

BOOK REVIEWS

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A History of Chinese Philosophy, Vol. II

BY FUNG YU-LAN, TRANSLATED BY DERK BODDE

(Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1953.) Pp. xxv+783.

China's Gentry, Essays in Rural-Urban Relations

BY HSIAO-TUNG FEI

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.) Pp. 287.

A Documentary History of Chinese Communism

BY C. BRANDT, B. SCHWARTZ AND J. K. FAIRBANK

(London: George Allen & Unwin, 1952.) Pp. 552.

The monumental *History of Chinese Philosophy* by Dr. Fung Yu-lan¹ was

1. *Geschichte der alten chinesischen Philosophie, Geschichte der mittelalterlichen chinesischen Philosophie und Geschichte der neueren chinesischen Philosophie* (Hamburg, 1927, 1934, and 1938). A shortened, popular version of Dr. Fung Yu-lan's *History of Chinese Philosophy*, edited by D. Bodde and published by Macmillan in 1948 (French translation with Preface by P. Demiéville, *Précis d'histoire de la philosophie chinoise*, Paris, 1952).

originally published at Shanghai in 1934. The first half of an English translation of that work, undertaken by D. Bodde, today Professor at the University of Pennsylvania, appeared at Peiping in 1937. Princeton University Press has now published the second half of this translation and has also re-issued with corrections and addenda the first volume, which was for long difficult to obtain, making available in a western language this full and competent study

of Chinese philosophy. Of course there already existed a considerable number of histories and syntheses of Chinese philosophy by western Sinologists, and among these the most considerable was the three-volume work by A. Forke. But among works of this kind, the English text of Professor Bodde is sure to occupy a place apart for many years to come. It is a book which will and can only be read critically, in a philological sense, by competent Sinologists. However the cultivated public, ignorant of the Chinese language, but interested as perhaps never before in the culture and history of China, will certainly be grateful to both author and translator. Sinologists will doubtless quibble over the translation of particular terms; but the general reader, with a justified feeling of over-all confidence in Bodde's text, will be attracted by other aspects of this work. In the first place, it is a book written by a Chinese for a Chinese audience. There is the fact that the author employs the method of direct quotation from his sources, which makes his work a sort of anthology of Chinese philosophy. In the choice of the documents which constitute this anthology the primary aim of the author has been to illustrate the history of ideas in China. In the first volume Dr. Fung Yu-lan has studied the period from 600 B.C. to *ca.* 100 B.C., "the period of the Philosophers," during which China was split up into many mutually hostile states. Only towards the end of this period did Confucianism emerge from the conflicting philosophical schools to become the state orthodoxy. In the present volume, the author covers "the period of classical learning." In

221 B.C. the Ch'in had terminated the conquest of the rival states and had created a unified empire. Thus this second period, which extends from the second century B.C. up to the twentieth century A.D. (and therefore overlaps slightly the ground covered by the first volume) is characterised by a greater degree of political unity and dominated by three main schools: Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. One of the most noteworthy aspects of this second volume is the considerable space devoted to the discussion of Buddhism in China and its critics. In characterising this second period as a whole the author remarks that "the wine brewed by the philosophers of the period of classical learning, regardless of whether it was new or old, was poured into the bottles of the ancient philosophy, and for the most part of Confucian classicism. Only very recently indeed have these old bottles been broken." It is with the death of Liao P'ing in 1932 that the author brings his narrative to a close. By then it had become impossible to continue to absorb the rising flood of western ideas in the traditional systems of Chinese thought. For the period from 1932 up to the present day, it is not without interest or value to point out that Dr. Fung Yu-lan, since his return to China from America, has been converted to Marxism, and is in fact the author of a much-publicised auto-critic. In the light of certain articles which have appeared more recently, one imagines that were Dr. Fung Yu-lan to settle down to rewrite his *History* he would probably find it necessary to make considerable alterations in his text.

Book Reviews

The second book under consideration, *China's Gentry, Essays in Rural-urban Relations*, is also due to Sino-American collaboration, Hsiao-tung Fei, a sociologist trained under Malinowski at London, and well-known in the West as the author of two monographs,² dictated to Mrs. Robert Redfield in 1948 at Peiping (which was at that time on the point of falling into the hands of the Communist forces) English translations of various articles he had contributed to Chinese newspapers during 1947-48. The purport of these articles, which form the matter of this book, was, while analysing the current political situation in the light of past events, to explain why Fei had personally decided to remain at Peiping and give Communism a trial. As Professor Redfield points out in his introduction:

"The essays give a Chinese point of view on China. They are not written to put a good face on things, or a dark face. They are written to help the Chinese to reach understanding of their troubles." Their limitations as serious systematic studies of the revolutionary period are obvious; for they discuss only a few of the ills that China was heir to. But the style as much as the matter of Fei's arguments is likely to interest western readers; for in these pages quotations from the Chinese classics jostle arguments drawn from Marx and Sorokin. It is doubtless an over-simplification to see, as Fei does, the roots of the Civil War as stemming primarily from the Conflict between the privileged rentier class and the rural population. Indeed this book is most unlikely to meet with

the approval of the professional sociologist or Sinologist. Nevertheless one closes it with the conviction that Fei's analyses contain a greater parcel of reality than is the case with many a learned schoolroom analysis. His articles, which make exciting reading, are followed by six life-stories of Chinese gentry collected by Yung-teh Chow in Yunnan between 1943-46. The lack of comparable background material makes it quite impossible to judge whether it would be subtly right or wildly wrong to take these life-histories as typical. However, Professor Redfield is to be congratulated on the publication of this volume and it is to be regretted that its high price will prevent its having a very wide circulation.

As Redfield writes in his introduction to Fei's *Essays*, the author "does not discuss the general effects in China of that great awakening of the ill-fed, overworked two-thirds of the human race who live chiefly in Asia which is such an immense event of our times." The same is true of the work by Brandt, Schwartz and Fairbank. For their book, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism*, is not a general study of the Chinese revolution, nor of Chinese Communism, but a documentary study of the party line in China from 1921-50. The main outlines of this period are beginning to be well-known in the West. One recalls the alliance between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang, Li Li San's stubborn efforts to found power on the weak city proletariat, the rise of Mao Tse-tung as a peasant-originiser in the southern hills, the Long March, the United Front from 1937-45 and then the Civil War:

thirty years of misery and bloodshed which form the background of this group of documents. These forty documents have been extracted by the authors from a mass of material mainly in Chinese, occasionally in Japanese or Russian, and were selected because they "mark significant stages or aspects of the ideological development of the Communist movement in China." The translation of each document has been based on or checked with the original and details of the origin of the documents are given in a bibliography. Uniform renderings of a number of key terms are to be found in a glossary, Chinese names being given with characters. There is also a chronology of the Communist movement in China for the years in question. In addition, the authors have furnished commentaries on the texts and these, along with their concluding comments, form an adequate introductory analysis of the documents. The book was finished in June, 1950, and it is important to note this fact, for it would be easy but unjust to question some of the authors' tentative conclusions in the light of more recent events. It is to be hoped that further books of documents of an equally high standard of editing will be made available. Despite or perhaps because of the narrow and self-imposed limits that the authors have set themselves, this first book of documents provides the western public with a balanced survey of source material which is of primary importance for any subsequent and wider studies of communism in China. It aims to be factual rather than speculative, explanatory rather than critical; and these are rare merits in present-day analyses of the Chinese political scene.

Here then are three very different books which tell us something about certain aspects of the Chinese past and present. It is perhaps true that the non-Sinologist is better informed about the fairly remote Chinese past than he is about the present condition of that great country. Paradoxically, it is perhaps the Sinologists themselves who are responsible for the plain man's ignorance in this domain. For the Sinologists are the general reader's source of serious reference and for reasons which it would be out of place to analyse here, Sinologists have interested themselves primarily in Chinese past history. Very few of them have devoted their lives to a study of post-eighteenth century China. For example, one of the most serious analytical studies of Chinese thought yet undertaken is surely that by Marcel Granet: *La pensée chinoise*. That work was founded largely on early historical data and when, after reading it, one turns to the documents studied by Brandt, Schwartz and Fairbank it is only with a considerable effort that one realises he is reading about the same country, that these are Chinese documents and that Dr. Fung Yu-lan is today a Marxist. It does not seem that Sinologists have done all they might to explain to us the birth of and the necessity for this new China. How was it that "in a social-psychological sense the Mandate of Heaven finally passed into the hands of Mao Tse-tung?" We shall not find the answer to that vast question in any of these three books, but each of them provides us with solid elements for an understanding of the scene in which the transition occurred.