. (Ch. Cl. 467, 584, 589, 671, 681, 683, 712, 816, 843, 856.) It is a characteristic fact of the growing bureaucratization that we hear of the existence of markets often only indirectly, namely, on the occasion of the naming of the officials who supervise them.) Large purchases of grain for state purposes are reported. (Tso Chuan, p. 114 ff. Cf. also pp. 21 and 167.) The question of taxing the merchants on the borders or in the markets plays a considerable part in the discussion of the later Chou period. (Cf. Mencius, I, II, 5; Legge, Ch. Cl. II, p. 162; also II, I, 5, p. 199 ff.; Ta Tai Li Chi, Li Gi, Wilhelm ed., p. 187; and Lü Shi Ch'un Ch'iu, loc. cit., p. 93 ff.)

[4]) Tso Chuan, Ch. Cl. V, 2, p. 664. In this case, as in the first of the sales of grain mentioned in the above note, the merchant is evidently of noble origin. The account

The growth of public works — dykes, canals, fortifications, luxurious buildings — requires a new type of state officials. There now arises the class of wandering philosophers, political counselors and non-hereditary officials, stemming mostly from the poorer members of the old feudal class, and in lesser numbers also from the other classes[1]). They offer their services to the various high officials and dukes, on a frankly commercial basis[2]). Alongside of the ideal of the feudal knight, as he is honoured in the remains of old songs and in other traditions, there now appears the ideal of the literarily educated administrative official. Confucius, though not the first to do so, formulated this ideal in a way heavily fraught with historical consequences.

The placing of posts of state on a non-hereditary basis signified a break with the feudal view of the state. In this way the central power demonstrated plainly that it no longer needed the feudal retainers. The new tasks of the state made such a break objectively necessary, while the growing economic, military and political power of the central government made it technically possible.

When former social bonds are destroyed, new institutions and forces are needed in their stead, to be used as material and moral supports to the changing state. In addition to the new type of officials, and the great business men (commercial, industrial and bank capitalists, who could not be altogether relied on)[3]), this

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of Tso Chuan proves that merchants normally ranked below the officialdom and could be taken up into the latter class only through very great services. Tso Chuan, loc. cit., p. 799. That a travelling merchant who is in a position to offer impromptu a dozen oxen and a number of hides is wealthy enough to mix in politics is to be seen from the report in the Tso Chuan, loc. cit., p. 224. Cf. also the somewhat divergent account in the Lü Shi Ch'un Ch'iu, loc. cit., p. 246 ff.

[1]) Both Confucius and Mencius belonged to poor or obscure branches of noble families. (Cf. Lun Yü, IX, VI, 3 ; Legge, Ch. Cl., p. 218 ; also Legge's preface to his edition of Mencius, Ch. Cl. II, p. 15.) Confucius only underlined a tendency already present in his time, in making the choice of the pupils he educated for a political public career independent of their wealth. (See Lun Yü, VI, IX, and especially VII, VIII, Ch. Cl. p. 188 and 197.) The classic figure of a very rich merchant who at the end of the Chou Period attains the highest state office is Lü Pu We. (Cf. Kao Yu's biography, trans. by Wilhelm, Frühling und Herbst des Lü Bu We, p. 1 ff.)

[2]) Confucius seeks to fix the amount of a suitable emolument for the new type of official demanded by him. This emolument is no longer in land, but in adequate payment for capable officials. (Lun Yü, VI, III. Ch. Cl., p. 185 ff.) Also Mo Ti demands that a competent officer should receive adequate payment. (Forke ed., under the title of Me Ti, Berlin, 1922, p. 197.) A chapter of the Li Chi, whose Confucian purity is thought doubtful, but which surely expresses the main tendency of the transition period, contains the following advice : „A superior man will not for words of small importance receive great emoluments, nor for words of great importance small emolument." (Li Chi, Legge, loc. cit., XXVIII, p. 345.)

[3]) Leading roles as counselors and high officials under the Han emperor, Wu Ti, toward the end of the second century B. C., were played by K'ung Chin, a wealthy

support was sought from the structure of the family — primarily the peasant family, which with the development of agricultural production was evolving out of its earlier forms.

During the close of the Chou period, the head of the then maturing small family was the father. He embodied in the peasant family the accumulated experience[1]) of increasingly skillful methods of agricultural production. The prestige derived from his economic leadership made him eminently fitted to exercise an almost unlimited moral and political authority over members of his family[2]).

Confucius' great rival, Mo Ti, agrees with him in this, that neither feudal heredity nor knightly qualities should determine fitness for state post[3]). In his demand that the members of the new ruling class should be professionally trained, his radicalism surpassed even that of Confucius[4]). But it was just these demands which led in the long run to his seeming, in the eyes of the new officials, a less suitable representative than Confucius, who did not hesitate to grant his „gentleman" dignity and a carefully limited brilliance[5]).

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iron manufacturer, Tung-Kuo Hien-Yang, a great salt producer, and the merchant's son Sang Hung-Yang. (Cf. Ssu-Ma Ch'ien, Chap. 30, Chavannes, III, p. 567 ff.) Cf. also O. Franke, Staatssozialistische Versuche im alten und mittelalterlichen China, Berlin, 1931, p. 5 ff., and Chun-Ming Chang, The Genesis and Meaning of Huan K'uan's „Discussion on salt and iron", Chinese Social and Political Science Review, XVIII, 1934, April, p. 21 and 25. On the growing importance of the banker see idem p. 12.

[1]) It is experience that counts, not bodily strength. „Man becomes a farmer by accumulated experience in farming." Hsüntze (trans. by Hu Shih, The development, etc., p. 156.) Cf. The Works of Hsüntze, H. H. Dubs ed., London, 1928, p. 115.

[2]) Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, I, p. 141 ff.

[3]) Confucius proclaimed as a principle for the selection of his pupils : „In teaching there should be no distinction of classes." (Lun Yü, XV, XXXVIII, Ch. Cl. I, p. 305. Cf. too Lun Yü, VII, VII, and XXVIII, loc. cit., p. 197 and 204.) He excluded from his teaching the old knightly subjects of learning, chariot-riding and archery, as well as the military arts. (Lun Yü VII, XVII ; VII, XXIV ; XV, I ; also the sarcastic remarks in Lun Yü, IX, II, Ch. Cl. I, p. 200 ; 202, 294 and 216.) Whereas the old feudal songs extol the brave chariot-driver, the good marksman and the reckless hunter (cf. Shih Ching I, VII, 4, Cl. IV, 1, p. 129 ff. and passim.), Confucius stresses, having perhaps in mind the cited passages in the Shi Ching, that he has no use for such men of strength. (Lun Yü, VII, X, loc. cit., p. 198.) Mo Ti's attacks on the choice of officials by the old feudal principle of heredity pervade all his writings (Me Ti, Forke ed., p. 193, 202, 208, 211, 226 and passim).

[4]) Confucius : the high official needs no professional training. (Lun Yü, XIII, IV, Ch. Cl. I, p. 264 ff.) Completely opposed by Mo Ti, who lauds the technical administrative and agricultural abilities of the idealized officials of the past. (Me Ti, p. 194 and passim.)

[5]) Confucius on eating, clothing and music. (Lun Yü, X, VI ; X, VIII ; XIV, XIII. Ch. Cl. 1, p. 230 ff. ; 232 ff. ; 279.) These observations in Confucius are accompanied by a number of limiting statements. But actual development considerably lessened the importance of these limitations. Ideologically the weakening of these restraints was rendered easier by the consciously aestheticizing character of the Confucian cultural ideal (cf. Lun Yü, VIII, VIII, Ch. Cl. I, p. 211 and passim). Opposed,

What tipped the scales in the historical victory of Confucius over Mo Ti was the former's conception of the small family organization as a necessary basis for the new society. Mo Ti, with his demand for universal love, according to which children should love their neighbours' parents as their own[1]), obviously reflects the mood of a developing commodity economy with its abstract equality of all produced commodities in the market. If China's feudalism had been resolved into a capitalist economy, its ideology would have been transformed in accordance with the ideas of Mo Ti or of some similar thinker. To be sure, even the Confucian ideas did not prove to be entirely fitted to the later developments. But at all events they corresponded to this development incomparably better than any competing ideological patterns. The epoch of political transitional struggles, from the Ch'in period to the Sui (202 B. C. to 618 A. D.), witnessed the struggle of Confucianism with other rival philosophies, namely, Taoism and Buddhism. The final establishment of „oriental" society during the T'ang period brought the final victory of Confucianism and its definitive formulation in the Sung philosophy[2]).

6. The Formation of „Oriental" Absolutism.

a. From Labor Rent to Rent in Kind and Money Rent.

Originally the feudal lords of ancient China took the surplus product of agricultural activity largely in the form of labor rent (work in the public fields); toward the end of feudalism, they began to substitute payment in kind. The new state, which expressed a new social system[3]) made rent in kind general, as being better suited to a more highly developed mode of production.

With the growing commodity economy and especially after the

Mo Ti and his school, who advocated simplicity in eating, clothing and dwelling (loc. cit., p. 293 ff., 296.), and were scornful toward music (Me Ti, p. 188 and Mohists, 399 ff.). Mo Ti's crude belief in spirits is as compatible with his early bourgeois social ideas as Cromwell's clumsy belief in the Bible was with his historical function.

[1]) The thesis that piety and obedience in the patriarchally constituted family must be the basis of society constantly recurs in Confucius' teachings, as is well known. Even when the parents are in the wrong, one must obey them. If the father steals a sheep, the son's duty is not to inform on him but to shield him! (Lun Yü, IV, XVIII and XIII, XVIII, loc. cit., p. 170 and 270.) Sharply opposed is Mo Ti. (Me Ti, p. 242 ff., 254 and 262 ff.)

[2]) We intend at a later date to elaborate this idea on the basis of a concrete analysis of the underlying economic and social development. At this point we rest content with referring to the presentation of Hu Shih, who makes this phenomenon obvious. (Hu Shih, Religion and Philosophy in Chinese History, Symposium on Chinese Culture, p. 32 ff.)

[3]) Cf. K. Marx, Das Kapital, III, 2, 4th ed. Hamburg, 1919, p. 324 and 173 ff.

completion of the Great Canal, the state exacted part of the rent payment in the form of money. The principle, nevertheless, remained the same. The peasant should retain just enough of his crop to enable him to reproduce both his family's labor power and his own[1]). As the history of agrarian crises in China shows, this principle, when not modified by other factors (tenantry, commercial capital and usury capital), was rarely departed from to ease the pressure but frequently to tighten it[2]).

b. Further Stages in the History of Chinese Economy and Settlement.

The growth of the Chinese state within the Yangtze Valley compelled it to undertake public works on a new scale. The great rice districts situated around the Yangtze required a very extensive state activity in the construction of water-works. The giant canals built in the great plain not only served agricultural production, but assisted in the economic and military, i. e., the political mastery by the bureaucratic state of all the important centers of the enlarged area of production[3]). When in the sixth century A. D. the Great Canal was unified by the linking of its

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[1]) The principle is already proclaimed by Mencius and Shang Yang. (Mencius, III, I, 3, Ch. Cl., II, p. 240. The Book of Lord Shang, p. 176 and 306 ff.)

[2]) The tax is demanded in bad years too, and when the people, after the whole year's toil, are still not able to nourish their parents „they proceed to borrowing to increase their means, till the old people and children are found lying in the ditches and water-channels..." (Mencius, loc. cit., p. 241 ff.) This condition, which set in toward the close of the Chou period (i. e. with the dissolution of the old agrarian commune), always reappeared in the history of the bureaucratic centralized state as the expression of the approach and outbreak of socio-economic crisis. A budget of a poor peasant family of the Han period shows that the taxes were so high, even in normal years, that if the peasant met all his obligations the year inevitably closed with a deficit. (Li K'uei's attempted calculation, as reported by the Han Shu, is translated by Duyvendak, The Book of Lord Shang, p. 43. Cf. too Eberhard, Zur Landwirtschaft der Han Zeit, loc. cit., p. 76 ff., and 81.) The famous memorial of Lu Chih of the late eighth century A. D. reports on the status of the land-tax system in the T'ang period after the modernization of the tax. (Cf. the translation of S. Balazs, Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen, Berlin, 1933. Ostasiatische Studien, p. 29 ff.) Ma Tuan-Lin's account gives detailed information on tax conditions during the Sung period. (See Biot's Mémoire sur la condition de la propriété territoriale en Chine, Journal Asiatique, 1838, p. 306 ff.) The procedure : merciless exaction of taxes leading to the flight or committing to tenantry of the pauperized peasants, continuing throughout the Min dynasty into the Manchu dynasty. (Cf. Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, The Economic History of China, New York, 1921, p. 350 ff., 407 and 411.)

[3]) See Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, I, p. 287-290. Cf. also Ch'ao-Ting Chi, The Economic Basis of Unity and Division in Chinese History. (Pacific Affairs, 1934, December, p. 387 passim.) Chi's conception of the dynamics of what he calls the „economic key areas" in Chinese history is, in our judgment, one of the most valuable contributions to scientific understanding of the economic development of China.

separate sections, in part very old, it represented a kind of artificial Nile. This huge canal made it possible for the capital which for military reasons had to be situated on the edge of the economic key area, to maintain control of this area and, thereby, of the economically essential parts of the empire[1]).

China's artificial Nile necessarily gave an enormous impetus to both private and state economy, in the direction of extension, intensification and commercialization. The growth of money economy during the T'ang period[2]) and its fiscal, military and political consequences are no accident. It represents the necessary result of the development and modification of the material foundations of „Asiatic" China.

c. The Struggle over Land Rent in the „Asiatic" System of Production.

The original form of the Asiatic system of production in China, in consequence of the historical causes depicted above, had a feudal point of departure which complicates the picture. The bureaucratic centralized state developed in China on the foundation of an agrarian community which disintegrated in proportion to the growth of the new society.

The higher form of the Asiatic system of production displays, alongside of simple commodity production the beginnings of a developed commodity production[3]). A commercial and money-lending capital springs up within the framework of the bureaucratic state[4]) based on a countless number of „free" peasant holdings. The state had to favor commodity economy and trade as a means of making the land rent mobile.

The ruling official class, which as representative of the commonwealth struggled against the feudal land rent on behalf of the state form of land tax, saw itself confronted by new opposing forces. Because the latter were linked by necessity to the new society, they were not so easy to get rid of as the outmoded old ones.

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[1]) This is one of the most important ideas in the work of Ch'ao-Ting Chi (The economic basis, etc., p. 392).

[2]) Cf. S. Balazs, Beiträge zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte der T'ang-Zeit (Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen, Berlin, 1931 and 1932). Balazs, by the use of sources, has for the most part accurately described the phenomena. Employing Max Weber's methodology, however, he seeks the explanation not in the development of the material basis but in the conditions of circulation and of politics, commerce and wars, 1932, p. 22 and 32.

[3]) Human labor power also becomes a commodity, in the form of wage labor (cf. on the beginnings of industrial capitalism in „Asiatic" China : Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, I, p. 525 ff.).

[4]) Ibid., p. 701 ff. and 726 ff.

A vicious economic-political circle resulted : accumulation of private wealth of the new type and accumulation of private possession of land in the hands of officials, „gentry" and great merchants, reduction of land tax, enfeebling of the state, agrarian crisis, internal crisis, external crisis — invasions[1]) — state crisis. Although this vicious circle could be periodically smoothed over by the fall and rise of „dynasties", it could never be really overcome.

The details of this contradictory process can only be hinted at here. The new „Confucian" ruling class, either active as officials or living privately as „gentry", may originally have arisen out of the old feudal aristocracy. Its economic position was now determined essentially by its specific relation to the land and the products thereof. Because of this relation, it was vitally interested in the new form of land rent received as tax and disbursed by the state treasury.

The land rent which flows into the state treasury must be large. This calls for agronomic activity by the state, especially for widespread irrigation works. It demands economic and political struggle against private landowners who seize the rent for themselves. This struggle takes the form of regulation of inheritances to effect the splitting up of landed estates[2]). It results in repeated attempts to destroy or limit large landownership. These measures prove effective so long as they are aimed against obsolete feudal strongholds[3]). They succeed only temporarily or not at

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[1]) We have analyzed the problem of invasion, as related to the internal crisis of the Chinese state, in Probleme der chinesischen Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik, vol. 57, 1926, p. 325 and passim.

[2]) The new regulations of inheritance, originating during the close of the Chou period, were pushed forward energetically after the establishment of the absolute state. Han Wu Ti in 128 B. C. enacted a law which had as its object the division of feudal estates previously inherited. The final statute of the regulation of inheritance is shown by the codex of the last dynasty as P. G. Boulais has translated it under the title of Manuel du Code Chinois, Shanghai, 1924. (Cf. ibid., p. 198 ff. ; O. Franke, Die Rechtsverhältnisse am Grundeigentum in China, Leipzig, 1903, p. 46 ff.) It is known that the majority of the ranks of nobility, in so far as they were bestowed in post-feudal times, usually disappeared after a few generations (cf. Manual du Code Chinois, p. 103).

[3]) The smiting of feudal power in 154 B. C. „politically meant the end of feudalism and the concentration of power in the hands of the imperial government". Economically it signified the impoverishment of the feudal lords. (Chun-Ming Chang, loc. cit., p. 12.) Bestowing a benefice on some dignitary was robbed of any material importance. Ma Tuan-Lin summarizes by saying : „We know from the accounts of Li Pi that the so-called bestowal of title and land was only an empty appearance, as no inheritance took place. ‚The fief-holders' were not allowed to draw any direct income from the fief. It thus becomes only an emolument or gift, there is no question of a bestowal of the land... But if there be no hereditary bestowal of the land, the feudal system is finished." (Wen Hsien T'ung Kao, p. 276, 11b. Translated by Balazs. Beiträge, etc., p. 66.) Traces of feudal land possession later appear often, finally in the form of the „banner-land" of the Manchus, but it never regained its historic role.

all, or react against their initiators[1]), when they are directed against social-economic powers which adhere necessarily to the new economic system.

In order that land rent may be controlled, it must be mobile. Roads and canals are useful in this connection, and a certain measure of monetary development is also serviceable. We have already pointed out what the establishment of the Great Canal during the seventh century A. D. meant in this connection[2]).

Finally, land rent must also be capable of being centralized. Only then is a centralized official apparatus economically reproducable. A bureaucratic, oriental centralized state differs essentially from the administrative state of European absolutism growing up on the foundations of early capitalism. The dimensions of the territory of China had specializing effect. Since the starting point and the means are different, the results must also be different. If the central power succeeds by and large in keeping its official apparatus in hand, even though with diminishing power in border districts, it has succeeded in achieving the maximum degree of centralization which can be realized under the given circumstances.

The control of the economic key positions constitutes the fundamental prerequisite for the establishment of such control. Numerous institutions, such as the ideographical form of writing prevailing throughout the whole empire[3]), the introduction of the examination system (which, it is significant to note, received its final form shortly after the completion of the Great Canal)[4]), and the

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The vast „palace farms" which members and officials of the court seized for themselves in the Ming period obviously determined the relation between landlords and direct producers in the form of tenantry, i. e. in a post-feudal manner.

[1]) This is the fate of the attempted reforms of Wang Mang (9-23 A. D.), as well as a number of similar later efforts up to the time of Wang An Shih (twelfth century A. D.). The slogan, „Back to the old well-field system", which always recurs, means economically and politically; „Give the state the exclusive power over peasant landrents!" (On the history of these attacks and reforms cf. Hu Shih, Wang Mang, the Socialist Emperor of Nineteen Centuries Ago, North China Branch of the Journal of the RAS, 1928, p. 218 ff.; Franke, Staatssozialistische Versuche, etc.) Cf. too the report of Wang An-Shih in 1058 upon the reform of the officialdom, translated by O. Franke, Berlin, 1932, significant at the same time as an example of a pushing forward in the direction of a really rational professionally-trained officialdom. How ineffectual all efforts to limit private land-possessions remain is shown by the sources of Chinese economic history translated by Mrs. Lee. Cf. among others, p. 171 and 187 (early and late Han); 233 (T'ang); 317 ff. (Sung); 352, 369, 384 (Ming); 420 (Tsin).

[2]) Cf. on this the conclusions of the high official Tung Hsün-Ho in the last (Manchu) dynasty, cited by Chi, The Economic Basis, etc., p. 389.

[3]) Chinese writing separated social classes but united regions. The particular character of this writing as the instrument of the ruling official class in manifesting its special social position and reproducing it continually was of great importance for Chinese social history.

[4]) The beginning of the system goes back to the start of the new order, i. e. in the Han period. Ma Tuan-Lin has exhaustively treated its development and maturity.

regular and frequent shifting about of officials[1]) — all of these are important expressions of the efforts of the central government to establish its power.

Investigators often overlook the methods of preventing the hereditary crystallization of high state positions and of large fortunes by the appointment of eunuchs to high political posts. It is not the „discovery" or introduction of the technique of castration that is important historically. It is rather the evolution of eunuchs from palace and harem servants to holders of high political and sometimes even military posts[2]). Ma Tuan-Lin is undoubtedly right in declaring that behind the change in the status of eunuchs is concealed the struggle against feudal inheritance[3]).

Along with the centripetal forces of the new economic and political system there develop its centrifugal forces. There may have been endeavours to hold in check the influential class of great merchants — powerful since the end of the Chou period, — by means of the decimation of its wealth[4]) and through social chica-

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(See Biot's essay based on Ma Tuan-Lin's work, Essai sur l'histoire de l'instruction publique en Chine, Paris, 1847. Cf. especially, p. 254 ff.)

[1]) Wang An Shih combated this frequent shifting about of officials, which, as he rightly contended, prevented real familiarity with local problems. (Cf. his report of 1058, Franke, loc. cit., p. 40.) Wang's reform efforts and similar ones were failures. The main interest of the Mandarinate was far more in having a stable state-apparatus, than in having a specialized and capable one. (Cf. the sharp regulations against officials who dare to stay in their district or office longer than they were ordered to. (Manuel du Code Chinois, p. 128.)

[2]) This transition begins already in the Chou period. The eunuchs mentioned in the Shih Ching (III, III, 10 Ch. Cl. IV, 2, p. 561) still belong entirely in the category of „harem and household affairs". We find in the Tso Chuan alongside of this type (Ch. Cl. V, 1, p. 173 ; and perhaps V, 2, p. 610) a definitely political type of eunuch, who may be versed in the art of chariot-driving (V, 2, p. 535 and 843) and who even leads the army on to the battle-field (V, 1, p. 137 and 145 ; cf. further V, 1, p. 191 and V, 2, p. 525). The high officials' hatred toward these „castrated" politicians was already bitter. (Cf. V, 2, p. 475 ; See too Lü Shi Ch'un Ch'iu, Wilhelm ed., p. 137.) Ch'in Shih Huang Ti, the founder of the first post-feudal dynasty, had a favorite eunuch, who accompanied him in his chariot and was apparently politically educated (Ssu-Ma Ch'ien, chap. VI, Chavannes, II, p. 192). The political influence of eunuchs increased exceedingly under the Han. Ho-Ti (89-105) „installed them by preference within the highest administrative posts" (Biot, Essai sur l'histoire de l'instruction publique en Chine, p. 188). We cannot here deal with the further development. It may only be remarked that the greatest admiral China possessed, Chang Ho, who led Chinese fleets as far as Arabia, Africa and across peninsular India, was a eunuch.

[3]) Cited in E. T. C. Werner (Chinese. Descriptive Sociology, London, 1910, p. 55).

[4]) That merchants were to be robbed of their profits and kept fearful was already the motto of Shang Yang (cf. The Book of Lord Shang, p. 177 and passim). The power of commercial capital grew exceedingly under the Han. Its agents were treated with servile respect by the members of the ruling class. Ssu-Ma Ch'ien has written illuminatingly on how the central power sought to defend itself against commercial capital and to bring the latter's wealth into the possession of the state-apparatus and its members (Chapter XXX, Chavannes, III, p. 583, 585 ff. Cf. Balazs, Bei-

nery[1]). Nevertheless, it could not be prevented from drawing great profits from the necessary processes of circulation[2]). Furthermore, it could not be prevented from purchasing with these profits the land of the impoverished peasants[3]) (who had been „emancipated" to increase the land rent!). There thus arose alongside of the remaining feudal landowners and officials holding land privately[4]) a new class of town-dwelling land-owners. But just as commercial capital created no new system of production, so the new tenant relationships prevalent during the „Asiatic" epoch in China, even in so far as they were fixed contractually, did not result in a new capitalist form of land rent. They produced only marginal variants of the older type of land rent, mainly preserving the form of payment in kind.

The Confucian official-state fought again and again for mastery over private land-owning, i. e., for a monopoly of the land rent. The antagonistic tendencies of the mandarinate itself (land purchase by officials), the indestructibility of the economic function of commercial capital, and despite clashes of interest, the close social connections between the two classes, prevented a real victory in this struggle. Apart from a few reforms evoked by special emergencies[5]), the fight against private landownership was carried on without even the attempt of using the extreme measures.

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träge, 1932, p. 47 on the T'ang period. For the Ming period cf. Lee, loc. cit., p. 379. The history of this struggle, which continued into modern times, is still unwritten. See Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, I, p. 708 ff.)

[1]) The wealthy merchants were attacked by taxation of their profits, seizure of their property, forced loans and movements toward the „limitation" of landowning; in addition, steep extra taxes were put on their luxuries (chariots) or their dress would be regulated by law, or they would be regarded as citizens of a lower order. (Ssu-Ma Ch'ien XXX, Chavannes III, p. 575, 588, 541.) These measures changed in form and intensity but they never ceased until the end of China's independence. Even in Ming times we hear of regulations of clothing imposed upon merchants. The peasants might wear silk clothes, if they were able to; merchants were forbidden to do so. (Cf. Lee, loc. cit., p. 359.)

[2]) On profits from trade in grain, especially in famine times (Shang Yang, loc. cit., p. 177 ff.; Han Shu, see Lee, loc. cit., p. 158 ff. Kiu T'ang Shu, cf. Balazs, Beiträge, 1932, p. 31. For more recent times, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, I, p. 724 ff.) On profits from salt and iron since the Han period, F. Hirth, Notes on the Early History of the Salt Monopoly in China, JNCBRAS, 1887, p. 58 ff.; cf. too Chun-Ming Chang, The Genesis and Meaning, etc., p. 8 ff. See also Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, I, p. 719 ff.

[3]) Han (cf. Lee, p. 159 and 187); T'ang (Balazs, Beiträge, 1931, p. 78); Sung (cf. Lee, p. 313 ff.); and so on until the present.

[4]) Whereas historical statements concerning merchants' land are often obscure (speaking frequently only of „wealthy families", etc), reports on the landed property of officials characterize the entire post-feudal history of China (cf. Lee, loc. cit. passim).

[5]) Han Wu Ti's reform measures arose out of the financial need of the state exhausted by wars. Because Wang Mang had usurped the throne, he and his followers

The efforts of the bureaucratic official-state to strike commercial capital at its root, i. e. profits, were not much more effective. The measures for the control of commerce by means of offices for the equalization of prices, etc. were intended to weaken the power of the commercial bourgeoisie and to strengthen that of the state and its representatives[1]). The same end was served by the millennium-old efforts of the mandarinate to control the production or at least the sale of two of the most important popular articles in agrarian China : salt and iron. Whereas other and more sweeping monopolistic tendencies were frustrated (Wang An Shi's plan to transfer village moneylending from private hands to those of the state is interesting)[2]), the control of salt and iron continued in various forms from the close of the Chou period[3]). It undoubtedly contributed greatly to the strengthening of the centripetal forces in the bureaucratic centralized state.

IV. Conclusions.

Our survey, sketchy and incomplete as it unavoidably is, at all events shows this : that the economic and social system of China was by no means always the same. On the contrary, it went through several clearly defined stages of development, before it assumed that stationary shape in which Europeans learned to know it[4]).

Insight into the rise and the dynamics of the economic system of China is, it seems to us, not merely a condition sine qua non for any deeper understanding of the cultural development of China. It is, at the same time, an indispensable prerequisite to an understanding of the forms which are today arising in China in the course of the dissolution of the old order and the rise of a new social and economic way of life[5]).

Attempted explanations based on metaphysical or racial consi-

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tried to break the resistance against the usurper, by means of an omnipotent centralized state. Wang An Shih's reforms fell within the time of the gravest external, political crisis of the Sung dynasty.

[1]) Ssu-Ma Ch'ien, XXX (Chavannes III, p. 579 ff. Cf. too Chung-Ming Chang, loc. cit., p. 22 ; Hu Shih, Wang Mang, p. 228. On the history of the institution see Franke, Staatssozialistische Versuche, p. 11 ff.)

[2]) Cf. Hu Shih, Wang Mang, p. 228 ; Franke, Staatssozialistische Versuche, p. 20 ff.

[3]) F. Hirth, Notes on the Early History of the Salt Monopoly in China, p. 55 ff. ; Franke, loc. cit., p. 6 ff. ; also Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas, I, p. 722 ff.

[4]) An attempt to explain the causes of China's „Asiatic" stagnation is given in Die natürlichen Ursachen der Wirtschaftsgeschichte, loc. cit., p. 606 and passim.

[5]) Together with the external political factor, which placed China in the position of a semi-colony, this fact is decisive in the most recent economic history of China (cf. Wittfogel, Die Grundlagen der Chinesischen Arbeiterbewegung, loc. cit., p. 238 ff.).

derations are evidently incapable of making intelligible why Japan, at the end of the nineteenth century, could so promptly evolve into industrial capitalism, while China has not even yet been able to do so. But comparison of the socio-economic systems of the two countries quickly shows that Japan, in contrast to China, was not an „Asiatic" country in our sense. It had indeed an „Asiatic" tinge (irrigational economy on a small scale), but was nevertheless fundamentally more akin to the European nations : her advanced feudal economy in the nineteenth century had already taken the preliminary steps toward the evolution of industrial capitalism[1]). The apparent riddle vanishes and its solution, or, more exactly, the beginning of its solution comes in sight.

In subsequent writings we shall attempt to work out this solution in detail.

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[1]) Japan's agriculture, like China's rests upon irrigation. But in Japan canals a few miles long have been regarded as large, and those of ten to thirty miles as extraordinary (cf. O. Nachod, Geschichte von Japan, II, 2, Leipzig, 1930, p. 987 ; also Yosoburo Takekoshi, The Economic Aspects of the History of the Civilization of Japan, London, 1930, III, p. 412 ff.). The result of this is the development of a system of production which, although it has an „Asiatic" tinge by reason of irrigation, is essentially of a decentralized feudal structure. Nachod's demonstration that Japan's ruling class borrowed much from the Han culture of China, but not the institution of eunuchs, is both true and sociologically important (Nachod, II, 1, p. 286 ff.). However, this happened not so much because of any abstract „healthy feeling" on the part of leading Japanese as because of the concrete social situation in Japan, which offered no place for the eunuch system of „oriental" society. The foundations of modern capitalistic activity were built up much more slowly in Japanese feudalism than in Europe — mainly because of its somewhat isolated position and because of the structure of its productive powers. There is additional similarity to features of European development in the fact that the landowning feudal class began of itself to develop certain branches of production, especially mining (cf. Takekoshi, I, p. 334 ff., 407 and 545 ; II, p. 177, 486 ff.). We also hear of pottery on a large scale, run by feudal lords. (Takekoshi, I, p. 478 ; 70 workers in one shop !) The feudal starting-point of Japanese capitalism has been noticed by several different authors (cf. Tokuzo Fukuda, Die gesellschaftliche und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in Japan, Münchener Volkswirtschaftliche Studien, 42nd part, 1900, p. 155 ; also G. B. Sansom, Japan, A short cultural history, New York, 1931, p. 512 and 515.) These and other authors have pointed out that at the same time there was developing, through the initiative of commercial capitalism, a system of industrial production no longer of a medieval handicraft type, but definitely capitalist in tendency and structure. Takekoshi gives a detailed account of this development, which may be criticized from the methodological view point, but nevertheless remains valuable because of the abundance of its documented material (loc. cit., II, p. 177, 352, but especially 415 ; III, p. 264 and 271). When J. E. Orchard compares Japan's economic position at the end of the Tokugawa period with that of England in the sixteenth century (Japan's Economic Position, New York, 1930, p. 71), he strikes at the heart of the matter, although he is reluctant to draw the historical conclusions. The development of Japan, retarded though it was, essentially bore a much stronger resemblance to that of the feudal and semi-feudal economic pattern of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Europe than to that of China. An understanding of this fact is essential to scientific comprehension of the discordant development of Japan and China in the last decades.

Grundlagen und Entwicklungsstufen der chinesischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte.

Der vorliegende Aufsatz stellt einleitend fest, dass nur eine an materiellen Gesichtspunkten orientierte Betrachtungsweise im Stande ist, die Frage des Wertes der chinesischen Geschichtsquellen zu beantworten, an der eine rein philologische Methodologie notwendigerweise scheitern musste. Sachliche, nicht formelle Probleme haben im Mittelpunkte einer wirklich wissenschaftlichen Analyse der chinesischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte zu stehen.

Gab es ursprünglich in China eine kollektive Agrarordnung, und falls ja, wie war sie beschaffen ? Welche Ursachen hatten Beginn, Blüte und Verfall dieser Agrarkommune ? Welche Ursachen hatte der Verfall der auf ihrer Grundlage errichteten Feudalordnung ? Welches waren Charakter und Bewegungsgesetz des aus Chinas Feudalismus hervorwachsenden Produktionssystems ? Welches war das Prinzip seiner Krisen und seines fehlerhaften Kreislaufs ?

W. s Aufsatz sucht, gestützt auf die These, dass Chinas nachfeudale Gesellschaft eine spezifische Schattierung einer allgemeineren ‚orientalisch' — bürokratischen Sozialordnung gewesen sei, einen Teil dieser Fragen zu beantworten und für die übrigen zu umreissen, in welcher Richtung ihre wissenschaftliche Beantwortung erfolgen muss. Der abschliessende Vergleich mit der durchaus andersartigen sozialökonomischen Entwicklung Japans zeigt die Bedeutung einer wirtschaftsgeschichtlichen Analyse Chinas auch für ein wissenschaftliches Verständnis der gegenwärtigen gesellschaftlichen Erscheinungen des Fernen Ostens.

Fondements et étapes de l'évolution de l'histoire économique et sociale de la Chine.

L'article précédent commence par poser que seule une méthode orientée à des points de vue matériels est en état de donner une réponse à la question de la valeur des sources de l'histoire chinoise, tandis qu'une méthode qui tendrait à la pure philologie échouerait nécessairement. Ce sont des problèmes de faits et non des problèmes formels qui doivent être au centre d'une analyse véritablement scientifique de l'histoire économique et sociale de la Chine.

A-t-il existé primitivement en Chine une organisation agraire collective et dans le cas où il faudrait répondre par l'affirmative, quelle était cette organisation ? Quelles furent les causes du début, de l'épanouissement, et de la décadence de ces communautés agraires ? Quelles furent les causes de la décadence de l'ordre féodal fondé sur ces communautés ? Quels furent le caractère et la loi d'évolution du système de production sorti de la féodalité chinoise ? Quel fut le principe des crises et du cycle défectueux de ce système ?

L'article de W. s'appuie sur la thèse selon laquelle la société post-féodale chinoise était un aspect particulier de l'ordre social général qu'on appelle bureaucratie „orientale", et cherche ainsi à donner partiellement réponse aux questions précédentes, et pour le reste à déterminer dans quelles directions une réponse scientifique doit survenir. La comparaison finale entre l'évolution économique et sociale chinoise et l'évolution toute différente du Japon montre la signification qu'une analyse d'histoire économique de la vieille Chine présente aussi pour une compréhension scientifique des phénomènes sociaux actuels en Extrême-Orient.