INTRODUCTION.

The possibility of translating into English this Autobiographical Preface to Mr. Ku Chieh-kang's Ku Shih Pien, 1 or Symposium on Ancient Chinese History, occurred to me when I was living in Peking and there read the book immediately after its appearance in June 1926. My study of Volume One convinced me that we have here an admirable introduction to the technique and temper of Chinese scholarship as it is carried on to-day, touching upon all the major problems of Chinese cultural reorganization, both in the light of western scientific methods and in terms of the best native achievements in the past. In a lengthy review 2 which Dr. Hu Shih 3 wrote in October 1926 he characterized it as “a revolutionary book in the field of Chinese historical scholarship” 4 — in fact the most significant contribution to ancient Chinese history that had been made in more than a century. In the same review he quoted with approval a statement of my own 5 in which I expressed the hope that the Autobiographical Preface, at least, might be put into English, not merely for its human interest as the biography of a modern Chinese historian, but because it is in effect a critical resumé of all the currents of thought that have swept over China in the past thirty years. No one having in the meantime pledged himself to the task, I myself undertook it with Mr. Ku's consent, hoping at the outset to include, in addition to the Autobiographical Preface, a few of the more significant mo-

1 古史辨.
2 In the Hsien Tai P'ing Lun 現代評論 (Contemporary Review) for Oct. 11, 1926; and reprinted in the Ku Shih Pien, Vol. II, p. 334 f.
3 胡適 See note 1 page 2.
4 這是中國史學界的一部革命的書.
5 In a letter to Mr. Ku, and in a printed review which appeared in the China Journal of Arts and Science, Nov. 1926.
nographs, and most of the letters that passed between the leaders of the renaissance movement in the years 1920 to 1925. But the comparative length of the Autobiography (comprising, as it does, more than a third of Volume One), and its inherent unity, led me to publish it as a separate work. Other parts of the Symposium, however, are equally worthy of translation, and it is my hope that those who read Chinese will be induced, after examining this part of it, to study the remainder of Volume One, and also Volume Two which appeared in 1930. One will there find monographs by most of the leaders of the so-called "new culture movement", giving their views on the resystematization of Chinese culture, the merits and demerits of the older scholarship, the genuine and forged literature of antiquity, and the application of the scientific method to China's cultural heritage. I myself had to be content to put into English only that portion which offers the widest survey of contemporary historical problems, and so serves as a general introduction to the subject.

I know of nothing in English literature corresponding to the Chinese tzǔ hsū, or autobiographical preface, by which an author provides his readers with an unaffected account of his life, including his ancestry, his upbringing, and his intellectual development, to aid them in understanding how he came by his views, and why he writes as he does. To be sure, our doctoral dissertations have their vitas, but these are so matter-of-fact and so terse that they are almost devoid of human interest. Also we have no end of diaries, journals, and autobiographies, but none of these are written from the viewpoint of the Chinese autobiographical preface, namely, to clarify a single literary work. The Chinese, too, have diaries, but seldom make a practice of writing extended autobiographies except in conjunction with or in clarification of some major purpose.

Prefaces of this kind, while not always so long, nor so significant for their times as the one which Mr. Ku has written, appear

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1 新文化运动 hsin wen hua yün tung.
2 自序.
very early in Chinese literature. The first and classic example is one which Ssü-ma Ch‘ien wrote in the first century B. C. and which still survives as the last chapter of his *Historical Memoirs* (*Shih Chi* 
1. ) Another appears in Wang Ch‘ung’s 2 (27—97 A.D.) *Lun Hêng* or *Critical Essays*, translated into English by Alfred Forke in 1907. The autobiographical preface to Liu Chih-chi’s 3 (661—721 A.D.) *Shih T‘ung*, 4 or *Comprehensive Study of History*, throws much light on the temper, the thought, and the times of a great critical historian. And without the various “personal pre­faces” which the great eighteenth century historian, T‘sui Shu, 5 (1740—1816) left to us in his writings, we should know much less than we now know of his relentless skepticism and his indomitable spirit.

That this type of autobiographical writing is still popular in China is evidenced, not only by Mr. Ku’s *Preface* written in 1926, but by many others of recent years. When they are not designed to illuminate a specific work, they may be written at a turning­point or mile­stone in an author’s career, and are then called “autobiographical narratives” (*tzü shu* 6) in which the writer reviews his life and his time up to a given year. Well­known examples of this type are Liang Ch‘i­ch‘ao’s 7 *tzü shu* at the age of thirty, 8 and this year (1931) Dr. Hu Shih’s *tzü shu* at the age of forty. 9 These, too, are written in the intimate, unaffected style of Mr. Ku’s *Preface*, or the great prefaces of other centuries.

The Chinese interest in objective self-revelation is observable in but few western writers. Not having learned to think of themselves objectively, they are seldom capable of writing without evident self-consciousness. A few have achieved it, however, —

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1 *Shih Chi*. 2 See p. XXIII.
3 劉知幾. Ibid.  4 *Shih T‘ung*. 5 See p. XXVII and note 4 page 82. 6 自述.
7 梁啟超 *(1873—1929)*. See note 1 page 17.
8 三十自述 san shih tzü shu.
9 Published in the monthly, *Crescent Moon (Hsin Yüeh 新月)* Vol III, No. 3 ff.
among them, Henry Thoreau (1817—1862) of Concord. He succeeded, perhaps, because his own world-view was strikingly like that of the Chinese in its combination of practical and laissez-faire (or Taoistic) aims. One is not surprised, therefore, to read in his well-known work, Walden, the following significant words: "I require of every writer, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life and not merely what he has heard of other men's lives; some such account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land; for if he has lived sincerely, it must have been in a distant land to me."

Now, this is precisely what Mr. Ku has done, and this is what gives to his writings the simple, unaffected charm that we admire in Walden and in Thoreau's Journal. He succeeds in giving the impression that he is not exalting himself; he is exalting discoveries that he has made, and which can be understood only in the light of the time and the personality that made them. Through years of living in a mentally "distant land" he has integrated his life about new, emancipating ideas. What he shares with his kindred are those intimate bits of self-revelation and self-criticism that he knows they are most concerned to hear. And like Thoreau, he writes in the first person because there is "no one else he knows so well." And what he writes does not impress one as unduly egocentric, doubtless because he is so obviously trying to be fair. He reminds us of his defeats as well as his victories, his wild fancies, his ingrained obstinacy, his physical handicaps as well as his liberating insights. We have here the thoughts of an unusually sensitive nature — one who is able to analyze himself, and at the same time look with skeptical eyes at his generation and the numerous generations that went before him. We have

1 Chapter entitled "Economy".

2 On the fly-leaf of the Chinese edition is printed, both in the original French and in Chinese translation, the Testament de l'Art de Rodin which he has evidently taken for his motto: "Be profoundly and ferociously truthful. Never hesitate to express what you feel, even though you find yourself in opposition to customary ideas. It is possible that at first you will not be understood, but your isolation will not last long. After a time those of similar mind will come to seek you out, for what is profoundly true for one man is true for all".
the findings of a Chinese who was born and reared in one age, but is fully aware that he must redintegrate his thoughts and his life to a very different age.

The long Chinese emphasis on "agriculture and learning" made it possible to develop in that country a family-system of unusual perpetuity, and an educated hierarchy in which scholarly traditions and studious habits were bred in the bone. The mass of the population, being anchored to the soil, maintained by that contact its physical vitality, and harmony with the rhythms of life; while the ideal of government by scholars (theoretically by good men rather than by law) fostered the segregation of a few men-of-letters who managed to get on with but a minimum of physical exercise, and yet were capable of almost any amount of mental exertion in the pursuit of scholastic, literary, and artistic aims.

It is from such a line of literati that the author of this *Autobiography* descended — one branch of the family reaching back to the celebrated Ku Yen-wu ¹ (1613—1682 A.D.), who initiated the new textual and literary criticism of the seventeenth century. The family was long settled in the vicinity of Soochow, on the fertile lands of the lower Yangtze, which for centuries have been the home of outstanding historians and literary men. Most of the ancestral families of Kiangsu, Anhui, and Chekiang provinces dwelt originally in a yet more ancient part of China (the Yellow River Valley), but were swept southward by successive waves of barbarian invasion to the watered lands and comparative tranquillity of the Yangtze delta.

The intellectual precocity that enabled Mr. Ku, when yet under thirty, to conduct the symposium which resulted in this volume, was possible only in one who enjoyed the heredity, and experienced the rigid mental discipline, which this type of social organization evolved. Similar precocity is common in Chinese history. We see it, for example, in the life of the third-century classical scholar, Wang Pi ², who, before his death at the age of twenty-three, had written the standard commentary to the *Classic of Changes*.

¹ Better known as Ku T'ing-lin. See footnote 1 page 146.
² 王弼 (226—249 A.D.).
And for our own day, one thinks naturally of Dr. Hu Shih himself, who, at the age of twenty-six (1917), laid down the principles that guided the “literary revolution” from the archaic classical to the modern colloquial style.

Mr. Ku is indebted for his skeptical approach, and for his technique in the study of Chinese history, both to Chinese and western models. While he can read with difficulty a few western languages, he cannot converse in any of them; has, I believe, never travelled outside of China, and certainly has never come into contact with western teachers. He was fortunate, however, at a crucial point in his career, to study under Dr. Hu Shih after the latter’s return from America in 1917. Dr. Hu was then writing much, not only on the literary revolution, but on the reorganization of Chinese culture in the three fields of history, literature, and philosophy—laying down the principles that make possible a scientific reevaluation in all three fields. Mr. Ku caught the spirit of his teacher, acquiring from him a more rigorous scientific method, which he proceeded to apply to the reorganization of ancient Chinese history, for it was about the question of national origins that the most pressing problems of the time revolved.

In his early years he came under the influence of teachers who took for granted the more conservative theories of the *ku wen*, or “ancient text” school of historical criticism, which held that the classics were written long before the time of Confucius, that they are to be treated primarily as historical documents of antiquity and not as philosophical treatises conveying the social teachings of any one man. From this point of view Confucius was, as stated in the Analects, a “transmitter and not a creator,” a conservator of values already ancient in his time, and not the proclaimer of a new social order.

Strangely enough, it was not until he entered the University

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1 文學革命 *wén hsūeh ké ming*.
2 See note 1 page 21.
3 VII, 1.
4 See the booklet, *Ching Chin Ku Wén Hsūeh* 經今古文學 by Chou Yü-t’ung 周子同, 1926.
and listened to the lectures of the *ku wên* scholar, Chang T'ai-yen, that Mr. Ku was induced by curiosity to read the works of the most ardent of contemporary exponents of the *chin wên* or "modern text" school, K'ang Yu-wei. Mr. Ku had not studied his writings before because in 1897, and again in 1900, they had been confiscated by imperial decree, and the blocks ordered to be destroyed. But it was through a reading of K'ang Yu-wei's works, as repeatedly affirmed in his *Autobiography*, that Mr. Ku began to take a skeptical view of the past. And this same statement he made to me verbally when I questioned him in 1926. The "modern text" school maintained that Confucius was the actual author of most of the classics or, at least, utilized them for the specific purpose of proclaiming an ideal social order and the foundation of a new world-view. In the opinion of this school, Confucius was not a mere transmitter of ancient historical documents but a philosopher, statesman, and educator, a "throneless king", a savior of the world. The rudiments of this theory go back far in Chinese history, but they were never propounded with such daring frankness, nor with such apparent finality as they were by K'ang Yu-wei. The effect of his theories on Chinese cultural and political ideas was so profound that one can hardly comprehend Mr. Ku's writings, or indeed what has happened in China in the past thirty years, without a brief interpretation of their meaning for that time.

In 1891 K'ang Yu-wei produced a work entitled *Forged Classics of the Wang Mang Period* in which he attempted to prove that many or most of the classics venerated by the "ancient text" school (and said to have been recovered from a wall of Confucius' dwelling) were in reality forged by the usurper Wang Mang and his minister, Liu Hsin — their motive being to find genealogical, historical, and philosophical sanction for their so-called...
New Dynasty (9—23 A. D.) and its avowed socialistic program. Among the texts thus suspected were parts of the Classic of History, Tso’s Commentary (to the Spring and Autumn), Mao’s Commentary (to the Odes), and the Institutes of Chou (Chou-li). There were grounds for this conclusion in the Han and other histories, and in the fact that at least one of the reputed “ancient script” texts (twenty-five sections of the Classic of History) was demonstrated by Mei Tsu ¹ in 1543, and later by Yen Jô-chü (1636—1704), Hui Tung² (1697—1758), Tuan Yü-t’sai³ (1735—1815) and Chiang Sheng⁴ (1733—1810) to have been forged in the fourth century A. D. In making his point, K’ang Yu-wei unfortunately fell into forced arguments and subjective reasoning; yet despite these drawbacks, many of his findings still hold, and constitute the starting-point for the historical criticism of our day. In thus raising the question of forged literature, he reopened the whole critical problem where the great eighteenth-century scholars had left off, due to the distractions of western aggression, the decline of Manchu power, and the resulting political turmoil.

K’ang Yu-wei’s motive in raising the question of ancient forgeries was to undermine the unwarranted conservatism of his day, by showing that it was based on false classics which obscured the moral grandeur and magnificent social insight of Confucius and his school. K’ang Yu-wei considered it necessary to brush aside the false classical basis of outworn theories, before he could proceed with his own carefully thought-out program of reform. Having discarded what he believed to be the spurious texts of his opponents, which pictured Confucius as a mere historian and conservator of ancient values, he could proceed to picture him in his own way as a great ethical leader — a man of action, deeply concerned with the salvation of the society in which he lived. This is the new constructive portrait of Confucius which K’ang Yu-wei brought out in his second great book, Confucius as a Reformer ⁵, published in 1897. K’ang Yu-wei had familiarized himself with western history, and after the palpable

¹ For Chinese characters and further details see pages XXVI and 151.
² 惠棟.
³ 段玉裁.
⁴ 江聲.
⁵ K’ung Tzîl Kai Chih K’ao, see footnote 5 page 41.
disclosure of his country's political weakness in the Sino-Japanese war, became convinced that fundamental reforms were imperative if the ancient culture was to survive. In his opinion China needed historical and religious sanction for a new concept of progress that would make possible the necessary reforms, but it had to be a sanction within the circle of Confucian ideas and within the frame-work of the Confucian system. Not prepared to find it in the acceptance of western scientific and legal methods, he sought to find it in Chinese history, or more specifically in the life and teachings of Confucius, religiously interpreted.

This necessary classical basis he discovered in the Kung-yang Commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals, which was the favorite commentary of the "modern text" school to which K'ang Yu-wei belonged. He there found a theory of social evolution which, in his opinion, described accurately the direction in which society must move. At a time when Darwinian ideas were almost unknown in China, he propounded what he believed to be the Confucian concept of san shih or "three eras". The first was an era of "world confusion" in which men must be governed either by force, or by rules of decorum to which they are expected to respond; the second an era of "advancing peace" in which the masses are educated and share in governmental control; the third an era of "world brotherhood", of which K'ang Yu-wei believed we have Confucius' own picture recorded in a famous passage in the Record of Rites. In a later work, the Ta T'ung Shu, he

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1 See Alfred Forke, Geschichte der alten chinesischen Philosophie, p. 108, note.
2 三世 of which the stages are (a) chū luan shih 擾亂世 (b) shēng p'ing shih 升平世, (c) t'ai p'ing shih 太平世. Or as given in the Record of Rites: the period of limited peace (小康 hsiao k'ang), the period of great peace (太平 t'ai p'ing), and the period of universal brotherhood (大同 ta t'ung). This conception doubtless influenced Sun Yat-sen to postulate his three periods of social control: the period of confusion, the period of tutelage, and the period of constitutional government.
3 Li Chi, Li Yin 礼运. See translation by Ch'ên Huan-chang "The Economic Principles of Confucius and his School, p. 18.
4 大同書 of which only a third was printed in the magazine Pu Jên Tsa Chih 不忍書志, in 1913.
outlined in more detail the social and political Utopia toward which society would move, hoping thus to make his ideas the rallying-cry for national unification and a guiding-star toward social reform. But in demanding that his theories be linked with the personality of Confucius he unconsciously lifted them out of the field of history into the rarefied atmosphere of philosophy and religion. It is not surprising, therefore, that after the establishment of the Republic his views became the basis of a Neo-Confucian religious movement sponsored by his pupil, Ch'en Huan-chang. 1

Having accepted the theory of progress from "world confusion" to "world brotherhood", K'ang Yu-wei had to account for the fact, that Confucius himself repeatedly referred to a golden age in antiquity, in which the empire had been governed by benevolent rulers who accepted office against their wills and resigned in favor of others more virtuous than themselves. This difficulty he surmounted by making an admission that Confucian scholars had never ventured to make before this time — namely that Confucius consciously read his ideas back into a past which he knew had no basis in fact. He was aware that the model emperors were not as perfect as the people supposed, but was compelled to employ such teaching in order to convey other more revolutionary ideas, which, if they had in that day been conveyed by any other method, would never have been tolerated. It was the accepted method of his day and was employed by other ethical teachers like Lao-tzu, Mo Ti, and Mencius. Historically speaking, this was a serious admission to make, but from the standpoint of K'ang Yu-wei was absolutely necessary if Confucius was to retain his place in a world of progress; if the evils in the old monarchical system (which for centuries had fed on the model emperor lore) were to be destroyed; and if China was to accomplish the reforms that were necessary for her new life in the family of nations.

How to reconcile the concept of a golden age in antiquity with the ideal of a developing society has been an unending problem

1 陳煥章 (1881— ) founder of the National Confucian Association, and promoter of the movement to make Confucianism a state religion.
in Chinese history. In reality it is a problem in the philosophy of history, for the concept of progress implies a determination of values, and therefore lies in the sphere of philosophy or religion rather than in the field of history. K'ang Yu-Wei thought he had founded it securely in history, but his teaching, as stated above, drifted inevitably into another realm. The ancient legalist school of the third century B.C., which was the first to wrestle seriously with the problem, frankly advocated what now amounts to the western pragmatic method of minimizing the lessons of the past, and finding the real sanctions for reform in the actualities of the day. Han Fei-tzǔ gave typical expression to this viewpoint when he said, “The sages did not aim to copy antiquity, nor to follow long-established traditions, they took into account existing conditions, and planned on the basis of these”. Again he said, “Practices differ now from what they were in antiquity — for dissimilar periods it is necessary to have dissimilar plans”. This is what Huai Nan-tzǔ meant when he wrote of “proposing policies adapted to the times”.

For K'ang Yu-wei to have adopted this approach thirty years ago would have meant a break with Confucianism, which neither he nor his followers were prepared to make. Being a Confucianist as well as a scholar, he was compelled to think, in part at least, in terms of the Confucian system. He could do this, however, only by unconsciously reading into the mind of Confucius his own Utopian ideals, precisely as he believed Confucius to have read his own ideals into the minds of Yao and Shun. Though deeply concerned to undermine the historicity of documents of which, no doubt, some are spurious, he did not hesitate, in building up

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1 See article by Ph. de Vargas, “History and the Belief in Progress” Shih Hsūeh Nien Pao No. 1, July 10, 1929.
3 聖人不期修古, 不法常可; 論世之事, 因為之備 — Ch. Wu Tu 五蠹.
4 夫古今異俗, 新故異備 — Ch. Wu Tu 五蠹.
5 隨時而舉事 — Ch. Ch'i Su 齊俗.
his own picture of Confucius, to quote as the *ipsissima verba* of the Master, ideas which appear in books known to have been compiled centuries after Confucius' time. ¹ This, more enlightened (because more favored) contemporary historians, like Ku Chieh-kang, refuse to do. They perceive that K'ang Yu-wei's ultimate motive was not academic, but social and religious; that "while he employed the methods of historical criticism his real aim was the reformation of society" ² — that is to say, a society still based on the Confucian world-view.

K'ang Yu-wei's admission that Confucius appealed to a past that had no basis in fact, was an admission of whose consequences (to long-established theories) he was doubtless unaware. But in making it he actually destroyed the traditional world-view, and the premise on which a large part of Chinese history was written. If the picture of antiquity drawn by the sages was after all a myth, it was not enough to be told that, in so picturing it, those sages had only the loftiest social motives in view — it now became necessary to discover, if possible, what the real picture was. And the desire to recover those truer, even though fainter, outlines may be said to have been the motivating factor that initiated the symposium which Mr. Ku conducted. The problems there studied, involved, of course, far more than a reexamination of the traditional circle of ideas that have come down to us in the most ancient classical texts. It led into entirely new fields, and to a search for corroborative evidence in realms wholly untouched by older scholars: namely folk-songs, folklore, novels, dramas, archaeology, and psychology. The symposium, however, represents only one phase of a renaissance movement that is examining the whole structure of Chinese life. Beginning in 1917 with the espousal of a simplified written language, and a unified spoken language, it has gone on to the reorganization of education, the reevaluation of the family system, the emancipation of woman, the rise of a new concept of law, and a restudy of the

¹ The *Li Chi*, from which K'ang Yu-wei drew quotations vaguely attributed to Confucius, was not actually compiled until the first century B.C. or later, although some passages are doubtless older.

² Page 78.
Confucian system in all its bearings — social, ceremonial, and religious.

The connection of the name of Confucius with the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and the *Classic of History* had given to historical writing a moralistic bias, tending toward the interpretation of the past in an almost exclusively ethical sense. Already in the *Book of Mencius* it is stated that, when Confucius completed the *Annals*, “rebellious ministers and villainous sons were struck with terror”. It thus became a habit to read into history judgements of praise or blame (*pao pien*) for the teaching or admonition of future generations. History was regarded as a *mirror*, not in the sense of giving a faithful reflection of the past, but that rulers might discover therein what types of conduct to emulate, and what to avoid. Thus the concept of change and movement was practically eliminated, and history became a record of seemingly static ideas. This tendency survived in the great *Tzŭ Chih T'ung Chien*, or “General Mirror for Help in Government” which Ssu-ma Kuang completed in 1085 A.D., and also in Chu Hsi’s *T'ung Chien Kang Mu* — a reconstruction of the former which adheres even more definitely to the “praise and blame” idea. De Mailla’s French translation of the substance of the latter (*Histoire Générale de la Chine*), published in 1777, passed on to the West the traditional conception of Chinese history as a record of perpetual stagnation and decay. One of the tasks of present-day historical scholarship is to penetrate below this veil, and to re-interpret events, as far as possible, in their original setting. It no longer aims to judge the past in terms of fixed, ethical standards, but to account for it in terms of the existing world view; or as Mr. Ku says, “not to ask whether it ought to be so, but whether it was so”.

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1 Legge II, p. 159.
2 *pao pien*.
When one examines the “new culture movement” ¹ purely from
the standpoint with which we are here concerned — namely
historical or classical criticism — one can observe among others
the following trends:

I. A CHANGED ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CLASSICS. The Chinese
classics, like Greek and Roman models of antiquity, were, until
recently, the objects of an almost exclusive veneration. The name of
Confucius was in one way or another connected with them, and when
Confucianism became a state cult the Thirteen Classics were taken
to sum up almost the whole of Chinese culture. Independent,
heterodox philosophies such as the Taoism of Chuang-tzu, the
utilitarianism of Mo Ti and the legalism of Han Fei-tzu and his
school were over-looked or else suppressed in the interest of
political expediency or ethical uniformity. Their writings were
precariously transmitted, and then largely with a view to unfair
comparison with the accepted Confucian world-view.

All this has radically changed. The study of the classics in the
light of their historical backgrounds has resulted in an entirely
different emphasis. The historical value of some, like the Classic
of History, has been in part discredited, while the value of others
like the Classic of Poetry has been immeasurably enhanced. ² In
general the name of Confucius has been disassociated from almost
all of them: some like the Odes being undoubtedly older, others
like the Record of Rites much later than his time. Dr. Fung
Yu-lan ³ takes literally ⁴ Confucius' own statement that he was a
"transmitter and not a creator," maintaining that he was a teacher
like Socrates who utilized the classics as text-books, and contributed
to China the concept of government by educated men without

¹ 新文化運動 hsin wen-hua yün-tung. Cf. A. W. Hummel, “The
² Being, at least in part, the spontaneous utterances of the people, the
Odes throw much light on phases of ancient social life about which the
official histories are silent.
³ See footnote 3 page 119.
⁴ See his article entitled Kung-tzu tsai chung-kuo li-shih chung chih ti-wei
孔子在中國歷史中之地位 “Confucius' Place in Chinese
distinction of class. It is true that Dr. Hu Shih attempts, in his *History of Chinese Philosophy*,¹ to show that Confucius wrote some of the Appendices to the *Classic of Changes*, and edited the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, thereby exemplifying his theory of the “rectification of names.”² But other writers like Liang Ch'i-ch'ao³ and Ch'ien Hsüan-t'ung⁴ are not disposed to emphasize this view. The Confucian canon was really not fixed until comparatively recent times — the *Analects* and *Mencius* not being regarded as classics until the T'ang and Sung periods. The *Odes* are now recognized as being partly folk-songs of antiquity which can lay no claim to convey specifically Confucian ideas; and the misnamed *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Hsiao Ching*) has long been recognized as a forgery.

II. FREEDOM FROM THE DOMINATION OF SCHOOLS. Perhaps it is to the sectarianisms of organized religion in the West that one must look for the closest analogy to the various schools of Chinese classical scholarship. Both flourished at a time when men thought in terms of absolute standards to which they committed themselves in advance of personal, objective investigation; and both tended to emphasize the peculiarities of a group at the expense of broader points of view. Schools developed in an age of influential teachers who, in isolated and self-contained communities, readily collected a body of followers to promote a new ethical theory, a new type of scholarship, or a new literary style. Having studied from childhood under a recognized teacher, one was bound by the rules of Confucian ceremonialism to assent to one's teacher, and as far as possible promote his views. To belong to no school

¹ Chung-Kuo Chê-Hsüeh Shih Ta-Kang 中國哲學史大綱 pp. 92—105.
² 正名 chêng ming.
³ In his *Chung-Kuo Li-Shih Yen-Chiu Fa* 中國歷史研究法 (p. 17) he likens it, on account of its extraordinary brevity, to a “mercantile day-book” 流水賬簿.
⁴ See note 2 p. 2. He characterizes it, in the words of the Sung statesman Wang An-shih (1021—1086 A.D.), as having the significance only of a “mutilated court record” 斷爛朝報. See *Ku Shih Pien*, Vol. I, p. 78.
was to have no history, and therefore to have no standing. To question the views of the school was to read oneself out of the group — not, indeed, into the lofty atmosphere of suspended scientific judgment, but into the warm embrace of another school equally as dogmatic, and perhaps equally as unscientific. The origins of one’s scholarship, its lines of transmission, and the masters under whom one studied were considerations quite as important as the actual problems themselves.

In such an atmosphere it was, of course, impossible to be impartial — one’s hypotheses, as Mr. Ku points out, had long been established, and all one was expected to do was to substantiate them still further in the same general direction. The natural result was a lack of balance and proportion in holding one’s theories. The Sung school,¹ for example, was rich in subjective, philosophical concepts, but, with the exception of a few representatives like Chu Hsi, was lacking in sound scholarship based on wide evidence. The school of Han learning,² on the other hand, had acquired the technique of gathering and sifting evidence and making hypotheses, but was powerless to set up a philosophy of its own, or avoid getting lost in details. The T’ung-ch’êng school ³ of the last two centuries had the merit of overturning the p’ien-t’i ⁴ literary style in which sentences are composed in pairs, but held so obstinately to other almost equally archaic literary models of the T’ang and Sung period that it

¹ 宋學 of which Chu Hsi (1130—1200) and Wang Yang-ming (1472—1528) were the outstanding philosophers. See note 2, page 56.
² See note 2 page 56.
³ 桐城派 founded by Fang Pao 方苞 (1668—1749), Liu Ta-k’uei 劉大櫆 (1698—1780) and Yao Nai 姚鼐 (1731—1815) — all natives of T’ung-ch’êng, Anhui, hence the name. The literary models which this school sought to follow were brought together by Yao Nai in 1799 and published in 1820 under the title Ku Wen T’zil Lei Tsuan 古文辭類纂. In 1876 Tsêng Kuo-fan (1811—1872) compiled a similar thesaurus entitled Ching Shih Pai Chia Tsa Ch’ao 經史百家雜鈔 which, together with the former, became the text-books of the T’ung-ch’êng school.
⁴ 驁體.
came, in the end, to be one of the greatest hindrances to literary reform.

The tendency of contemporary scholars like Ku Chieh-kang is to emancipate themselves from every school and, so far as possible, abandon all party leanings. Fortunately the rise of a new individualism, and of a new educational system, and the disintegration of local prejudices through swifter communication, makes such independence now possible.

III. THE ABANDONED QUEST FOR ABSOLUTES. The doctrine that the sages handed down in the classics a kernel of moral truth which it is the duty of sound scholarship to defend and transmit was an accepted premise of the older learning. Even the most daring of eighteenth-century critics, T'sui Shu, while devoting his life to pointing out discrepancies in uncanonical literature, and anachronisms in the classics themselves, never abandoned the belief that one may discover in the classics an irreducible minimum beyond which the most rigorous criticism cannot go. Not only the classics, but all writing, tended to lay claim to a similar finality, — only to a lesser degree. Something of this is implied in what the *Tso Chuan* calls “the immortality of great words”,¹ and may have been in the mind of Ssŭ-ma Ch’ien when he wrote his *Historical Memoirs* in the first century B.C.; for, both in his autobiographical preface, and in a letter to a friend, he says, “My sincere purpose in writing this book is to store it in some famous mountain (library) for transmission to men of other ages”.²

Compare this attitude with the statement of Mr. Ku that the picture he is drawing of antiquity can be compared only to the “rough sketches” which an artist makes in advance of his completed

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¹ Legge Vol. V, p. 507 — the so-called “three immortalities”: (三不朽 san pu hsiu) of great virtue (德), of great deeds (功), and of great words (言).

² 朴誠以著此書藏之名山傳之其人 — Letter to Jen An 安, and *Shih Chi* Sec. 130. While this is the interpretation which Liang Ch’i-ch’ao and others give of these words, they need not necessarily be taken in this rather restricted sense.
drawing and therefore can, in no sense, be taken as a masterpiece.

"I can never experience the joy", said he, "of being able to say, 'Truth has at last revealed itself to me, hereafter there is nothing left to do'". With him all writing partakes of the nature of hypothesis, and deserves only such immortality as it can manage to maintain in the face of the most searching criticism. Compare also the attitude of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, as expressed in his monograph on Mo Ti where he says, "I have nothing but contempt for writers who think of 'storing their works in famous mountains'; for the way of knowledge is forever changing, and there can be no stopping". He preferred to take for his own motto the words, "Let me not hesitate to repudiate the self I once was for the self I now am".

IV. A NEW SKEPTICAL APPROACH TO THE PAST. "Skepticism toward the past" — so prominent a note in to-day's cultural transformation, is by no means unknown in Chinese history, for in almost every period there were a few bold spirits who insisted, as Tai Chên (1723—1777) said, "on handing down what they believed, and not what they half-believed". One of the important concerns of the modern movement is the recovery of as many as possible of the expressed doubts of antiquity, for "knowing the importance of their insight", says Mr. Ku "we can build on the heritage which they left us".

For the convenience of the reader, therefore, I shall list chronologically the names and characteristic skepticisms of a few of the most outstanding "doubters of antiquity", even though the grounds for their skepticism cannot here be given.

1. **Han Fei-tzū** (died 233 B.C.). Two characteristic sentences will suffice: "Is it not impossible after the lapse of three thousand years for a piece of writing to be recognized as a masterpiece?"  

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1. P. 124.  
2. P. 4.  
4. "不破以今日之我難昔日之我" — *Ch'ing Tai Hsüeh Shu Kai Lun*, 清代學術概論 p. 143.  
5. 疑古之精神 *i ku chih ching shên*.  
6. 傳其信不傳其疑 letter to Yao Nai 姚鼐.  
7. P. 75
years to ascertain the facts about Yao and Shun? He who seeks to determine such (facts) without evidence is foolish, and he who relies on unverified conclusions misinterprets those men". ¹ "Those who talk about antiquity with a view to setting up false theories, are relying on external power to further their private aims; and so neglect the interests of the kingdom.²

2. Wang Ch'ung (27—97 A.D.) severely criticizes those who "trust in delusive books, taking everything indited on bamboo and silk for the records of wise and sage men, and as absolutely true."³ In his Lun Hêng he has such chapter-headings as, "Falsehoods in Books", "Literary Exaggerations", "Criticisms of Confucius", "Censures on Mencius", etc., etc.

3. Liu Chih-chi ⁴ (661—721 A.D.) — the first Chinese scholar to advocate the separation of literature from history with a view to making the latter an independent discipline. In his Comprehensive Study of History (Shih T'ung) he blames former historians for partiality and subservience to power, accuses Confucius of suppressing unpleasant facts in the Spring and Autumn Annals, and censures literary men for imitating the style of former dynasties instead of writing in the language of their day. See his chapters entitled, "Doubts Concerning Antiquity"⁵ and "Doubts Concerning the Classics".⁶

4. Liu Tsung-yüan (773—819 A.D.) maintained that portions of the Kuo Yü ⁷ are unreliable, and that such Taoist works as

¹今乃欲審堯舜之道於三千歲之前,意者其不可必乎。無參驗而必之者, 愚也; 弗能必而據之者, 謊也。— Ch. Hsien Hsieh 顯學．
²其言古者為設詐稱, 借於外力以成其私, 而遺社稷之利 Ch. Wu Tu 五蠹．
⁴ For Chinese characters and dates of the following, writers see p. 151.
⁵ I Ku P'ien 疑古篇．
⁶ Huo Ching P'ien 惑經篇．
⁷ See his Fei Kuo Yü 非國語．
He Kuan-tzü,¹ Wên-tzü,² and Kuei Ku-tzü³ were forged from materials borrowed from other sources.

5. Ou-yang Hsiu (1017—1072 A.D.) in his Reply to a Youth’s Queries About the Changes⁴ denies that Confucius had anything to do with the Classic of Changes, and thinks it suspicious that the Ten Appendices are not mentioned in literature prior to the Han dynasty. He had doubts also about the historicity of the material in the Tso, Ku-liang, and Kung-yang Commentaries to the Spring and Autumn.

6. Ssu-ma Kuang (1019—1086 A.D.), in his Doubts Concerning Mencius⁵ takes exception to historical data in that work, particularly his statements concerning the emperors of antiquity.

7. Chêng Ch’iao (1104—1162 A.D.) — one of the first to maintain that the Odes were originally lyric poems, or ballads of the people. He advocated a skeptical approach to the classics⁶ and a study of original texts without commentaries. He was the first to promote the theory, (still held by many)⁷ that the “stone drums” are relics of the third, instead of the ninth century B.C.

8. Chu Hsi (1130—1200 A.D.) although commonly regarded as a conservative scholar, was one of the first to doubt the authenticity of the Ancient Text of the Classic of History (Yü Lei

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¹ 閎冠子 of unknown authorship, but attributed by the Han Dynastic History, on insufficient grounds, to a writer of the Ch’u Kingdom (Chou dynasty). See Forke, Geschichte der alten Chinesischen Philosophie, p. 528 f.

² 文子 written (according to the Han History) by a disciple of Lao-tzü who lived in the time of Confucius, but of doubtful authenticity. Forke, op. cit. p. 333 f.

³ 鬼谷子 alleged to have been written at the close of the Chou period, but the title first appears in the Sui History (6th cent. A.D.). Forke, op. cit. p. 483 f.

⁴ I T’ung-tzü Wên 易童子問.

⁵ I Mêng 疑孟.

⁶ Cf. his saying, “While the Odes and the History are trustworthy, they are not necessarily so in every jot and title” 詩書可信然不必字字可信 — from a fragment of his lost Shih Pien Wang 詩辨妄.

⁷ See article on this subject by Ma Hêng in the Kuo Hsiieh Chi K’ân 國學季刊. (Journal of Sinological Studies) for Jan. 1923, Vol. I, No. 1.
67), the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Wên Chi* 66), and parts of the *Record of Rites* (*Yü Lei* 86). He held that *Lieh-tzŭ* was in part made up of Buddhist sources (*Wên Chi* 67) and that the *Classic of Changes* was primarily a book of divination (*Yü Lei* 66).

He regarded the following as forgeries: the *Preface to the History* (*Wên Chi* 71), *K'ung An-kuo’s Commentary to the History* (*Wên Chi* 71), *K'ung T'sung-tzŭ* (*Wên Chi* 66), and the *K'ung-tzŭ Chia-yū* or *Family Sayings of Confucius*.

9. **Yeh Shih** (1150—1223) doubted, among others, the following traditionally accepted views: that Fu Hsi and Wen Wang invented the trigrams and hexagrams, that the Duke of Chou compiled the *Chou-li*, that Confucius edited the *Classic of History* or revised the *Odes*, or that the *Spring and Autumn Annals* harbor profound and recondite meanings.

10. **Wang Po** (1197—1274). See his *Doubts Concerning the History*, and *Doubts Concerning the Odes*. He discarded the *Small Preface* to the *Odes* written by Wei Hung (1st cent. A. D.), holding that the meaning of the *Odes* must be found in the text itself and not in commentaries. He also suspected the authenticity of the so-called “ancient script” classics.

11. **Sung Lien** (1310—1381) published in 1358 his *Chu Tzŭ*...
Pien\(^1\) in which he analyzed the viewpoints and authenticity of some fifty philosophical writings. While somewhat marred by subjective generalizations, due to an imperfect historical method, it is one of the earliest specific attempts to appraise numerous writings of antiquity from the standpoint of authenticity.

12. Mei Tsu\(^2\) (obtained degree in 1513). His work, *Discrepancies in the Classic of History*,\(^3\) was the first work specifically written to demonstrate the spuriousness of the *Ancient Text*.

13. Hu Ying-lin\(^4\) (1551—1618) published in 1586 his work, *Forgeries in Four Branches of Literature*\(^5\) in which he comments critically on more than one hundred doubtful or spurious titles. He lists eight principles for the detection of forgeries on the basis of origin, literary style, internal evidence, attribution, transmission, comments of others etc. He also differentiates forgeries into twenty types such as those fabricated from older sources, those suggested by ancient titles whose texts are lost, those written for personal aggrandizement, those written to malign others, those forged only in part etc. etc.

14. Yen Jō-chū\(^6\) (1636—1704) was the first to demonstrate by the most critical methods, after a lifetime of study, that the *Ancient Text* of the *History*\(^7\) was forged by Mei Tsê\(^8\) in the years 317—322 A.D., thus finally accomplishing the overthrow of a work that had been accepted for a millennium as an unimpeachable Classic.

15. Hu Wei\(^9\) (1633—1714) in his *Exposition of the Diagrams*\(^10\) Repunctuated and prefaced by Mr. Ku, this work was printed in modern form in 1926.

\(^{1}\) 諸子辨. Repunctuated and prefaced by Mr. Ku, this work was printed in modern form in 1926.

\(^{2}\) 梅鶴.

\(^{3}\) *Shang Shu K’ao I* 尙書考異.

\(^{4}\) 胡應麟.

\(^{5}\) Szıl Pu Chêng Wei 四部正詮. Arranged in modern form, and published by Mr. Ku with a preface, in 1929.

\(^{6}\) See footnote 3 page 21.


\(^{8}\) 梅鶴.

\(^{9}\) 胡渭.
of the Changes, 1 published in 1706, traced the origin of the so-called Supreme Ultimate (T'ai Chi T'u) and the maps and drawings reputed to have come from the Lo and Yellow Rivers (Ho T'u Lo Shu). By proving these to have no basis in any classic, but to have been the invention of a Taoist of the 10th century A.D., he did much to undermine one important phase of the Sung philosophy.

16. Yao Chi-hêng 2 (1647—1715?) a little-known historian, most of whose works are lost, but his Forgeries of Ancient and Modern Times 3 is historically significant as the most complete exposition of forged literature up to the close of the eighteenth century. It analyzes, solely on the basis of authenticity, some ninety works in every department of literature. Many of his conclusions are unwarranted, but they connote a skepticism certainly unusual in his time.

17. T'sui Shu 1740—1816) possibly the most valiant doubter of Chinese history, who anticipated important conclusions of present day scholarship. He was the first to point out that the model emperor lore was built up in successive strata 4 so that the more remote from a given event, the more detailed becomes the information about that event. Thus Yao and Shun are unknown to the earliest classic, the Odes; Shên Nung appears first in the writings of Mencius; the Huang-ti lore first becomes prominent in the Ch'in period (255—206 B.C.); and P'an Ku, supposedly the most ancient figure of all, is mentioned first in the literature of Han. T'sui Shu also pointed out that writers of antiquity made a practice of substantiating their theories by illustrations drawn from folklore. After long transmission these illustrations, together with accretions and mistaken interpretations, were accepted as fact, thereby vitiating many histories, commen-

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1 I T'u Ming Pien 易圖明辨.
2 See footnote 2 page 74.
3 See footnote 3 page 74. A modern punctuated edition of this work, with a preface by Mr. Ku, was published in 1929.
4 This is what Mr. Ku calls “the stratified fabrication of ancient Chinese history” 層累地造成的中國古史 Cf. Ku Shih Pien, Vol. I, p. 97.
taries, and philosophical writings that appeared after the time of the Warring Kingdoms (403—255 B.C.).

The Anglo-Chinese war of 1842 convinced the intellectual leaders of the time that they must thereafter reckon with a new type of civilization which could not be made innocuous by assimilation, as other powerful cultures of the past, but must be reckoned with on entirely new terms. The first natural, and instinctive, reaction of scholar-statesmen of the day—men like Tsêng Kuo-fan (1811—1872), Tso Tsung-t'ang (1812—1885), and Chang Chih-tung (1837—1909)—was to work all the harder for the "preservation of the national heritage" in the face of impending disaster. In the midst of the wreckage of the time they turned instinctively to the consolations of the subjective Sung philosophy, and to what they regarded as the highest ideals of the nation's past. They were in no mood to examine critically the basis of those ideals, nor could they envisage a time when a complete reorganization and reevaluation would be necessary. The result was that after 1840 critical scholarship of the type that flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was held for three quarters of a century in almost complete abeyance. The intellectual leaders of the day threw in their lot with the afore-mentioned T'ung-ch'êng school which fancied that, by popularizing the literary style of the great T'ang and Sung masters, or the yet older models of the Han and Wei dynasties, they would be in a position to recover and preserve the authentic ideals of the past in their final and most beautiful forms. This basic assumption survived well down to the collapse of the Manchu regime (in 1911), and was the guiding motive of the editors and contributors to the foremost sinological journal of the years 1905—1911 (the Kuo T'sui Hsüeh Pao 2) which, as the name indicates, was still bent on "preserving the quintessence of the country's past". All the recognized literature of the day was purposely and frankly composed in the style of former

1 Pao-t'sun kuo-t'sui 保存國粹.

2 國粹學報.
dynasties. Even the translations which Yen Fu (1852–1921) made of Huxley, Spencer, and Mill were written after the style of the pre-Han period (before 206 B.C.), while the stories translated by Lin Shu (1852–1924) were reproduced in the telegraphically terse language of the seventeenth-century tales known as *Liao Chai Chih I* (translated by Herbert A. Giles under the title, *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*). However unnatural and unsuited these mediums were for modern times, they were actually the only ones in which the literati of the day cared to read—even the works of western authors!

By 1917 the country was ready for the "literary revolution" which set itself with no small success to the overthrow of the archaic classical style and the substitution of the vernacular as the literary medium for all practical purposes. The result was the sudden creation of a vast new periodical literature in which minds, that were once in bondage, could express themselves in the natural, colloquial language of every-day life. Old poetic forms were discarded in favor of new ones, imaginative writing in the form of short stories filled the book-stalls, and every type of new knowledge was popularized in a medium which people of limited education could understand. In 1920 the simplified *kuo-yü* or "national spoken language" was made compulsory for the first two years of the primary grades, and later was extended to the upper grades and middle schools as well. But prior to this time (in 1919) Dr. Hu Shih wrote an essay entitled *The Meaning of...*

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1  嚴復 Born in Fukien, he studied in England in 1876, taught in the Pei-yang Naval Academy, and later became principal of the Ching Shih Ta Hsūeh T'ang 京師大學堂, now the Peking National University.

2  林紳 He translated some one hundred and thirty western works, including parts of Shakespeare, Defoe, Swift, Irving, Dickens, Hugo, Dumas, Balzac, Ibsen, Cervantes, Tolstoy et al. It is noteworthy that he knew no western language, but depended wholly on verbal translation by others.

the Renaissance Movement,¹ in which he made it clear that the literary revolution aimed not merely at the simplification of the literary style, by establishing the vernacular as the proper medium for all purposes, but must proceed to the reorganization and reevaluation of the entire literary heritage. In January 1923, in his Editorial Pronouncement² for the initial issue of the Journal of Sinological Studies³ of the Peking National University, he outlined the guiding principles that, in his opinion, must govern a movement designed to resystematize what Mr. Ku, in one of his essays, calls “the muddled account-book of Chinese history”.⁴ His principles are not, of course, new to the West, for they rehearse, in effect, the history of European historical criticism in the past century, stressing the importance of a proper historical method and the need of investigation from wider angles than the most critical scholars of former times had done.

The slogan for the new “Chêng-li Kuo-ku,⁵ or “reorganization of the national past” movement, was derived, strangely enough, from the writings of the ku wên scholar, Chang T’ai-yen.⁶ In 1918(?) he published a well-known work entitled Kuo Ku Lun Hêng,¹ Critical Comments on our National Past — the first two words of the Chinese title being used as a part of the above slogan, and also forming part of the Chinese term for “sinology”, namely kuo hsüeh,⁸ or “national learning”. Although a conservative scholar in respect to the classics, his profound study of Buddhism, Chinese philosophical writings, and the paleography and phonetics of Chinese characters convinced him that a whole-

² Fa K’an Hsiian Yen 發刊宣言.
³ Kuo Hsüeh Chi K’an 國學季刊 edited by Dr. Hu Shih and others.
⁵ 整理國故.
⁶ See footnote 5 page 20, and Index.
⁷ 國故論衡.
⁸ 國學 a shortened form of kuo-ku hsüeh.
sale resystematization was necessary if Chinese literature is to have its maximum intelligibility. Instead of groping vainly about for the recovery of imaginary ideals in the imitative mood of the old “preservationist” school of the last century, the new movement looks forward to positive and impartial reconstruction on a broad scale. Its aims, and their practical application, may be briefly summarized as follows:

I. DETECTION AND ELIMINATION OF FORGERIES. Types of forgeries that have long ceased to circulate in the West continue in China to trap the unwary, not because there has been no criticism of these in the past, but because the writings of the critics were either neglected, or the evidence advanced was not sufficiently convincing to win the assent of over-credulous scholars. Differentiation of forgeries is, therefore, of first importance in the reorganization of the national culture. There is no doubt that the feeling of helplessness so frequently voiced by older scholars at the vastness of Chinese literature would have had far less force, if they had perfected a sound method of forgery-detection, and so had eliminated, at least some of them, from their calculations. This, however, is not easy to do, for forgeries are of every degree of reliability, and discrimination between them requires scholarship and technique of the highest order. This Mr. Ku is attempting to provide in his Pien Wei T’sung K’An (Series on the Detection of Forgeries) in which the conclusions of former scholars are being placed before the public in critically annotated editions, as the basis for a yet more critical study.

II. RECOVERY OF LOST OR NEGLECTED WORKS. This was a task to which eighteenth-century scholarship set itself with intelligence and with correspondingly valuable results, and to-day it is being resumed with increased vigor, and on a much wider scale. Many works, which for political or other reasons were proscribed during most of the Ch’ing dynasty (1644–1911), are now being reprinted

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1 Cf. the saying attributed to Wen T’ien-hsiang (1236–1283 A.D.) “Where shall one begin in the study of the seventeen dynastic histories?” —

2 辨僞叢刊.
XXXII

by libraries, museums, bibliophiles, and private publishers. Most of the writings of the great critical scholars enumerated above, which for centuries were more or less submerged under the weight of Confucian learning, are now appearing in new editions and thus greatly enriching the thought-life of our time. Manuscript finds of Tunhuang, and other places in Central Asia, have shed new light on art, linguistics, Buddhism, the origin of the novel — subjects that have occupied the attention of scholars for almost a generation. Not only have many old works, or better editions of old works, been discovered in the hands of private families in China, but a few important works, long lost in China, have been found in Japan, Korea, and even in the West. The possibilities are by no means exhausted, and we may expect other important discoveries in years to come.

III. ENHANCING THE INTELLIGIBILITY OF OLD TEXTS. Since the spoken and written language of China bridges the entire period in which the languages and literatures of Europe were evolved, it is not surprising that variations in the sound, meaning, and form of ideographs should be correspondingly numerous. If one adds to this, errors introduced by careless transcription, unenlightened emendation, and faulty printing, one obtains some conception of the labor necessary to restore such texts to their original condition. This is particularly true of literature before the T'ang and Sung dynasties, in which one frequently meets passages which are unintelligible, even to a Chinese, who has not had some training in etymology, phonetics, and textual criticism. Despite the valuable

1 As, for example, the T'ien Kung K'ai Wu 天工開物, a work on labor-saving machinery and inventions, written by Sung Ying-hsing 宋應星 in 1634 and published in 1637. Also the Yu Hsien K'u 漁仙窟, the earliest known specimen of a Chinese short story to be purposely so written. This work by, Chang Wên-ch'êng 張文成 (660—740 A.D.), was reprinted in China in 1929 from a manuscript preserved in the Shohei-gaku Library, Japan. Likewise the Hsiu Shih Lu 森節錄, a valuable work on lacquer written by a Chinese artisan, Huang Ch'êng 黃成, in the Ming dynasty. It was reprinted in 1927 in the T'o Po Ch'an T'sung K'ê 託跋塵叢刻 from a copy found in the Japanese Imperial Household Museum.
contributions of eighteenth-century scholars in this direction, nearly all ancient texts need to be subjected to a vigorous process of collation, emendation, annotation (in the vernacular), repunctuation, and clear printing. Not the least necessary is repunctuation, for not even the writings of the late Wang Kuo-wei \(^1\) (1877—1927) and the recent *Draft History of the Ch'ing Dynasty*, \(^2\) have adequate devices to indicate the beginning and end of sentences, the separation of phrases, paragraph headings, not to mention such simple matters as tables of contents with adequate pagination.

Until recently proper grammatical helps were surprisingly few. One of the earliest works on particles was the *Chu Tzü Pien Lüeh* \(^3\) written by Liu Ch'i \(^4\) in 1711. Another valuable work on the meaning of particles — the *Ching Chuan Shih Tz'ü* \(^5\) — was published by Wang Yin-chih \(^6\) at the close of the eighteenth century (1798). It was not, however, until another century had passed, that there appeared in 1898 a work on Chinese syntax — the *Ma Shih Wên T'ung* \(^7\) which analyzed all parts of speech in terms of western formulae. Since then many such helps have appeared, including one by Yü Yüeh (1821—1906) — the *Ku Shu I I Chü Li* \(^8\) — which analyzes the particles in terms of principles deduced from the language itself.

Then, too, the unalphabetical nature of the language is responsible for much acknowledged clumsiness in Chinese works of reference, and for the lack of proper indexes to names, places, events and institutions recorded in literature. Until these deficiencies are remedied, sinology will continue to be, as it has in the past, a time-consuming, not to say irritating procedure. The most

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\(^1\) See footnote 3 page 93.

\(^2\) *Ch'ing Shih Kao* 清史稿.

\(^3\) 助字辨畧.

\(^4\) 劉淇.

\(^5\) 經傳釋詞.

\(^6\) 王引之 1766—1834.

\(^7\) 馬氏文通 by Ma Chien-chung 馬建忠.

\(^8\) 俞樾, 古書疑義舉例.
promising solution of this problem seems to lie in the direction of some numeral system, whereby ideographs can be assigned a number which, when filed in numeral order, can be traced perhaps as easily as in an alphabetical language. One reason why former scholars never set themselves to this task, is the aversion they felt against anything in the nature of "helps," looking upon these as we once regarded "cribs" for the translation of Greek and Roman classics — the great scholar did not need them, and lesser scholars were ashamed to use them!

IV. DELINEATION OF SPHERES. Chinese literature of the past is so undifferentiated, that a knowledge of what it really contains is in no small degree unknown, even to the Chinese themselves. Multitudes of questions, to which the modern man requires an answer, still remain unsolved — not because the answer cannot be found, but because the materials for providing it have not yet been sufficiently isolated. Nor can these be isolated until the above-mentioned problem of indexing has been adequately solved. Then, for the first time, the tangled skein of ethics, philosophy, empirical science, folklore, art, religion, and a host of other disciplines will be unravelled, and we shall have, on an adequate scale, what we have now only in their beginnings — specialized histories in all these fields. Scholarship will then be building on the whole of Chinese society and not on a part.

V. A NEW EMPHASIS ON SCIENTIFIC METHOD. The Ming philophers, and to some extent the Sung, being under the domination of Buddhist and Taoist ideas, believed that the highest knowledge is to be found within the mind, and comes to man by intuition and sudden enlightenment rather than by the slow and painstaking observation of innumerable things. Man was made the measure of nature, and needed only to practice tranquillity and profound contemplation to discover all that it is necessary for him to know. It is true that Chu Hsi (1130—1200 A.D.) and his followers

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1 For an exposition of some of the problems pertaining to such systems Cf. J. J. L. Duyvendak, "Wong's System for Arranging Chinese Characters", T'oung Pao, Nos. 1—2, 1931.

were genuinely interested in scholarly research, and talked much about, "the investigation of things"; but "things", from their point of view, turned out on further study to mean, not primarily things in the outer world, but things in the mind, or at most ethical and moral data that were handed down in classical literature. As in Europe at the same time, it was believed that physical phenomena were so multitudinous and complex that no ultimate truths could be derived from them, and it was ultimate truths that they were after. In the absence of a proper scientific method of hypothesis, induction, and generalization on the basis of facts, they resorted to what was in effect a religious synthesis, which was all the more natural, since they were concerned almost solely with ethical and moral ideas. They had no method by which wide observations could be made manageable, and so reduced to understandable laws. The natural result was that students who had a bent for the physical sciences never secured a standing comparable to that held by classical scholars, moralists, poets, and essayists who were imagined to have more immediate access to truth. Their writings were looked upon, like those of the novelists and dramatists, as outside the stream of pure literature. It is not surprising, therefore, that books which did have genuine scientific value were, from the western point of view, seriously neglected. In many instances they were lost, and our knowledge of them must now be derived from indirect sources such as biographical sketches, local histories, or fragmentary quotations preserved in ancient encyclopedias.

The seventeenth and eighteenth century school of Han learning set itself to the overthrow of Sung subjectivism, both in the classical and the philosophical field, and really achieved remarkable success in placing textual and historical criticism, phonetics, and geography on a sound scientific basis. The proponents of this school understood the advantage of wide research, the value of evidence, the spirit of incredulity, and the setting up of hypotheses as the basis of a new originality. They restricted themselves, however, to these fields, and to the data to be gathered from classical sources; and their studies, valuable as they are, constitute merely the starting-point for a wider and yet more rigorous
VI. COMPARATIVE STUDY IN OTHER FIELDS. Chinese scholars were convinced, from very early times, of the truth of the Confucian maxim that “virtue never dwells alone, it always has neighbors”. \(^2\) They were not so firmly convinced, however, of the equally important maxim for historians that a fact has no significance so long as it stands alone; that it must borrow its significance from its neighbors. This discovery Mr. Ku had to make, more or less for himself, after attending the lectures by Dr. Hu Shih — “that the historical method consists in the apprehension of a given event from every conceivable angle, and in every possible relationship — no event being regarded as having sprung up independently of other considerations” \(^3\). Prior to his time Chinese culture was studied almost wholly in terms of itself, or more specifically, in terms of that phase of itself which relates to classical study of the Confucian type, just as the culture of Europe was, until modern times, studied solely in terms of the classical history of Italy, Greece, and Palestine — no attempt being made to study even the latter “from every conceivable angle and in every possible relationship”. The application in the West of the comparative method in philology, mythology, politics, and history was declared by Edward A. Freeman, (in his address on the *Unity of History*, delivered in Cambridge in 1872) to have been the greatest contribution of the nineteenth century to the advance of human knowledge — as great, in his opinion, as the revival of Greek and Latin learning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Speaking of the results of recent comparative studies in China, Mr. Ku remarks, “our eyes have been opened to a new world of hitherto uninvestigated and unorganized materials; questions which once were believed to have no significance have now taken on an entirely new meaning” \(^4\). Recent corroborative evidence derived from discoveries in archaeology alone has completely overthrown the traditional assumption of the indigenous, homo-

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1 P. 77.  
3 P. 175.  
4 P. 161.
geneous character of the Chinese people, showing them to be a mixture of many races, and perhaps akin in prehistoric times to similar cultures in Central Asia and the Near East. The discovery in 1899 of the inscribed oracle-bones of Honan has given to modern paleographers information on the origin and development of Chinese ideographs, entirely unknown to Chinese scholars who lived even as early as the first century of our era. Archaeology has made quite untenable the old assumption of a primitive Chinese monotheism, or the long-accepted hypothesis that China never passed through a stone age culture, or had no fecundity cult. Such far-reaching conclusions could never have been deduced from literary sources alone which, in fact, often led historians to quite erroneous theories, causing them to postulate a structure for Chinese antiquity exactly the reverse of that which actually obtained. Such archaeological studies as were carried on since the Sung dynasty (960—1260 A.D.), when intelligent interest in such matters began, were, after all, largely antiquarian in nature; and like pioneer archaeology in Palestine some decades ago, were utilized chiefly for substantiating predetermined ideas. It hardly occurred to those scholars to deduce from actual objects social, economic, or political interpretations at variance with the Classics. They understood to a degree the significance of bronzes and inscriptions on stone, but the information to be gleaned from jades, coins, pottery, frescoes, sculpture, and artifacts, entirely escaped them. Only in recent years (as in the West) have these been utilized to reconstruct human society in its ancient setting. But it is necessary to push such studies beyond the boundaries of China proper, as recent excavations in Japan, Korea, and Siberia have shown.

Scarcely more than a century ago Niebuhr began rewriting ancient Roman history, institutions, and customs in terms of ballads, myths, and legends, as well as from formal written do-

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1 See footnote 3 page 106 — reference to an article by Karlgren.

2 See Lo Lang — the report of the excavations of Yoshito Harada and Kingo Tazawa on the burial site of an ancient Chinese colony in Korea in the Han dynasty; published in 1930 under the auspices of the Tokyo Imperial University.
cuments, which he found to be full of official falsifications. These same methods are to-day being exploited by Mr. Ku and his associates; and while the present results are comparatively meagre, the possibilities are really enormous. The ancient emperor lore, which was crystallized by later scholars in the Shu Ching as actual history, is now being reexamed in terms of analogous folklore of our own day. Folk-songs of antiquity,¹ which before the time of Confucius were brought together in the collection now known as the Odes, are given a new intelligibility by the simple process of studying them in terms of the twenty thousand and more folk-songs, which have been collected among the common people. Similarly the everyday life and the psychology of the common people, whose existence is hardly hinted at in the dynastic histories, is made real in the spontaneous poetry, the novels, and the dramas of other times. It is not enough, however, to base such studies on Chinese materials alone. All folk-songs, superstitions, institutions, and social practices of China must, in the future, be studied in terms of similar phenomena in the history of other cultures, or ones still surviving in other parts of the world. This is true of all customs that center about ancestor-worship, the worship of the soil, birth, marriage, mourning, religious and seasonal festivals. As isolated phenomena, peculiar to China, their meaning is easily exhausted, but as diverse manifestations of a common human urge they have a significance that is almost inexhaustible; the reason being that in China these institutions can be traced through a long unbroken history, through ancient and contemporary literature, through archaeological finds, and through existing practices.

Mr. Ku repeatedly acknowledges that it is in these very fields of comparative study that his greatest handicaps lie. He is thoroughly at home in the handling of evidence from Chinese literary sources, but lacks the technique in philology, anthropology, and archaeology, to deduce from these sciences the evidence which they can and will yield. This accounts for the fact that some of the parallels he draws seem slightly forced, and perhaps not always convincing

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to those who are compelled to judge them solely on the basis of evidence here offered. In these matters his work does not always compare favorably, either in technique or in results, with such critical studies as Ettore Pais, for example, has made on the legends of Roman history. Lacking the wide background in primitive sociology and folklore of such western sinologists as Granet and Maspero, it cannot be said that he utilizes materials in these fields as skillfully as they do. Undoubtedly there are many phases of Chinese folklore, linguistics, institutional life and history which westerners, with specialized knowledge of related phenomena, can handle more adequately than the most learned native classical scholar who has not had a special training in such matters. This is already true of certain phases of archaeology, anthropology, Buddhism, and the dead and living languages of races that once impinged upon China proper. The findings of one trained phonetician like Bernhard Karlgren, says Dr. Hu Shih, are of more actual significance than the conclusions of all the Chinese scholars of the last three centuries, who went at their task wholly within the classical sphere; the reason being that Karlgren, with a sound training in phonetics and linguistic methods, took into account ancient pronunciations that survive, not merely in literature or in the dialects of China proper, but in the languages of Annam, Korea, and Japan.

But Mr. Ku can not be expected, nor does he claim, to be a specialist in all these fields. He aims merely to show how these entirely new, and hitherto unsuspected, materials can be utilized in the reconstruction of ancient Chinese history; he has no intention of prosecuting the entire task himself. He is, for his countrymen, a pioneer in this field, and, moreover, evidence which it is impossible for him to adduce in full in his Autobiographical Preface he brings out far more conclusively in his monographs on the Yao, Shun, and Yü lore which appear in the main body of his work. In any case, one must grant that he has in general the right method, and one cannot but admire his indomitable

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1 Collected Writings, Series III, Vol. 1, p. 203.
2 It is true that on page 175 Mr Ku seems to labor under the impression that the precise method of the physical sciences is somehow directly applicable
spirit. Chinese scholarship needs only to pursue the course he has laid down to produce results of yet greater significance.

In the present state of Chinese studies in the West there is almost nothing more needed than the translation of representative Chinese productions of a scholarly nature, both ancient and modern. But it is seldom attempted, perhaps because it is both a difficult and a thankless task. The translator knowingly lays himself open to types of criticism, which one who writes for himself has little difficulty in answering. A critic in search of errors can always suggest what seem to him, and may well be, more apt renderings of almost any given phrase. This is particularly true of Chinese literature whose written characters, as James Legge has said, “are not representations of words, but symbols of ideas; and the combinations of them in composition is not a representation of what the writer would say, but of what he thinks”. While this is less true of the modern kuo yü than of the archaic classical style, the difficulties that inhere in the use of an ideographic language are nevertheless very real.

I have tried, despite these handicaps, to convey the ideas of the author faithfully, sentence by sentence and phrase by phrase, without lapsing into unreadable English. The work, therefore, is no mere paraphrase of the author’s meaning, but adheres steadily to the text at every point. Omissions do not number more than a score of sentences, and these were reluctantly made only for the sake of avoiding unnecessary redundancy. In no case, however, have I shortened quotations; where marks of omissions occur in these, I have left them just as they are in the original.

While the author is admirably precise in dating the events of his own career, he unfortunately followed traditional Chinese practice in never dating a book, an author or an event except in terms of the dynasty in which these appear. This is entirely too indefinite for Westerners, and it is pleasing to note a vast improvement in such matters in recent years, particularly in the study of history. This view, commonly held in the West some decades ago, can, of course, no longer be accepted without qualification.

1 Preface to the Yi King page XV.

2 語 the simplified vernacular or “national speech”.
writings of Dr. Hu Shih, and the later essays of Mr. Ku himself. In order, therefore, to give the text its maximum intelligibility, I was compelled at every point to insert exact dates, (when such are available,) despite the fact that this often involved, even for a single date, many hours of tedious searching among the extremely inadequate helps that are as yet available, even in the most complete Chinese libraries. This is particularly true of modern or contemporary writers; for, however strange it may seem, it is easier to find the exact dates (when such are recorded) of a Chinese who lived in the twelfth century, than of one who died fifteen years ago! Whenever my datings differ from the usual English sources, further study will show that I have in such instances preferred to follow more recent Chinese findings. In a parenthetical note on page seven of the original text Mr. Ku explains that, whenever he uses the Chinese word sui to indicate his age at a given point in his career, he intends it as equivalent to the western reckoning. I have, therefore, so translated it in every case.

There are no footnotes in the original. All that now appear in the translation are my own annotations and were added in the hope of clarifying allusions, that would otherwise mean almost nothing to the western reader. Persons, places, books and events that the cultivated Chinese, writing for his own countrymen, takes entirely for granted, often require detailed analysis before they can have the intelligibility which the western reader has a right to demand. These, however, are entirely alien to the Chinese text, and for them the author himself is in no way responsible.

I must express my deep gratitude to Dr. J. J. L. Duyvendak, Professor of Chinese in the University of Leyden, for laboriously comparing the translation with the original, sentence by sentence, suggesting many improvements, and eliminating errors that would otherwise have escaped my attention. It was a pleasure thus to come into intimate contact with him, both at Columbia University (N. Y.) and in the Sinologisch Instituut at Leyden, and so profit by his kindly criticism, and his exceptional knowledge of sinological
literature, both Chinese and European. My thanks are due also to Mrs. Duyvendak for generously assisting to see the work through the press during the days I was absent from Holland. At the same time Mrs. Hummel aided me greatly in the preparation of the index, by critical suggestions, and by unfailing encouragement to proceed with the task. To Mr. K. M. Tsu and Mr. B. L. Tai of Johns Hopkins University, and Miss Ya-ch'uan Wang of George Washington University I am indebted for conscientious help in checking the translation, and looking up innumerable references that would otherwise have made my task far more burdensome. To Mr. Han Shou-hsüan, Cataloger in the Chinese Division of the Library of Congress, I am grateful for suggestions which he kindly offered from time to time.

ARTHUR W. HUMMEL.