

### Who Is "Tuanfucius"?

THOSE who know Chinese history will recall the strange career of Wang Tung (王通) who lived approximately from 584 to 617 A. D. He was a Confucian scholar of some renown, but what is more interesting, he was also probably the best advertising expert that China has ever produced. He wrote a book in which he recorded his conversations with the political big-wigs of his time, and made the public believe that he was honored by them not only as their Master but also a greater Sage than Confucius himself. The book, known as *Wen Tsung Tse* (文中子), is still widely read today, but more as a piece of *literary curiosa* than as genuine literature. For one thing, most scholars now agree that the conversations in the book are all spurious. Wang Tung made them up himself, with the belief that they would help him increase his prestige and achieve ever-lasting fame. He had his wares to sell, and he was shrewd to see the value of testimonials from important personages, even though he had to fake them. More than thirteen centuries have passed since Wang Tung's day, but, curious to relate, his method of self-

advertising still seems to be very effective in our age. A man by the name of Tuan Chun-yuen (段正元) is now being hailed as the worthy successor to Confucius, and has in fact been given the honorific title of "Tuanfucius," or Tuan the Sage. This paragon of humanity, it seems, is not only an excellent scholar and philosopher, but also a healer and a prophet. The World Peace Prayer Conference, sponsored by such well-known names as Wang I-ting and Wang Shao-lai, has recently extended an invitation to the sage to come to this city to lead a prayer meeting for world peace, and to give public lectures on the "Way of the Master"—whether "the Master" here refers to Confucius or "Tuanfucius," we are, however, not told. As we have not yet heard him, it of course would be injudicious of us, if we were to call him a down-right charlatan and a cheat. But for some reason or other, this Sage Tuan does remind us of Wang Tung, self-styled *Wen Tsung Tse* or "Wentsungfucius"—if we may thus latinize the title. It may be just a hunch on our part, but somehow we feel that this Tuanfucius too is, as a thinker, a better press-agent for himself.

### A Free Press

THE principle of a free press, almost a lost cause in this country, seems to have been revived once again as the result of the Fifth Plenary Session and thanks to General Chiang Kai-shek and Mr. Wang Ching-wei. In their recent circular telegram to the nation, it is emphatically observed that, as long as no effort is made to advocate the use of force or to instigate the creation of disturbances, the government should not abridge the right of free speech but should even protect it. Although China is today subjected to the rule by the Kuomintang, it is the party principle rather than party affiliation which should be given paramount importance. And although every attempt should be made to enlist the support of all the people to the party program, the spirit of political tutelage does not demand the artificial maintenance of uniformity of public opinion or, in other words, of what is called a "canalised" press. Suppression would only discourage the cultivation of original thoughts on the part of the common people, and would consequently retard progress of the nation.

The great pains with which the two national leaders took to expound the need of a free press would seem to indicate a sincerity that is decidedly encouraging, and coming as it does without a public demand, the assurance thus given by them is all the more welcome. One may venture to suggest that the Chinese press through these turbulent years has stood by the government loyally and sympathetically. While occasional outbursts of criticism may have perhaps proved distasteful to those to whom they are particularly directed in good faith, no charge can be entertained of deliberate attempts to embarrass, or undermine the prestige of, the Nanking regime. Even when public sentiment ran high over the invasion of Manchuria and of Shanghai and over the apparent futility of resistance, the press did not omit to do its

duty in preserving peace and order and in presenting a true perspective of an obviously hopeless situation. Or when the anti-communist campaign encountered setbacks at times, the press did not lose courage; on the contrary, by discretion and optimism, it kept up public confidence and enthusiasm, so necessary to the maintenance of army morale and to the conclusion of military loans.

Now that the campaign is drawing to a close in central China, the government has seen fit of its own accord to keep faith with the press by reaffirming the freedom of speech. This magnanimous gesture, though well deserved by virtue of its fidelity to Nanking, will nevertheless further strengthen the desire of the press to serve its cause. Once the seed of mutual trust is allowed to blossom forth in due time, the necessity of control from the above will readily give way to a spirit of reciprocity: the government will undertake to protect the press, and the press will in turn continue to support the government.

It is perhaps for this reason that the Shanghai Press Association and the Shanghai Reporters' Association lost no time in conveying their appreciative sentiments to General Chiang Kai-shek and Mr. Wang Ching-wei for their generous decision to leave the press free and independent. Not inappropriately did they suggest two immediate steps which the government may adopt as evidence of good faith. Firstly, before conditions would arise to warrant the complete abolition of censorship, definite instructions should be enforced against the abuse of authority of which cases are too numerous to be recounted. Secondly, certain newspapers which have been banned under extraordinary circumstances should be permitted to circulate freely once more, provided that they refrain from expressions fraught with danger to public peace, or inimical to constituted authority. With these two suggestions no difference of opinion may be offered. In fact, unless they are accepted and translated into deeds, general doubt may not be com-

petely dispelled of the actual value of the timely affirmation of a free press for China. The public may be well upheld in watching with interest and expectancy for the final decision yet to be reached by the government.

In the same spirit with which the circular telegram in question was addressed to the whole nation, one may respectfully submit that the system of censorship seems to have outlived its usefulness. By the sheer weight of its accomplishments the central government has more than justified its existence. It has put an end to civil strife; it has practically exterminated the menace of communism; it has established its authority in the far corners of the country; it has gained the confidence of the leading powers of the world. In short, it has come to be recognised as the most stable government since the birth of the republic, and as such it now commands the respect of the people irrespective of party affiliations or political differences. If the press should deem it advisable to offer criticism, it would do so not for the sake of subversive activities but for the purpose of seeking improvements. So long as the intention is constructive, criticism should be welcome, and there is nothing which would deter the press from genuine expressions of opinion than the constant spectres of over-

zealous censors always ready to pounce upon them on the slightest pretext.

As a *modus vivandi* we may tender one suggestion. If censorship is as yet indispensable, a board of censors may be appointed by the press association in each city from among its members, and it will devolve upon this board to carry out the instructions laid down by the government. A self-governing board has fared remarkably well in the film industry in America, and the same principle may be applied equally well to the press in China. In this wise the government will be able to demonstrate its sincerity in wishing to protect the press, and the press will enjoy an opportunity to prove itself worthy of the trust reposed by the government. This honor system may probably pave the way to an independent press in the future, and since the government is free to terminate its application at pleasure, there is no reason why it may not be given a fair trial. It will on the one hand promote good feelings among all parties concerned and, on the other, save considerable expense which the government has to incur to support a large host of censors. If both General Chiang Kai-shek and Mr. Wang Ching-wei will approve of this intermediary step, they will inject substance into their well-intentioned pronouncement.

## Buchman vs. Japanese Bluejackets

THE Japanese Naval Landing Party carried out, in the morning of December 14, a military manoeuvre in which it captured Nanking Road, the heart of the International Settlements. Mr. Alexander H. Buchman, one of the editorial writers of the *China Press*, noticed it, took several pictures near the Chinese General Post Office, went to the *China Press* office, got a hire car, ran to North Szechuan Road, snapped three more pictures at the Japanese school from the road, and went to the Japanese barracks on Kiangwan Road, where the trouble started. Staying inside his parked car, Mr. Buchman took two pictures of tanks parked in the barracks. And getting out of the car at the arrival of "loaded military trucks", he took two more pictures. The third he took, at about 11:15 a.m., against the warning of a Japanese bluejacket to desist, for "knowing that I was on extra-Settlement road, I told him in broken Japanese that a permit was not necessary to take pictures". He then went into his car, but the Japanese marines followed him, would not let him close the door of the car, and insisted that he should give them the films since he had no permit to take pictures. Mr. Buchman stood his ground and, after about half an hour's argument told them that they "could either let me go freely or forcefully detain or 'arrest' me." He then paid the chauffeur, got out of the car, and "started to walk away. Almost immediately three or four Japanese bluejackets set upon me, and I struggled for about 10 feet, and they then brusquely forced me into a room in the barracks." This was at about noon. Even the statement by the Japanese consulate-general admitted that Buchman "was taken to headquarters". After that whether Mr. Buchman was merely "requested" to remain in the barracks, as the Japanese consulate-general contend-

ed, or he was never "requested" to stay, but was "forced over to the barracks and kept under a guard of three Japanese bluejackets," as Mr. Buchman declared, our readers can without doubt easily form a correct judgment.

At any rate, Buchman remained in the Japanese naval headquarters till after two o'clock, and only after Mr. Edward L. Faupel, U. S. court marshal, had obtained the negatives from Buchman and turned them to the Japanese officers. In the long interim Buchman spoke to many Japanese officers and Mr. Terasaki, Japanese Vice-Consul, all of whom never contended that he violated any law, nevertheless they had the "moral right", so they claimed, to take the negatives from him. Mr. Buchman was allowed to call up the *China Press*, the American consulate-general, etc.

Let us pause here to consider the nature of the charge against Buchman. According to Mr. Faupel's statement, "the Japanese alleged that Buchman took pictures of an interior of a tank, after he had been asked not to do so." The Japanese consulate-general's statement accused Buchman of having "attempted to take photographs of armored cars entering the tank and car sheds at the barracks", while that of the Japanese Naval Landing Party asserted that Buchman attempted "to take photographs of the interior of a shed built to house armored cars and tanks." Now which version of the charge is right? If the Japanese cannot agree among themselves, we are inclined to believe Mr. Buchman's.

The Japanese consulate-general asserted that it was "in view of the difficulty on both sides in making each other understood" that the Naval Landing Party authorities requested Mr. Buchman to remain at Japanese barracks, while they were getting in touch with their consular authorities.