

China

TA T'UNG SHU



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HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, ECONOMICS

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TA T'UNG SHU

The One-World
Philosophy of K'ang Yu-wei

K'ANG YU-WEI
AND
LAURENCE G THOMPSON

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China: History, Philosophy, Economics

TA T'UNG SHU

*The One-World
Philosophy
of
K'ang Yu-wei*

TRANSLATED FROM THE CHINESE
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

LAURENCE G. THOMPSON

LONDON
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PREFACE

IN the first issue of the quarterly journal, *Philosophy East and West*, one author remarks that, 'as a result of the devoted study of so many philologists, the most important texts are available in translations and can be used as a starting-point for later phases in the evaluation'.¹ The desire of that author is to see studies in Oriental thought progress beyond the basic stages, and reach the level of comparative philosophy. This desire is understandable, and is shared by an increasing number of students. However, his statement as to the availability in translation of 'the most important texts', applicable though it perhaps may be to the Indian philosophers, is certainly far from correct, so far as Chinese philosophy is concerned. The only period well represented in translation is the most ancient one, although even there such important texts as the *Ku Liang Commentary on the Tso Chuan* and the *Huai Nan Tzu* remain untranslated. For the period since the Latter Han dynasty (about A.D. 200), there is a great emptiness, broken only by a solitary sampling here and there. Unfortunately for our wish to rise above the basic work of translation, the fact is that a tremendous work of translation must yet be done before we can make bold to essay a serious comparative study of philosophy.

The present writer is convinced from his experience thus far in the study of Chinese thought, that the most important contribution the student can make, at the present stage of scholarship, is to add what he can to the presently meagre store of translations. Upon the quality and range of translations depends the possibility of developing our understanding of Chinese thought. I hold no confidence in the view that we can acquire such understanding merely by reading the texts in the Chinese, even provided we have that ability. The labour of providing an accurate translation, familiar to all who have attempted the task, is proof enough that only such thorough study and detailed work as is necessary to produce a translation faithful to the original, will guarantee an adequate comprehension of the text. Nor, to be realistic, can we hope that such a competence in reading classical Chinese will be developed among foreign students, as will

assure that more than a handful of the most able can in a short lifetime actually read many of these texts in the original. No, we shall depend upon the translations in all possible cases. Much therefore depends upon the quality of the translation. And there is perhaps no language offering such possibilities of mistranslation as classical Chinese. A poor translation from classical Chinese is really worse than none.

It is the present translator's purpose therefore to bring to the Western student of Chinese thought an accurate and reasonably literate rendering of one of the major works of modern Chinese philosophy. He is far from supposing his rendering to be free from faults of misinterpretation or clumsiness. He does trust that it is clear and precise enough to assure that the reader is actually receiving the ideas which the author sent forth.

The original suggestion that *Ta T'ung Shu* should be made available to Western readers was made to me by Katherine Hughes. I am very grateful to her for having put me on the track of such a rewarding subject. It is an obligation and a pleasure to own a pupil's debt of gratitude to professors Ch'en Shou-yi and E. R. Hughes. While in Taipei from 1951 to 1953, I was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of the eldest son of K'ang Yu-wei and of his third wife; they kindly supplied me with some materials which would not otherwise have been available. I am further indebted to Professor Shen Kang-po (沈剛伯), then of National Taiwan University, for his generosity in giving me his personal copy of the Chung Hwa edition of the text, which, despite its recent date of publication (1935), has become a 'rare book'. Professor T. S. Wei (衛挺生) has also placed me in his debt by pointing out several corrections which needed to be made in the manuscript.

¹ J. Kwee Swan Liat, 'Methods of Comparative Philosophy', *Philosophy East and West* (quarterly), vol. 1, no. 1, April 1951, p. 12.

BOOK ONE
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

Biographical Sketch of K'ang Yu-wei

Note: The following material might in part almost be called an autobiographical sketch. It is taken, unless otherwise identified, from Chao Feng-t'ien's *Draft Chronology of Mr. K'ang Ch'ang-su*, 康長素先生年譜稿, which is in turn based (for the first forty years of the story) on the subject's own *Self-Compiled Chronology of the Gentleman from Nan Hai* 南海先生自編年譜 (cited hereafter as *Chronology*). Mr. Chao's work is by far the most detailed biography of K'ang Yu-wei yet to appear.

(Page citations below refer to Chao's article.)

K'ANG YU-WEI was born in the eighth year of the Ch'ing Hsien Feng Emperor, on the fifth day of the second month (corresponding to March 19, 1858). His natal place was Kwangtung province, Nan Hai *hsien*, Yin T'ang *hsiang*, Tun Jen li (廣東南海縣銀塘鄉敦仁里). According to his own *Chronology*, he was carried by his mother for eleven months before birth—an infallible sign of a prodigy.

He early demonstrated his intellectual capacities: by the age of five he was able to recite several hundred T'ang poems. The following year he began his studies of the regular curriculum, comprising such works as *Ta Hsüeh*, *Chung Yung*, *Lun Yü*, and *Hsiao Ching*. When he was eleven his father died, and he was sent to Lien Chou (連州) to study with his grandfather. At fourteen he was again living in Yin T'ang *hsiang*, his studies facilitated by the large family library collected by his great-grandfather. His independent spirit manifested itself as early as the age of fifteen, when he rebelled at the task of composing the 'eight-legged essays'¹ set for him by his teacher.

At seventeen, he states (*Chronology*), he first read the *Brief Description of the World* 瀛環志畧 (compiled by Hsü Chi-yü 徐繼畲 in 1848),² and learned something of the history and geography of foreign nations. Two years later (1876) he began studying under

a teacher of real stature, Chu Chiu-chiang 朱九江. In this same year he was married.³ The following year, upon the death of his grandfather who had cared for him since he was a child, K'ang Yu-wei observed the mourning period for him as for his father.

In 1878, when he was twenty-one, he underwent a sudden revulsion against the arduous studies he had been pursuing for so long. He records in his *Chronology* the following significant experience:

'While sitting in meditation, I suddenly saw that the ten thousand creatures of Heaven and Earth and I were all of the same body; a great light dawned (literally, I [received] great enlightenment), and I believed I was a sage: then I laughed with joy. Suddenly I thought of the sufferings of life: then I cried with melancholy. Suddenly I thought of the parent I was not serving—how could I be studying?—then forthwith I packed up and went back to dwell by his grave.'⁴ (p. 181.)

He thus gave up his instruction under Chu Chiu-chiang, and we find him in his twenty-second year living alone on a mountain to the south of Yin T'ang *hsiang*, named Hsi Ch'iao Shan (西樵山), in the Cave of the White Clouds (白雲洞). Here, according to his *Chronology*, he spent his time in studying Buddhist and Taoist books, and in meditation and spiritual clarification. During this time he became intimate with a scholar named Chang Yen-ch'iu (張延秋), and the two men spent long hours together, discussing the affairs of the day, the new books, and the old learning. Such was the importance of his friendship with Mr. Chang that K'ang Yu-wei said: 'From my teacher, Mr. Chiu-chiang, I was introduced to the Great Way of the sages and worthies;⁵ from my friend, Mr. Yen-ch'iu, my interpretation of our original written records was enlarged.' (p. 181.)

It was in the winter of this year (1879) that he first went to Hong Kong. Prior to this trip he had read several works on foreign lands in addition to the *Brief Description of the World*; his *Chronology* mentions a *Concordance of Modern Western History* 西國近事彙編, a *New Account of a Tour of the World* 環遊地球新錄, 'and others'. Now, when he visited the British Crown Colony, he

'saw the elegance of the Westerners' houses and the good order of the streets, and for the first time realized that the governments

of the Westerners had laws. He read again the *Illustrated Gazetteer of the Countries Across the Seas* 海國圖志 and the *Brief Description of the World*, bought a map of the world, and gradually acquired [more] books on Western learning so as to investigate the basis of Western learning.' (p. 181.)

In 1882, when K'ang Yu-wei was twenty-five, his old teacher, Chu Chiu-chiang, died, and K'ang took part with his other pupils in collecting his writings. It was also in this year that K'ang first travelled to Peking, to take part in the triennial examinations for the second degree. He was not successful. On the return journey he passed through Shanghai, where, according to his *Chronology*, he observed the prosperity of this city, and realized all the more that the Western methods of government had [sound] basic principles. So he purchased many books on Western learning, and became a serious student of that learning.⁶ (p. 182.)

In 1883, at the age of twenty-six, he undertook his first venture in practical reform by organizing an Anti-Footbinding Society in his native place. This was the first such society in China, and it was later followed by his South China Anti-Footbinding Society, and his memorial to the Throne of 1898, in which he urged the prohibition of this inhuman practice.⁷ This year saw further steps in his intellectual development: he bought the *World News*⁸ 萬國公報, studied Western sciences, read on foreign history, geography, and travels. He now became interested solely in practical studies, and no longer devoted himself to preparing for the examinations.

It was during the years 1884 and 1885 that K'ang Yu-wei wrote the 'Li Yün' Annotated 禮運注 and the first draft of the *Ta T'ung Shu*. Thus it was at the age of twenty-seven that his ideas crystallized into a conception of a world in the future, in which the sufferings of mankind would be ended, and the Universal Society established. The first draft of the work was entitled *Universal Principles of Mankind* 人類公理. It had only just been completed in the second month of 1885, when the author (who was then again in Peking) was attacked by head pains so severe that they seem very nearly to have cost him his life. He remained in his room for several months without emerging, and seemed resigned to die: 'The Universal

Principles of Mankind was already finished, the polity of the *Ta T'ung* was already formulated, and the Teacher contemplated death without regret.' (p. 184.)

In 1887 he revised the manuscript of the *Universal Principles*, considering such matters as the establishment of the world language institute, the world parliament, a world army, etc.

The following year he went for the third time to the capital, where he arrived in time to find his old friend Chang Yen-ch'iu dying. It was in November of this year that he addressed his first memorial to the Throne, urging reforms—a memorial which was not brought to the Emperor's attention. He remained in Peking until the fall of 1889, taking the triennial examination for the second degree, and this time winning first place.

In 1890 K'ang Yu-wei was thirty-three, and living in Yang Ch'eng (i.e. Canton). It was during this year that Ch'en Ch'ien-ch'iu (T'ung-fu) 陳千秋 (通甫) and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao (Jen-kung) 梁啟超 (任公) came to study with him; and the following year he began lecturing at Chang Hsing li 長興里 in the provincial capital of Kwangtung. According to Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's *Biography* (Chapter III),

'in teaching his students, [Mr. K'ang] took as the matter Confucian, Buddhist, Sung, and Ming (i.e. neo-Confucian) scholarship; he took as the method history and Western studies. He taught solely by fostering a spirit of determination, by expanding upon essentials, by aiming at knowledge in a broad way.'

While the school at Chang Hsing li was not organized like schools of the present day, in spirit, Liang states, it was like Western schools.

During these past few years K'ang Yu-wei had been writing various things, and in 1891 was printed the first book that was to bring fame—not to say notoriety—to him: *Forged Classics of the Hsin Period* 新學偽經考. In the following year he set his ablest students to helping him revise the manuscript of a work which he had first begun in 1886: *Confucius as a Reformer* 孔子改制考. In these books he tried to establish the position of the so-called 'new text school' as against the 'old text school',⁹ and to picture Confucius as a reformer rather than a conservative. While these two works

created a turmoil in scholarly circles that has not yet completely died down, their real objective seems to have been to furnish a sanction from the sacred texts for the author's intended programme of reforms.

In the practical difficulties of reform he had his first lesson during 1893. In attempting to correct evils in the local administration of his native place, he and his pupils incurred the enmity of officials protecting their vested interests; the upshot was that the reforms failed, his favourite pupil, Ch'en T'ung-fu, fell ill, and K'ang himself was forced to flee to Kweilin (Kwangsi). Thus he came to realize that it is not easy to abolish evils and bring about good conditions.

The next year, when he was thirty-seven, he made his third trip to Peking, but stayed there this time for only three months. His *Forged Classics of the Hsin Period* was attacked as sacrilegious and unscholarly by high officials, and at their request the blocks were burned. K'ang Yu-wei also suffered the loss of a favourite pupil, Ts'ao Chu-wei (曹著偉). After returning from the capital, K'ang busied himself with attempting to improve standards of education in Kweilin. Then, on August 1, the Sino-Japanese War broke out. K'ang had pointed out in his memorial of six years before the dangers of the existing situation of unpreparedness on the part of China, and now his fears were realized.

The death of Ch'en T'ung-fu in February of the next year was a severe blow to K'ang, whose most brilliant and trusted pupil he had been. But he had little time to brood over this tragedy, as he had now returned to Peking once more, and was embroiled in the turbulent affairs of state then taking place. Learning that the government was negotiating a treaty to end the war with Japan, which treaty would involve a heavy indemnity including cession of Taiwan and Liaotung, the officials in Peking were overcome by dismay and anger. Perceiving the temper of these officials, K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao organized the graduates from the eighteen provinces into a mass meeting lasting for a day and two nights, which produced a petition asking for rejection of the peace and strengthening of the military forces, removal of the capital, and a general reform of the laws. This petition was handed to the Court of Censors on April 8; but the treaty had already been signed. The officials in power, fearing the repercussions of the agitation among

the graduates, saw to it that the Emperor and Empress Dowager were persuaded to honour the treaty, and that the joint petition was not brought to their attention.

In the fourth month of the same year K'ang himself succeeded in taking fifth place in the examination for the third degree (*chin-shih*), forty-eighth place in the Palace Examination (an examination of *chin-shih* conducted personally by the Emperor), and second place in the Court Examination (examination of *chin-shih* for admittance to the Academy, called *Han-lin*). According to what K'ang heard from Weng T'ung-ho (翁同龢), the Imperial Tutor and Associate Grand Secretary, he had actually been first in both the *chin-shih* and Court examinations, but his standing had been changed because of the opposition of two high officials. He was appointed to office in the Board of Works, but did not accept the appointment.

At this time, on his third attempt to memorialize the Throne, he succeeded. This memorial was a redraft of previous recommendations, urging broad reforms in the government. While this memorial was published, a fourth one was suppressed by his enemies. He wanted to return to the south, but upon the urging of his friends remained a short time longer, publishing articles in a paper put out with his pupils Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Mai Meng-hua (麥孟華). He also organized a group called the Society for Studying Strengthening [of the Nation] (強學會), and this began to attract a number of the scholars in the capital. It was also at this time that Timothy Richard¹⁰ first joined the reform movement in Peking. Although there were many powerful officials who supported this reform group and supplied financial backing, there were likewise highly placed enemies of its objectives. K'ang soon departed for Shanghai, where he opened another study society and started up a paper. But a decree from Peking forced both of the societies to close down, and the Shanghai paper as well. In the twelfth month K'ang returned to Kwangtung.

The following year he taught at the provincial capital, continued his always prolific writing, travelled throughout Kwangtung and Kwangsi, and founded another paper at Macao with Ho Sui-t'ien (何穗田), called *Know the New* (知新報). This paper continued publication for over two years. His *Confucius as a Reformer* was put into final form, and he began a *Bibliography of Japanese Books*

(日本書目志). This was based on the numerous Japanese works he had by that time collected, which he had had his eldest daughter translate.¹¹ K'ang realized that the strength of the Western countries lay in their specialization in studies, and he believed that China must import this specialized learning in order to become strong. But since it was difficult to learn Western languages, the solution lay in acquiring the Western learning through the Japanese translations by then available in large numbers. (p. 193.)

In 1897 K'ang went to Kweilin, where he started up another study group, and busied himself with teaching and writing. His *Bibliography of Japanese Books* was completed, and along with *Confucius as a Reformer* and a study of Tung Chung-shu's interpretations of the *Ch'un Ch'iu*, was printed by the newly founded Ta T'ung Translation Bookstore in Shanghai. At this time, he had become concerned with the problem of over-population in China, and was sponsoring a plan to develop emigration to Brazil. He therefore travelled north to Peking once again; but the sudden occurrence of the Kiaochow affair¹² changed his objective into a new effort to bring about governmental reforms so as to save China from disaster. He presented another memorial pleading for reform, started up another society like the previously established one, and joined his voice to those who were advocating an alliance with England and Japan to oppose Russian aggression. He urged the opening of all of China's ports to international trade as being the best method of utilizing the power of the foreign nations to preserve Chinese territorial integrity. It was also in this year that K'ang took a second wife.¹³

In 1898, when K'ang Yu-wei was forty-one, there occurred his sudden rise to great power, and his equally swift fall to defeat and exile. The story of this affair has been told in English in such writings as Bland and Backhouse's *China under the Empress Dowager*, Meribeth Cameron's *The Reform Movement in China*, and the great biographical dictionary edited by Arthur Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, to name three of the more important studies.¹⁴ It does not seem necessary, therefore, to discuss the events of 1898 here, all-important though they were in the life of K'ang Yu-wei. As is well known, the young Kuang Hsü Emperor had become convinced that the reforms advocated by K'ang and his party were essential, if

China were to survive; taking the bit in his teeth, he began to issue one reform edict after another, based on the programme spelled out by K'ang Yu-wei. The latter was, for a few months, to all intents and purposes the legislator of the Chinese Government.

The brief hour of power was brought to an end by the Empress Dowager, who had been watching this revolution with increasing alarm. Acceding to the pleas of the reactionary and conservative elements at Court, she deposed the Emperor and entered upon her third Regency. K'ang Yu-wei, along with his most prominent colleagues, was of course condemned to be executed. Six of the reformers actually suffered execution (including K'ang Kuang-jen, Yu-wei's younger brother, and T'an Ssu-t'ung, still respected both for his voluntary acceptance of martyrdom in this affair, and for his book, *Jen Hsiieh*; but K'ang himself made his escape from Peking, and eventually to Japan, as did Liang Ch'i-ch'ao.

K'ang was in Japan from the ninth month of 1898 to the second month of 1899. Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, with others of the reform party, founded a paper in Yokohama to carry on the fight. At this time Sun Yat-sen was also working in Japan with his revolutionary group. He wished to join forces with K'ang and Liang, but K'ang refused to meet with the revolutionary leader. This was only the first manifestation of the fundamental cleavage between the two men: Sun believed a revolution must be brought about, to replace the decadent Ch'ing dynasty and the entire imperial system with a republican government; K'ang believed that the best hope for China was to bring about reforms within the framework of the traditional system, with the modification of the absolute monarchy into a constitutional monarchy. He knew that the young Emperor was willing to carry out these reforms if given the chance, and so he bent his energies to the task of restoring the Emperor to power. In 1899 K'ang went to Canada, where he founded the Society to Preserve the Emperor (保皇會). The one attempt at forceful action made by K'ang's group occurred in the next year, when, hoping to take advantage of the chaotic conditions of the moment (largely due to the Boxer troubles), an army was formed under T'ang Ts'ai-ch'ang (唐才常), which was to take over the southern provinces. The plan miscarried, and the resulting arrests and executions caused K'ang to abandon any further thoughts of using violence in the pursuit of his aims.

During these several years following the Hundred Days of Reform, K'ang's life was very unsettled. He was constantly on the move, living in Hong Kong, Japan, America, England, Japan again, Penang, Singapore, India. He was very much a wanted and hunted man, with the fear of assassination ever present. He was preoccupied with the raising of funds and other activities connected with the movement to restore the Emperor; at the same time, he continued to write, completing such works as *Mencius Analysed* (孟子微), *Lun Yü Annotated* (論語注), and *Ta Hsüeh Annotated* (大學注).

It was in Darjeeling, India, in 1902, when K'ang Yu-wei was forty-five years old, that he finally completed the work now entitled *Ta T'ung Shu*.¹⁵ At the time this may not have seemed as important to him as a letter which he received from the overseas Chinese members of the Society to Preserve the Emperor. These people had become discouraged at the lack of success in accomplishing restoration of the Emperor, and were now in favour of stronger measures. Even K'ang's own disciples were becoming impatient, and were beginning to think along revolutionary lines. K'ang wrote open letters to these two groups, stating his firm conviction that a constitutional monarchy was the only answer to China's problems, and rejecting the revolutionary thesis.¹⁶

With the death of his arch-enemy at Court, the Empress Dowager's kinsman Jung Lu (榮祿), K'ang felt it safe to return to Hong Kong in 1903. On the way there he visited Burma and Java. He did not remain for long in Hong Kong, but departed early in 1904 for an extended tour of the West, which lasted for some five years and took him to eleven different countries. During 1907 he took a third wife.¹⁷

The sudden death of the Kuang Hsü Emperor in 1908—which was immediately followed by that of the Empress Dowager—profoundly shocked K'ang Yu-wei. Although to this day the circumstances of the Emperor's death are not clear, K'ang was convinced that he had been poisoned by Yüan Shih-k'ai. He poured out his hatred of Yüan¹⁸ in several writings, accusing him of the dastardly crime and crying for revenge upon the traitor.

During the next three years K'ang lived in Singapore, Penang, Hong Kong, Germany, and Japan. He once narrowly escaped assassination. He watched events at home moving with increasing

momentum towards a revolution, and did not cease to counsel constitutional monarchy-plus-reform as the better alternative. However, in the tenth month of 1911 the Republic of China was declared, with Dr. Sun Yat-sen as provisional president.

It was 1912, and K'ang Yu-wei was fifty-five. While he had deplored the revolution, and considered it the wrong solution for China's problems, he did not fight against the new Republican Government. His attention was directed instead upon the dangers which threatened from within and without. He implored the northern and southern factions to unite, lest China be partitioned among the foreign powers. He pointed out that it was no longer a question of Chinese revolutionaries versus Manchu court, but of the Republican Government versus Yüan Shih-k'ai. Unity of the nation was the essential thing. The territories of Mongolia and Tibet had declared their independence and they were in imminent danger of being taken over by foreign powers. K'ang also wrote on the necessity of basing the financial policy of the new government soundly on metal. Again, he came out against the proposed banking loan to be obtained from the Powers. This year Liang Ch'i-ch'ao returned to China from his long exile; while Hsü Ch'in, a faithful disciple of K'ang, was elected by overseas Chinese as a member of the new parliament.

The following year K'ang started publication of a monthly magazine entitled *Compassion* (不忍雜誌). This title was meant to indicate his feelings as he considered the sufferings of his nation in the present day. The contents, written by K'ang himself, comprised writings on government, [Confucian] teachings, his travels throughout the world, and literary pieces including poetry. Many of these were earlier writings, such as 'Confucius as a Reformer'. The magazine was issued from February to November of 1913. K'ang later added two issues, and had the whole published in two bound volumes, in 1917.

In 1913, also, his mother died in Hong Kong, at the age of eighty-three. K'ang had just undergone an operation for ulcers in Tokyo, and was unable to return immediately; so that it was not until the eleventh month of the year that he arrived in Hong Kong, and thence journeyed to Yang Ch'eng, where the interment took place

accompanied by manifestations of respect from the governor of the province and local authorities. This was the first time that K'ang Yu-wei had set foot on the soil of his native land since fleeing for his life in 1898. He was now fifty-six.

His old enemy, Yüan Shih-k'ai, whom he had so bitterly denounced as the murderer of the Kuang Hsü Emperor, had now replaced Dr. Sun as president of the new Republic. Yüan sent three successive telegrams to K'ang, asking him to join the government. The latter refused on the ground that he was in mourning for his mother.

The next year he suffered two additional losses in the deaths of his sister I Hung (逸紅) and his young third wife, Ho Chan-li. Along with these personal tragedies there continued a series of national misfortunes which caused him deep anguish and compassion. The great European war broke out, and while China declared its neutrality, Japan entered against Germany, and used this as a pretext to seize German-held Tsingtao and the province of Shantung. Then in 1915 Japan served China with the notorious 'Twenty-one Demands'. In addition, Yüan Shih-k'ai had scarcely been elected president that he attempted to make himself emperor. Civil war broke out as Sun Yat-sen and his followers hastened back from Japan to take up arms against Yüan; while K'ang, for once in sympathy with Sun, came out against this would-be emperor. His disciple Hsü Ch'in, with the financial backing of K'ang's wife, Madam Chang, raised a flotilla of warships and attacked Kwangtung.

Yüan soon disavowed his imperial designs; but K'ang was sure that he intended to monopolize control of the government in fact. Therefore he wrote a letter to the governors of the seven southern provinces, urging them to hold fast and to maintain neutrality in the interests of the entire nation. In the second month of 1916 he also wrote a lengthy essay suggesting the adoption of three policies: the institution of an hereditary presidency without real powers; the establishment of a council of elder statesmen elected from all the provinces and dependencies, which would have in its hands the real powers of government; a figure-head monarch, performing the same function as the British monarch. K'ang considered the American and French forms of republicanism as impossible to carry out in China;

he pointed out that the essence of republicanism lay not in the existence or non-existence of a monarch, but in the extent of the rights of the people.

Upon the death of Yüan Shih-k'ai in June of this year, K'ang had become hopeful of actually bringing an end to the chaos within the country—due, as he thought, to the unsuitability of the new form of government—by a restoration of the Ch'ing dynasty. He wrote an open letter on this matter to his followers; he also corresponded with General Chang Hsün, urging him to take advantage of the circumstances, and to rally to the support of the legitimate emperor. As before, however, K'ang was doomed to failure in the realization of his plans. The restoration was a fizzle. He was forced to take sanctuary in the American Legation, where he remained for half a year, occupying the time by writing a book expounding his criticisms of republican government. A glance at the mandate he issued during the few days of his incumbency as an official of the 'restoration government' shows that his ideas on reforms had not changed in any essentials from those of 1898. (p. 232.)

At the year's end he was convoyed out of the capital by American officials, and returned to his home in Kwangtung. It was the end of his active participation in public affairs. He maintained his interest in the political situation, sending telegrams to one and another of the powerful men in the arena of civil conflict, ever urging unity of the nation. He never abandoned his loyalty to the cause of a constitutional monarchy or to the memory of the Kuang Hsü Emperor who once, so long before, had tried to carry out the policies which K'ang believed would save China.

In 1922 his wife, Madam Chang, for many years his faithful helpmeet in all the difficult situations of his unsettled life, died at the age of sixty-seven. In the second month of 1927 his former pupils and followers gathered from near and far in Shanghai to celebrate the teacher's seventieth birthday. Liang Ch'i-ch'ao wrote a special essay for the occasion, recalling the inspiring days when he was a student of K'ang Yu-wei in the 'Thatched Hall in Ten Thousand Trees' and eulogizing his teacher as the man who opened up the new era in China's history. The Hsüan T'ung Pretender sent him a scroll with the words 'Peak of peaks, deep and clear' (嶽峙淵清), in recognition of his lifetime of loyalty and fidelity.

Twenty-five days after the celebration, on the twenty-eighth day of the second month (March 31), 1927, death ended the career of K'ang Yu-wei: a man of singular genius, unswerving high principles, and noble compassion; a man whose vision places him among the greatest of those who have dreamed of a world in which there shall be happiness without suffering.

REFERENCES

¹ A kind of literary exercise of a very artificial type, but formerly required in the examinations.

² Teng, Fairbank, and Sun say of this work: 'It was not so long and less broadly discursive, compared with Wei Yuan's *Hai-kuo t'u-chih* [海國圖志, 1844]; as a straight summary of world geography based on Western sources it was more handy and succinct—one might say "scientific".' [It was printed in 1850, and reprinted by the Tsungli Yamen in 1866.] (See *China's Response to the West*, p. 62.)

³ The first wife, *née* Chang (張), was two years his senior. She had been betrothed to him when he was eight.

⁴ The duty of a filial son included this dwelling by the grave. From Mencius we learn, for example, that the disciples of Confucius remained by his grave for three years; and that one of them, Tzu-kung, could not bear to leave for an additional three years. (*Mencius*, III, A, 4.13.)

⁵ 賢 A word for which there is no adequate English equivalent. The term indicates a man of moral eminence, who is yet not quite to be ranked as a sage. Thus, Confucius, of course, is a sage, while his seventy-two disciples are called 'hsien'. (On these terms, and the general subject of official Confucian titles, see John K. Shryock, *The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius*, New York, 1932, especially Chapter IX, and Appendices.)

⁶ Liang Ch'i-ch'ao tells us (*Biography of K'ang Yu-wei*, Chapter III) that the books which K'ang purchased at that time were those published by the Kiangnan Arsenal and the missionary societies. He remarks that these translations were all on 'elementary, common studies, and technology, military methods, and medicine; if not, then they were only the Christian scriptures and commentaries. On political science, there was nothing whatsoever'.

⁷ The first foreign-sponsored organization for this purpose was the Anti-Footbinding Society founded by Mrs. Archibald Little in Shanghai, in 1895. (See Richard, *Forty-Five Years in China*, pp. 226-8.)

⁸ Often rendered as *A Review of the Times*. An influential journal founded by the Rev. Young J. Allen in 1875, and edited by him until his death in 1907. During the latter half of this period, it was the organ for the Christian Literature Society. It was an important agent in spreading information about the 'outside world' among the intellectuals of China.

⁹ These names derive from a controversy which arose first during the Han period (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), concerning the authenticity of certain texts basic in the Chinese curriculum. The 'old text school' became dominant, and for many centuries there were but few proponents of the 'new texts'. One of the principle subjects of study by scholars in the Ch'ing period (1644-1911) was the matter of the authenticity of texts; K'ang Yu-wei is generally considered the last and most influential of the latter-day champions of the 'new text school'. (For a good discussion of the Han controversy, see Tjan [Tseng], *Po Hu T'ung*, vol. I, Section 36: 'The New Text and Old Text Controversy', pp. 137-45. For the philosophical developments based on the two schools, see Fung-Bodde, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. II, Chapters II, IV, and XVI.)

¹⁰ Timothy Richard reached China in 1870 under the auspices of the English Baptist Missionary Society. He became widely known and respected by the intellectual class throughout China as a man of scholarly attainment, deep sympathies for China, and personal integrity. His influence on the reform movement was undoubtedly important, although as yet it has not been analysed in any study of which I am aware. As an indication of this importance we can cite the fact that in a publication of the Peking reform society of February 1898, entitled a *New Collection of Tracts for the Times*, thirty-eight of the essays were by K'ang Yu-wei, forty-four by Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, and thirty-one by Richard. In 1898, during his brief period of power, K'ang invited Richard to become a foreign advisor to the Emperor. (On Richard, see Soothill's *Timothy Richard of China*, and Richard's own *Forty-Five Years in China*.)

¹¹ (p. 193.) Mr. K'ang's eldest son informs me, however, that this daughter is not able to read Japanese. But if we suppose that these Japanese translations were written in the 'Sinico-Japanese' style, it would then not be impossible for a Chinese student to grasp the meaning sufficiently well to make an adequate translation.

¹² An incident involving the murder of two German priests in Kiachwang, Shantung, which served as the pretext for Germany's forcing upon China a series of demands; these demands led to Germany's assuming a position of economic and military dominance in the rich province of Shantung.

¹³ The second wife, *née* Liang (梁), is at the date of this writing living near Taipei, Formosa, aged seventy-five.

¹⁴ See also Bibliography, Section 3.

¹⁵ (p. 217.) This is stated by Liang Ch'i-ch'ao in a note in *Anthology of Poems of the Gentleman from Nan Hai* (南海先生詩集), published Hsüan T'ung, third year (1911), *chüan* 1, p. 1.

¹⁶ A discussion of this matter is found in Sung Yün-pin's *K'ang Yu-wei*, Chapter V, Section 2. (This author is strongly biased against K'ang and his views.)

¹⁷ The third wife, *née* Ho (何), was an intelligent girl who had gone to America to pursue her studies. She had admired K'ang for a long time, keeping his picture on her wall. She became his concubine at the age of seventeen, with her parents' permission. (p. 228.)

¹⁸ Yüan, one of the prominent figures in the history of this period, had been directly responsible for the downfall of the reformers and the *coup d'état* of the Empress Dowager in 1898: entrusted by the Emperor with the crucial task of removing the Empress Dowager from the scene, and of executing Jung Lu, Yüan instead passed on a warning of these plans to the latter, who was his chief. Thus K'ang Yu-wei's hatred of him was from the most understandable of reasons.

CHAPTER II

'Ta T'ung Shu': The Book

As we have noted in the first chapter (p. 13), the work which is now entitled *Ta T'ung Shu* was originally called *Universal Principles of Mankind* (人類公理), when K'ang Yu-wei wrote the first draft in 1884-5. This draft is not now extant, so far as is known,¹ nor is the whereabouts of any other, later draft known to me. That the author made changes at later times is known. According to his own *Chronology*² he revised the *Universal Principles of Mankind* in 1887. The text itself contains mention (on p. 267) of the death of President William McKinley, which occurred in September 1901. Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, in a note in the *Anthology of Poems of the Gentleman from Nan-Hai* (南海先生詩集) which was published in 1911, states that (what had now been titled) *Ta T'ung Shu* was completed in 1902, while K'ang Yu-wei was residing in Darjeeling, India.³ Aside from the fact that Liang Ch'i-ch'ao was in a better position to know the facts than almost anyone else, due to his long and intimate relationship with Mr. K'ang, this date is reasonable from the evidence of the text as we now have it.⁴

In his *General Discussion of Ch'ing Dynasty Scholarship*, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao tells us that it was only he and Ch'en Ch'ien-ch'iu who, as young students of K'ang Yu-wei, were given the opportunity to see this work; but that the teacher refused to permit its publication, on the ground that its ideas were 'too advanced for the times.'⁵ In his school at the 'Thatched Hall in Ten Thousand Trees', Mr. K'ang did not lecture on *ta t'ung*. The world being as yet in the 'Age of Disorder', he was only concerned to discuss with his students the problems of the present era.⁶

It was not until 1913 that Liang Ch'i-ch'ao prevailed upon his teacher to publish the first two parts of *Ta T'ung Shu* (comprising about one-third of the whole work) in the pages of Mr. K'ang's magazine, *Compassion*.⁷ The published portions contained plenty of ideas which were radical at the time, but these were not yet so extreme as what were contained in the remainder which Mr. K'ang

still refused to publish. According to the Preface of the San Francisco edition of the book (published in 1929 and also including only the first two parts), Mr. K'ang was asked by a Columbia University professor⁸ to have the entire work translated into English, but this he would not consent to do. President Wilson was also said to have made the same suggestion in vain.⁹ It was not until 1935, eight years after K'ang Yu-wei's death, that the complete book was published, under the care of Mr. Ch'ien Ting-an (錢定安), a former pupil of Mr. K'ang, by the Chung Hwa Book Company.

Thus far the name of the work under consideration has been given only in a transliterated form. It is time that an explanation of this name and an indication of the contents be given. As is the case with so many concepts originating in a culture which has developed apart from the West, a mere translation will not serve our understanding, and we require an elucidation.

So, then, we will recall that in 1884-5, when K'ang Yu-wei was writing his first draft of the *Universal Principles of Mankind*, he also completed another essay, entitled 'Li Yün' *Annotated*.¹⁰ That these two studies were undertaken at the same time is not an accident. For it is in the 'Li Yün', one of the sections of the canonical *Li Chi*,¹¹ that the conception of *ta t'ung* is set forth.¹² It may be interesting, if only to show how differing translations of classical Chinese can be, to quote this passage in the versions of four different translators. Confucius is made to say the following words.

(According to James Legge):

'When the Grand course was pursued, a public and common opinion ruled all under the sky; they chose men of talents, virtue, and ability; their words were sincere, and what they cultivated was harmony. Thus men did not love their parents only, nor treat as children only their own sons. A competent provision was secured for the aged till their death, employment for the able-bodied, and the means of growing up to the young. They showed kindness and compassion to widows, orphans, childless men, and those who were disabled by disease, so that they were all sufficiently maintained. Males had their proper work, and females had their homes. (They accumulated) articles (of value), disliking that

they should be thrown away upon the ground, but not willing to keep them for their own gratification. (They laboured) with their strength, disliking that it should not be exerted, but not exerting it (only) with a view to their own advantage. In this way (selfish) schemings were repressed and found no development. Robbers, filchers, and rebellious traitors did not show themselves, and hence the outer doors remained open, and were not shut. This was (the period of) what we call the Grand Union.' (*Li Ki*, 'Li Yün', pp. 364-6.)

(According to Tsuchida Kyoson):

'When the Great Way is realized, the following will surely take place: all the world will be a common possession; the wise and the able are elected; all people will be bound by equal ties of intimacy so that no man sees only his father as father nor only his son as son; the old keep their case, the ripened youth has his responsibilities; the boy and the girl are trained up, widows, orphans, the disabled and the like are respectively cared for; men take their respective parts while women respectively marry; as for property, while one would hate to let it go to waste, he will not wish to have it in private possession; as for man's talents, while he would hate not to have exercised them, he will not necessarily expend them on himself; and thus plots will come to an end, thieves and brawlers will not be seen, so that people will come to leave every door open: such an age should be called *Ta T'ung*.' (*Contemporary Thought of Japan and China*, pp. 194-5.)

(According to Wu Kuo-cheng):

'When the great principle prevails, the whole world is bent upon the common good. The virtuous and able are honoured, sincerity is praised, and harmony is cultivated. Hence, the people not only treat their own parents and children as they should be treated, but others' as well. They provide that all the old are given comfort, all the adults are given work, all the young are given development, all the widowed, orphaned, helpless, disabled and defective people are given nourishment. For every male there is a division of land; for every female there is a home. The people dislike to have wealth wasted; but they do not like to hoard it up

for themselves. They dislike to have their strength unemployed; but they do not like to work solely for themselves. Hence, all cunning designs become useless, and theft and banditry do not exist . . . This is called "the age of Great Universality".' (*Ancient Chinese Political Theories*, pp. 299-300.)

(According to Fung Yu-lan, as edited by Derk Bodde):

'When the great *Tao* was in practice, the world was common to all; men of talents, virtue and ability were selected; sincerity was emphasized and friendship was cultivated. Therefore, men did not love only their own parents, nor did they treat as children only their own sons. A competent provision was secured for the aged till their death, employment was given to the able bodied, and a means was provided for the upbringing of the young. Kindness and compassion were shown to widows, orphans, childless men, and those who were disabled by disease, so that they all had the wherewithal for support. Men had their proper work and women their homes. They hated to see the wealth of natural resources undeveloped, [so they developed it, but this development] was not for their own use. They hated not to exert themselves, [so they worked, but their work] was not for their own profit . . . This was called the great unity.' (*Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 202-3.)

We shall not in this place consider the philosophy of history underlying the above description.¹³ But it will be apparent from the passage that, whether the translator has rendered it in the future or in the past tense, 'Confucius' is picturing an ideal state of society and of human nature. This ideal state is called *ta t'ung*. The question for the translator is, how to express that idea concisely in English. From the various authors who have essayed to do this, we may secure the following suggestions:

1. 'The Great Unity'.¹⁴
2. 'Grand Union', or 'Grand Course'.¹⁵
3. 'Cosmopolitan society'.¹⁶
4. 'The same social ideal as in Western communism or anarchism'.¹⁷
5. 'The Great Commonwealth'.¹⁸