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CHINA AND THE NEW WOMAN

By H. Petherton

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CHINA'S WOMANKIND AT THE CROSSROAD

Editorial

FEMINIST MOVEMENT IN CHINA

By Shao-wei Chang

中國評論週報

蔡元培題

The trip up the Yangtse River by slow stages with frequent landings for dyke inspection and intercourse with the villagers, who a year ago lost their all but this year enjoyed bumper crops, was highly instructive. The completed dykes varied somewhat in height and width, those around Chinkiang and Nanking being lower and narrower than those further up the River. At Hankow, they were over 53.6 feet—the highest water level reached in 1931—and this was three feet more than the maximum reached by the previous floods of 1870. In this city, the party was entertained to tea by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his wife on December 4th. The noted Commander in spite of a whole year's arduous campaign against the communists appeared to enjoy perfect health, and thanked both Chinese and foreigners in China and elsewhere for their great humanitarian efforts at a time when the sufferers needed most sympathy and relief. After two days in Hankow, the inspection party proceeded another sixty miles up the River, where it entrained for Loyang (the ancient and recent temporary capital), thence for Hsuechow and back to Nanking by the Pukow Railway.

What of the future? It is undoubted that the government and the people have on this occasion risen to the occasion, and by large scale operations—in which they are helped by experts and organisations abroad—have shown their worth to the world. But it should not be only in time of disaster and famine that our real worth as a nation ought to display itself. What our engineers have accomplished in dyke-building, what our medical experts have successfully done in saving lives during the floods and after, what our poorer brethren have shown in the way of courage and recuperation in times of adversity, the whole nation, *if united*, could do *at any time*. Individually, the Chinese are the equal of any in the world; and yet collectively, they have so far failed on most occasions and allowed smaller (and often inferior-minded) countries to trample upon their just rights. Is it not time for us all to learn something from

the lessons of the Yangtse dykes? If such a gigantic undertaking could be constructed by Chinese engineers alone, within such a short period and at such a low cost, as Sir John Simpson testified, surely they could extend their activities and knowledge to other fields. Why not survey and plan for the control of the treacherous Huang Ho—the Yellow River, known from time immemorial as China's Sorrow—while there is yet time? Time and again this mighty watercourse has been known either to overflow its banks or to change its route. For years there has been continuous sifting, and unless we adopt preventive measures in time we may wake up one morning as on August 19th of last year to hear of terrible floods in the Huang Ho Valley. That other great country India used to suffer constant floods and famine up to twenty years ago. But the British administrators employed the best experts available first to survey the land and later to plan preventive measures against every possible mishap. Trees were planted in arid regions, canals were dug, roads were built, and the result was that famine is now a thing of the past, for the peasants can grow wheat and rice at all times and the roads and railways offer quick and ready transportation. Again, the Yangtse Gorges have a potential power to run the most powerful electric plant for all sorts of needed activities. Why must the abundant silver of the wealthy be hidden in the vaults of the banks and not made use of for the national benefit? Why must experienced engineers, doctors and other technical men, who have spent tens of thousands of hard-earned dollars for their education, be out of employment, and sometimes be obliged to accept work outside of their profession while their services are so much required for developing the country? Obviously, co-operation, correlation and a guiding hand are urgently required. We believe there are some very fine leaders among the Executive Body of the Government. Let us trust that they will invite the able and willing to their fold irrespective of party lines and thus help build a really strong new Republic.

China's Womankind at the Crossroad

THE present issue contains two articles on a subject which seems to have become more and more controversial since the great war. Feminism of the English and American type gained much headway before the War, but since then the tide seems to have turned and many are there who are of the opinion that if some form of feminism is inevitable, they much prefer the continental type which has always made the home and motherhood the main objectives of its solicitations. Others, with or without a taint of misogyny, have come out with a totally different idea of emancipation from what is traditional in the feminist movement. Emancipation from what? No more from the home and the tyranny of the men, but from the factory, the shop, the man-made ideas and ideals of success, achievement, contribution to progress, and the like, indeed, from the whole of the feminist psychology which has turned many an intelligent woman into a bundle of defence mechanisms.

Mr. Petheron's article was apparently written from some such standpoint as we have just been reviewing. In the main we believe he is correct. He is perhaps no misogynist, but many of his expressions appear to be unnecessarily bitter and sweeping. But it remains true that man and woman are not only morphologically different, there are psychological difference as well.

Such differences are far from superficial, but are traceable to their respective cellular constitutions. Being differently constituted, we believe, they are good for different functions. We do not believe in sex equality, but we know for sure that the sexes have complementary parts to play, each therefore important and indispensable in its own way. At best we can only agree with Mr. Havelock Ellis in his revised edition of *Man and Woman* that the sexes are equivalent. Mr. Ellis would like to have the notion "equality" replaced by that of "equivalence." But it is the word "complementary" that we are going to dilate upon. The sexes are complements, each completing the other. The trouble in the past that aroused just indignation in the minds of feminists and their sympathisers was that woman was seldom taken and treated as complementary to man, but merely supplementary to him. In the very matter of reproduction, not to say anything else, it was thought that the female sex only played a secondary role, that of supplying the soil in which the seed, a totally male contribution, was to grow and draw its nourishment. Modern biology has of course long exploded this sort of naive and prejudiced beliefs, it has found that the reproductive cells, far from being equals (the female

cell almost immeasurably outweighs the male cell), are true complements.

We believe any social order and true social progress, which should include the feminist movement for emancipation, must be firmly grounded upon a knowledge of the differences of the reproductive cells and all the implications and ramifications that these differences give rise to in the course of post-natal development in a social setting. Early in man's history, or indeed in the history of our animal ancestors for that matter, we learned the necessity and art of division of labour. Of many forms of division of labour, none appears more fundamental and unshakable than that based on sex. Dispensing with numerous and important deviations, the general rule has been that man is to be culturally and economically productive and woman to be biologically and racially productive and culturally and economically distributive. If men have produced economic and cultural systems, it is to the greater credit of the women who gave birth and nurture to the men. If this is a man-made world, it is woman who is indirectly responsible for having produced him. While this is a fact which no feminist fails to deplore, it is really under a different psychology, a source for legitimate pride. It is of course true that in barbaric and semi-civilised stages, women also shared economic burdens. But they only shared, they did not divide up the work with men, as many feminists aim to do at present, and during periods of pregnancy, parturition and lactation, they ceased to be productive altogether and would have to rely entirely, which was only just and proper, upon their husbands and other male relatives. We believe full economic independence for women is not possible until "ectogenesis" such as suggested by Professor Haldane and Mr. Huxley will have become an accomplished fact, which may never be. In short, such division of labour between the sexes as we used to have before the feminists came upon the scene, is primarily necessitated by the physiological differences that the sexes are endowed with, and only secondarily influenced by the prejudice and ignorance of men, who upon seeing that women were incapable, partly due to inaptitude and partly to the lack of time, of doing many things which he himself did, and forgetting the great labour and time that must needs be consumed in the bearing and rearing of children, had learned to look down upon them and to further limit their sphere of activity and contribution.

Mr. Petherton has raised the question as to which way China's women are tending, the way that many of their western sisters have trodden, or one that will be in keeping with China's best traditional standards as well as with some of the facts and principles that modern biology and psychology have revealed to us and are still adding to our stock of knowledge. He has expressed fairly explicitly that the second way is the more

desirable, and we again believe he is right. Viewed individually and with only a point of time in mind, feminism as is commonly advocated may be productive of many results, but viewed socially, racially, and with a period of time in mind, it is quite sterile. One Queen of Elizabeth is indeed interesting, but a cohort of Elizabeths is hardly desirable, and it is not to be gainsaid that one effect of feminism has been to make cohorts of Elizabeth out of many intelligent and able young women who would normally have taken upon themselves the career of the home and motherhood.

But this is perhaps too much to be expected at present. A short period of time should perhaps be allowed to the more ambitious of China's young women to try their hand at many things which formerly belonged exclusively to the sphere of activity of their brothers, and to find out for themselves whether such work is best in keeping with their aptitudes, tastes, and even their health, and what is more fundamental, to their social and racial usefulness. This is why the achievements enumerated in the article by Mr. Shao-wei Chang are interesting. They tell us that the experiment is being made with a good measure of rapidity. But it is perhaps already time that the more ardent of Chinese feminists and their male sympathisers should be reminded that feminism should not be an end in itself, nor indeed should the ideal of emancipation, unless such emancipation as would prove to be enriching not only to the women as a sex for a generation or two, but the people or racial group as a whole. Their attention should also be called to the fact that many intelligent women in the West, themselves pastmasters in the cause of uplift, are already coming to themselves and realising that not all is well with the path they have chosen. If the ultimate test of the worth of human life is freedom and happiness, they have found to their embarrassment that a factory girl or a woman clerk is not necessarily freer and happier than a housewife.

If the reader wants to know more about the arguments that are presented in Mr. Petherton's paper, and to know it more scientifically, may we suggest a few books? Mr. Ellis' book on *Man and Woman* which we had the pleasure of reviewing sometime ago is certainly basic for entering into a problem of this sort. Mr. Ludovici's many volumes including, *Lysistrata*, *Woman: A Vindication*, and *Man, An Indictment* are extremely stimulating, but true to the Schopenhaurian and Nietzschean tradition, a shade of misogyny is to be met with on many pages. But Mr. Meyrick Booth's *Woman and Society* presents the subject with a degree of fairness and scientific accuracy which is not easily to be surpassed and should be read by all who take the welfare of womankind as well as that of the race to heart. An ably translated version of the same book, re-entitled 婦女解放新論, has been available since last winter.

Sir John Simon And The League

THE decision of the League Assembly to appoint a Committee to study the Lytton report and to suggest a solution to the Sino-Japanese dispute is the inevitable course that can be adopted. To Japan it means the triumph of her bombastic diplomacy and to China, the futility of relying upon extraneous influence for her own salvation. Nanking's keen disappointment with

the outcome at Geneva has already been publicized, but it is no more productive of result than crying over spilt milk.

Off-stage the world's statesmen would to a man lament, if not condemn, Japan's flagrant defiance of every international agreement to which her signature has been attached, but in official parlance a plausible excuse has to be supported to white-