

The 45th George Ernest Morrison Lecture in Ethnology 1984

**THE CHINESE  
AND THEIR REVOLUTIONS**

**J.S. GREGORY**

The Australian National University  
Canberra

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in Ethnology  
8 August 1984**

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## THE CHINESE AND THEIR REVOLUTIONS

I want to put before you some very general, rather discursive reflections about the revolutionary process that has occurred in China over the past 100 years or so. What else indeed can I do, or you expect, given my very open-ended and wide ranging title which, like some political manifesto, seems to promise a great deal without pointing to anything in particular?

That title is, as I am sure many of you will have recognised, adapted from the book by Thomas Taylor Meadows first published in the middle of last century, *The Chinese and Their Rebellions*. *The Chinese and Their Revolutions* was suggested to me as a subject for this lecture by someone who knew of my interest in Meadows and in the immense Taiping movement of revolt in China of which he was a close and committed observer. Of course I found it very difficult to resist so capacious a title which was also for me a gesture of recognition towards a man in whom I had long been interested and whose ideas are, I think, of some continuing value for students of China. Prudence did subsequently suggest to me that something rather less open-ended, less likely to lead towards a morass of generalities or banalities, might be politic, since this is the annual Morrison lecture and I had by chance recently been reading up on Morrison's career in order to write the entry on him for the next volume of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Something on his career and ideas, his warnings and prognostications about Australia's future relations with China and Japan, for example, would be appropriate and a good deal more precise. But prudence soon guided me away from such an alternative because, although I had been asked to be the author of the brief *Dictionary of Biography* entry on Morrison, I was acutely aware that there are several others, including a recent lecturer in this series, far better qualified than I to lecture about Morrison. So I decided to stay with Meadows and my large, imprecise title.

However, let me at least at this point pay my respects to George Ernest Morrison, that vigorous, independent and courageous Australian observer of China who in 1894, half a century after Meadows on whom I will have much more to say, also made his way independently and experimentally to China,

then spent nearly the whole of the rest of his life there and became like Meadows, an acute, informed and sympathetic observer of, and indeed to some extent participant in, the developments he observed and reported on. Meadows and Morrison were in many respects very different kinds of men. The first never married and appears never to have been close to any woman - or man, for that matter - whereas Morrison, although he married late, was never indifferent to the opposite sex and had a wide circle of friends and correspondents. Again, Meadows was a prolix, pedantic kind of writer, whereas Morrison was a master of the succinct, direct report. But both believed in being if possible on the spot; were prepared to make risky and lengthy journeys to get there and then to do their best to report their observations fully and accurately, not omitting some vigorous expression of their own views; both, too, were deeply concerned for the future of China and prepared to commit their personal futures to working in that country; and, finally, both left behind them much writing of worth and continuing interest to students of China. Had the years between not made it impossible I think it probable they would have been interested to have met one another - for a short time at least! I am glad to have had the chance, through the historical record, to have come to know both of them a little and to have this opportunity of paying them some tribute.

When I came to grapple with the task of, as it were, updating Meadows I began to wonder whether I should not have adapted his title less ambitiously, in the way that Jonathan Spence appears to have done in his recent book *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* which is sub-titled *The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895-1980*, i.e. in the singular and with definite dates. From many points of view, let me admit it early on, it makes much sense to look at the long struggle of the Chinese people to reorganise and establish themselves in the modern world as *one* revolution, protracted and complex of course, but in essence a bloc, a single ongoing process, *the* Chinese revolution of modern times. Meadows, had he been writing in mid-twentieth rather than mid-nineteenth century, would certainly have recognised the reality of revolution, as distinct from mere rebellion, in China, but I am sure he would also have still emphasised the immense strength of the entrenched traditions, values and institutions of Chinese society and the limits imposed on any revolutionary movement within such a tradition. One of the main ideas I want to try to convey tonight is to suggest that, although from one perspective it certainly helps make sense of the complexities and conflicts within modern Chinese history to see these as basically aspects of one single great revolution, yet at the same time that there are difficulties and

distortions inherent in such a view; that we ought, if it is historical truth that we are after, to keep eyes and minds alert to the limitations of any tightly focused, single-pathed perspective on the modern Chinese revolution. I want to question a little - 'challenge' would be too strong or ambitious a word - the view that, in the words of the French writer Lucien Bianco in his lucid and stimulating study *Origins of the Chinese Revolution* 'we all know there was only one Chinese revolution and that it took place in 1949'.<sup>1</sup> I am perhaps rather overstating any counter case I may be able to mount by using the term revolution in the plural in my title, but am sure you will at least agree that, if there is indeed an historical entity we can call *the Chinese revolution* it has been, and still is, a many-headed phenomenon which seems at times to move in very different if not downright contrary directions.

But before I venture further into this line of argument I would like to say a few words about Meadows' career in an effort to give some substance to the man whose ideas I am borrowing freely. He was born in Northern England in 1819 and went to Germany when about twenty to study science and philosophy, but once there became caught up by the study of Chinese. In 1842 he made his way to Hong Kong and, students of Chinese being then very rare indeed though much needed to help operate the new treaty system created after the first opium war, he was at once appointed as Interpreter in the new Consulate at Canton. He proved to be an energetic, courageous and scholarly servant of the Crown, becoming very proficient in the language, making quite dangerous intelligence-gathering forays into the environs of Canton. He published, in 1847, his first book, an excellent collection of essays on the administrative system of China.<sup>2</sup> He also wrote the first official British reports on the Taiping rebellion which had broken out in south China about 1850. In 1852 he was transferred to Shanghai, and was there when the Taiping suddenly launched themselves northward to the Yangtze valley and captured Nanjing. As Interpreter at the nearest British Consulate to the new rebel capital Meadows became the first Westerner to make direct contact with the Taiping when a British naval vessel sailed to Nanjing in May 1853. Meadows' experience at Canton had made him very hostile to the ruling Manchu dynasty and its bureaucracy, and he was predisposed to sympathy for any rebels against them. The Taiping, with their quasi-Christian religious faith and their program of land and other reforms seemed to him, as to many others at that time, to hold out promise of a rejuvenated, less conservative, less anti-western China, and he became an advocate of their cause.

Most other Westerners fairly soon abandoned hopes in the Taiping, coming to see them as blasphemous and destructive fanatics (a kind of Khmer Rouge of the nineteenth century), even less open to Western ideas about trade and diplomacy than was the ruling dynasty. After the second opium war and the forcing of a more extended treaty system in 1860 from the Manchus, the British and French governments soon began helping to suppress the rebel movement. Meadows however persisted in seeing reforming potential in it, and consistently opposed the emerging Western tendency towards intervention. His major book, *The Chinese and Their Rebellions* - part a description of the movement as he had observed it, part a general philosophical-historical disquisition on Chinese civilisation, part a plea for continued Western neutrality - was published in 1856, by which time Western hopes in the Taiping were fast fading. The book was no best seller, but is still a respected text (perhaps more respected than read) and was reprinted a few years ago. Meadows must have been bitterly disappointed in its reception, however, as he was also in his attempts, continued when he was British consul at Shanghai in 1860-61, to influence British policy away from intervention. He spent his last years in the consular service in what turned out to be a remote and unrewarding post in north China and died there, still a scholar and a recluse, in 1868.

Although deeply concerned for China, and a profound student of its history and culture, Meadows can fairly be described as an agent of Western imperialism in China. His job, after all, was to help administer the unequal treaties that resulted from the opium wars; he was not particularly critical of the opium trade, seeing it as a fact of life; and he was capable of acting in a high handed, even violent way, towards the Chinese. But he also sought to convince his far from receptive fellow countrymen that there were great qualities and strengths within Chinese culture, even lessons to be learned from it; that high civilisation was not, and never had been, a Western monopoly. His whole career illustrates the double-sided nature of the Western - more specifically the British - imperialist presence in China in the mid-nineteenth century. He was an admirer of Chinese civilisation, yet he was also, by virtue of his position and the forces he represented, a disrupter of it. He sought consistently to study its achievements and to understand its strengths, but he was also helping put before it the dilemma of modernisation; helping in fact to import revolution into China and to compound and complicate its own long tradition of political change through rebellion which fascinated him so much. I do not wish to imply here that revolution in modern Chinese history was primarily an importation.

It stemmed strongly from purely internal and domestic roots, not least the immense pressure of population on limited resources that was steadily mounting by the mid-nineteenth century. But the forms revolution was to take, the programs it would develop, and to some extent the idea itself, was certainly in some sense being brought into China by Meadows and his Western contemporaries, very few of whom were at all sensitive to what was happening to the country on which they had imposed themselves. Meadows called his book *The Chinese and Their Rebellions*, but it is a book which implicitly explores the possibility of revolution within that great tradition which he respected so deeply.

Meadows is possibly best remembered today as the author of a striking *bon mot* about Chinese history. Early on in his rambling book of 650 pages he wrote: 'Of all nations that have attained a certain degree of civilization the Chinese are the least revolutionary and the most rebellious. Speaking generally there has been but one great political revolution in China, when the centralised form of government was substituted for the feudal about 2,000 years ago'.<sup>3</sup> The least revolutionary, the most rebellious; only one great revolution in over 2,000 years of history. Meadows wrote those words when Westerners generally saw China as a very static society, 'the land of the eternal standstill', as one German scholar of the time put it. Meadows himself, although concerned to argue the comparability and indeed, in certain respects, the superiority of Chinese civilisation over Western, seems to have shared this view to a significant extent. It was forcefully and facetiously put by *The Times* reviewer of his book who, with characteristic mid-Victorian confidence, was far more amused than impressed by Meadows' attempts to illustrate the high achievements - moral, administrative, philosophical - evident in Chinese history, writing that 'the geological transformation of the earth's surface affords a fair parallel to China's advancement. Coal is made quicker than Chinese ethics and continents grow while their philosophers sleep'.<sup>4</sup> Clearly in such a history nothing very much happened, certainly nothing revolutionary - although I suppose even *The Times* reviewers would have to admit that the earth does sometimes move.

I do not wish to attempt to range over the preceding 2,000 years of Chinese history that Meadows was looking back upon in order to test the validity of his aphorism. However I do wish to illustrate the tenacity of this view of China's pre-modern history and to make some general comment on it. Barrington Moore in his highly regarded comparative analysis entitled *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*

comments, with the Taiping movement mainly in mind, that the mid-nineteenth century saw one of what he called the periodic reappearances of internal decay evidenced by major rebellion in Chinese history, and added a footnote stating 'Modern sinologists are prone to deny that Chinese history has been fundamentally unchanged for two thousand years, asserting that this is an illusion due to our ignorance. Nevertheless to a nonspecialist it seems quite obvious that, in comparison with Europe, Chinese civilisation did remain largely static. What changes are there in China comparable to the Western sequence of city state, world empire, feudalism, royal absolutism, and modern industrial society. Take architecture: is there in China any variety over time comparable to the Parthenon, the cathedral at Chartres, Versailles, the skyscraper?'.<sup>5</sup>

This static view of China's pre-modern history is tenacious - at least among non-China specialists - perhaps because there may after all be some kind of basis for it. But it is a view which may also have as much validity if applied to other parts than China's, and even be applicable to quite long stretches of our own Western past. A visitor to planet Earth from Mars arriving somewhere between the seventh to twelfth centuries of our Christian era would have been likely to have seen China as a more dynamic, expanding, outward-looking centre of civilised society than Western Europe. It is surely misleading to assume that a history that does not have many of the kind of signposts set up by historians to guide (or misguide) us through the thickets of our own West European history - signposts pointing to such territories of the mind as the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, or to such dramatic events as the storming of a Bastille, a Tuilleries or a Winter Palace, events which result in obvious, immediate and radical political change - it is surely false to assume that such a history is in any real sense necessarily 'largely static', as Moore puts it. Even if we agree that there were fewer such apparently rapid and far-reaching cultural, economic or political shifts as we are accustomed, from the history books, to find in our own tradition (and appearances there can, of course, be very deceptive), we should remain aware that all change and development, including revolutionary change, is relative. We should recognise that traditional Chinese history, though apparently much less mobile when viewed from certain angles than Western history of the past five or six centuries - we must leave aside the twentieth - should not be distorted into some kind of flat and featureless plain where nothing much moves.

The rise of what is termed gentry society; the southward moving frontier of Chinese settlement; the economic and commercial expansion of China in Sung times before 'the high equilibrium trap' closed in; the development of the civil service examination system as a path to power and status and a mechanism of some degree of social mobility - all these and other developments may be called upon to underline the point that significant change, even if we do not see it as revolutionary change, was going on through the long and apparently repetitious sweep of the Chinese dynastic cycle. China's long history superficially may not be the most dynamic or revolutionary of the major traditions of civilisation, but it is not therefore truly static. Such a view of China's past distorts by conditioning the mind to expect far more from revolution than is likely, in practical and human terms, to be realisable, especially within so deep and lasting a tradition of civilisation as China's. Meadows, although he did not live to see modern revolution come to China, understood that well.

One kind of change which is recognised by all observers to be present in China's history is, of course, the regular dynastic cycle - the periodic shift of the mandate of heaven from one ruling imperial house to some other, often after a lengthy intervening period of political instability and struggle between rival would-be successors. It is worth remembering at this point that the modern word for revolution in Chinese derives from this traditional concept of a mandate. *Ke-ming*, is an old term, first used in the *I Ching* or *Book of Changes*, and subsequently in some of the dynastic histories and other classics.<sup>6</sup> Mathews dictionary gives a rather characteristic, Mathews-type definition, i.e. one which both illuminates and confuses the mind - 'to deprive a ruling dynasty of the divine right to rule; used for revolution or any reform which, strictly speaking, is not a revolution'. Certainly today it means only revolution, not reform, and I do not mean to suggest that modern Chinese, when they use the term, consciously break it down into its constituent characters and say to themselves 'Ah yes! the shedding of the mandate', nor that they hear echoes of the old matching term *tian-ming*, the mandate of heaven. Yet it is of some interest to note that the language, by using an old term for a modern concept, seems still to preserve something of the old notion that any major change of political rulers is in certain respects like (though it may in many respects be also very unlike) previous political change. Maybe in this way it preserves a scrap of the national collective unconscious - if you can accept the validity of such a concept. Our own word 'revolution' also had an original meaning of a circular movement back to the original starting point, a meaning still evident

when we speak of the revolutions of the planets or of engines. As a social and political term of course it now means only change to a new and quite different system. But even in our own language, and possibly more strongly in the Chinese, there remains a remnant of the older meaning, a hint of ambiguity in the word, as there is in the historical reality of revolutions, whether they occur in China or elsewhere.

Crane Brinton remarked at the start of his classic comparative study of four major revolutions, the English, American, French and Russian, first published nearly fifty years ago and entitled *The Anatomy of Revolution*, that revolution is one of the looser words, often hardly more than an emphatic synonym for change.<sup>7</sup> There is now a much larger historical, theoretical and analytical literature on revolutions in the modern world, and many more sophisticated - though not, I think, more readable - comparative studies than when Brinton wrote. I do not intend to venture far into that literature here, nor to make any earnest attempt at a scholarly definition of the term. I certainly need to keep my own usage loose! Rather than defining I want to ruminate around the concept a little. However, given my title and its source, some consideration of the word and of its alternative, 'rebellion' seems unavoidable and, naturally, I turn first to Meadows for ideas and guidance.

At the beginning of the paragraph which concludes with the *bon mot* already quoted, Meadows noticed certain conflicting views given of China and its history by different writers.

By some [he wrote] we have enforced on our attention the fondness of the Chinese for the old, and the unchangeableness of their institutions. Others dilate, on the contrary, on the constant rise and fall of dynasties and on the internal conflicts which accompany them, till we are tempted to think the Chinese the most unstable and revolutionary people in the world.

Meadows found the source of this conflict in what he called the undistinguishing use of words.

The words are in this case 'revolution' and 'rebellion', which have been constantly interchanged as synonyms, yet refer to two essentially different kinds of acts. Revolution is a change of government and of the principles on which it rests, and does not necessarily imply a change of rulers. Rebellion is a rising against the rulers which, far from

necessarily aiming at a change of governmental principles and forms, often originates in a desire of preserving them intact. Revolutionary movements are against principles, rebellions against men.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, for Meadows revolution was a change in the principles of government not necessarily involving a change of the men in power, though it commonly did this; it may in fact come from them, from above. The example he goes on to cite is seventeenth century England, stating that it was the revolutionary tendencies of Charles I that made his subjects rebels. This is not the prevailing view of the seventeenth century English Revolution today, but it is worth remembering that for long the Puritan revolt that overthrew Charles I was known as the Great Rebellion, and that the subsequent so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688 in English history was so called because it supposedly restored, without another civil war resulting, the old balance between Crown and Parliament which had been disturbed by Charles I and later again by James II. The word revolution there is used in its original sense of a restoration or return to old, approved principles. In the Chinese context Meadows saw a right to rebel, and thereby to transfer the mandate to another dynasty, as central to the balance and health of the political system. Rebellion is 'the storm that clears and invigorates a political atmosphere which has become sultry and unwholesome'. Whatever doubts the modern historian may have about the reality of any right to rebel within the Chinese tradition, for Meadows there certainly was some corrective mechanism within that tradition which he called the right to rebel and which preserved, over time, a basic social and political balance and harmony by preventing autocracy becoming a fixed despotism.

In this respect, Meadows suggested, China was very different from Russia.

The Russian autocracy [he wrote] is a despotism, not only because it is supported by great physical force but, what is still more terrible, because the whole intellectual power is possessed by the rulers. The Chinese government is not a despotism [he went on] but an autocracy existing in virtue of the cheerful acquiescence of the people. The latter actually do share largely in a kind of self-government in consequence of the mandarins being taken impartially from all classes.<sup>9</sup>

Rebellion and competitive examinations were for Meadows the two main institutions which had, over time, kept Chinese society so remarkably stable. This is certainly an idealised but not, I think, totally false view of the Chinese political tradition. Recent developments in China do suggest that there may be some truth in Meadows' belief in a fundamental contrast between the Russian and Chinese polities, and thereby in their revolutions. Superficially, then as now, China and Russia may appear to have comparable authoritarian political systems, the result in the twentieth century of apparently comparable revolutions. But it seems there is still, somewhere in the new China as in the old, a greater degree of flexibility allowing even yet a more effective, though certainly by our standards a far from complete or adequate, flow upwards from governed to governing than is apparent in the other great communist autocracy. For example, a recent analysis of the Production Responsibility System and the Future of Collective Farming in China concludes that 'official policy has appeared to develop more slowly than peasant practice; the authorities were constantly in the position of having to sanction trends in the countryside which, at each stage required further concessions from the previous position. The process was one of gradually reconciling policy with practice'. The writers of this article comment that, at least in the region they observed, there was on this matter 'a momentum independent of central authority' and considered that any attempt by government to reverse that momentum would meet with strong resistance.<sup>10</sup>

I shall come back to this question of popular, especially peasant, pressures on the course of revolution in China, and here merely observe that whereas Russia, thirty years after the death of Stalin, seems to remain firmly fixed in an established pattern of revolutionary authority, China thirty years after the triumph of the Communist party seems as yet to have settled much less firmly into any new revolutionary orthodoxy, to be still a society testing the limits and nature of its revolution and still capable, however slowly, laboriously, uncertainly, of influencing the new autocracy - and I am not suggesting that it will cease to be that - by mass pressures if not by overt rebellion from below. Rebellion, like revolution, may take many forms and operate to many different degrees. Is it altogether fanciful to suggest that there may still be some kind of corrective system, some surviving institutional capacity, to clear and invigorate a political atmosphere which has become 'sultry and unwholesome', as Meadows put it, and to turn autocratic government, whether of emperor or party, away from draconian despotism? In short, I suggest, following Meadows, that party-led revolution in China is likely always to be more tempered

than is possible in Russia by that long tradition of major rebellion from below, though of course in a modernising China it is unlikely to be rebellion quite of the traditional kind. But revolution in China has not necessarily made rebellion totally redundant or anachronistic.

Meadows was a contemporary of Marx though not, I think, in any way influenced by, or aware of, any of that great theorist's writings. Meadows does refer at one point in his book to modern communism, pointing out that Taiping communism was certainly not of that kind, though just what Meadows meant by modern communism is unclear.<sup>11</sup> In Marxist and Marxist-related theories revolution is usually seen as fundamentally a social phenomenon whereby a previously subordinated and oppressed class (another of the looser words) breaks the bonds of the old order and establishes a new socio-political system at a supposedly higher stage of historical development, so creating a new order in which the basic productive forces of society are more fully liberated. Thus, through revolution - the locomotive of history, as Marx called it - human society moves nearer to that ideal society in which the principle 'from each according to his ability to each according to his needs' will ultimately prevail. It is a now very familiar theory, a splendid vision which has led many men to do terrible things to other men in pursuit of it. Theda Skocpol in her recent, well received, comparative study *States and Social Revolution* defines social revolution as the rapid basic transformation of a society's state and class structures accompanied, and then in part carried through, by class-based revolt from below. Rebellion, she adds, may involve the revolt of subordinate classes but does not eventuate in structural change; political revolutions transform state structures but not social structures. 'What is unique to social revolution' she says 'is that basic changes in social structure and in political structure occur together and in a mutually reinforcing fashion'. Such revolutions are 'rare but momentous occurrences' of which there are relatively few historical instances. The major ones so far are those of France, Russia and China. Skocpol would, I am sure, agree with Bianco that there has really been only one revolution in modern Chinese history and 1949 was its climax.<sup>12</sup>

One of my reservations about this kind of model is that it seems to me to induce a kind of triumphalist, Whiggish view of modern Chinese history, even in learned and sophisticated analyses such as those of Skocpol and Bianco, not to mention the 'all-kōtow-to-Mao' school of historical and political writing - a triumphalist interpretation which does not fit all the facts, including many of the basic facts, whether of before or after

1949. Later in her book Skcopol writes that 'ultimately the Chinese Revolution could be completed only when some revolutionary leaders learned to tap the enormous insurrectionary productive and political energies of the peasant majority'.<sup>13</sup> Now it is certainly true that by 1949 the Communist Party had learned, far better than its political and military rival for power, the Kuomintang, to organise the peasant masses for their revolutionary ends. But words like 'completed' and 'taps' suggest a degree of finality and of control in the process which I believe is exaggerated and indeed distorting of the reality, both then and since. Such judgments and generalisations gloss over the complex, uncertain balance, which exists to some degree within all revolutions, between the leaders and the led; between the revolutionary elite and the masses - masses who may, indeed, be themselves quite revolutionary, and supportive of certain of the objectives of the revolutionary elite leadership, but who are not therefore necessarily, in the longer term, looking to the same kind of revolution. Writers like Bianco and Skcopol are certainly not unaware of such contrasts and tensions within the complexities of the history of the Chinese Revolution.<sup>14</sup> But the main thrust of their analyses and conclusions is, I think, to suggest that there was by 1949 a degree of fusion of revolutionary elements and aspirations, a degree of finality about the achievement and nature of the revolution and about its capacity to transform state and class structures, to use Skcopol's terms, which subsequent events and other evidence suggests was in fact far from the case. One of the most forthright statements of the paradigm I am questioning is provided by Leon Stover in his lively book *The Cultural Ecology of Chinese Civilization*, where he states that the 'rulers of communist China, in projecting their ideological culture downward, have provided a common denominator for the peasantry as well, moving it from folk society to mass society. The peasantry as such has ceased to exist now that villages are participants in a national culture'.<sup>15</sup> Has it really been so final and neat, one wonders? Was the peasant class mobilised and moved forward 'transformed' quite so firmly and completely? Has there perhaps been some kind of slow but effective peasant pressure - 'rebellion' - turning the revolution towards less transforming, more traditional looking structures? Is it really the same revolution as it appears to be in the history books celebrating 1949?

Well, of course, in some sense it clearly is. It is still the same party in power with the same avowed socialist ideologies and objectives. But the directions in which it is heading towards those objectives and the means it is employing to achieve them do seem to be unexpected, very different from

what they once were. Fox Butterfield, in his recent book *Alive in the Bitter Sea* quotes a party official in Yunnan as recently saying 'We are having trouble defining what our system is, we are trying a number of experiments. Those that work we will call socialism, those that don't we will call capitalism'.<sup>16</sup> One could, I suppose read that as a sort of Chinese-Irish joke, but it has the ring of authenticity about it; a genuine definition of what Chinese socialism will indeed be like. If revolution is the locomotive of history, as Marx said, have the Chinese somehow got on board a runaway engine of change which is heading who knows where exactly? It seems at times rather like the locomotive put on film by that other great Marxist, Groucho, in 'The Marx Brothers go West', which dashed off through paddocks, herds of cows, farm buildings and so on, practically everywhere save through a recognisable railway station! Revolutions can be like that, and commonly are at some stage. The Chinese Revolution, if it is still the same revolution that began in 1895, to take Spence's starting date, and climaxed in 1949, to take Bianco's date, does seem now to be on a more or less straight stretch of the track, heading, we are told, towards the four modernisations; although a few aboard, far from the driver's cabin it must be said, want to head also towards a fifth - democracy - through which they say you must pass in order to reach the others. That is very uncertain, and it seems unlikely that the Chinese locomotive of revolution will actually pass that way. But at least it does seem to be heading somewhere reachable, not Utopia.

Having momentarily dashed off headlong myself in pursuit of Marx's metaphor of revolution, I must return briefly for a few final ruminations about the key word in my title. Revolution can be taken to mean only basic social and political transformation of societies, such as are recorded in the history books around years like 1789, 1917 and 1949. But one may indeed question, as I have been doing, just how much transformation in the end really takes place by means of such revolutions. 'New presbyter is but old priest writ large', Milton wrote bitterly in the midst of the Puritan revolution in seventeenth-century England, and we can readily transpose his terms to fit other revolutions, seeing Stalin and Mao as old Tsar or Emperor, and party commissars or cadres as old style bureaucrats, writ large. Such parallels are far from reliable guides to the reality of revolution, and it would be foolish to attempt to deny the immensity of the social and political changes which have in fact followed from the great revolutions. But still, there is a problem about the transforming powers of socio-political revolution.

Alfred Cobban in an iconoclastic inaugural lecture talked of the myth of the French Revolution, not thereby denying that great and dramatic events had actually occurred in France after 1789, but arguing that the people - the class if you like - effectively in power after those events were much the same as before, and that the revolutionary decade and its Napoleonic aftermath, so far from carrying French society forward more decisively and rapidly out of one historical stage into another more advanced state, could as well be said to have slowed it down.<sup>17</sup> This is a far from unquestioned or popular view (especially in France), but it is one which does remind us that there are many myths embedded in all history, and nowhere perhaps more so today than in the history of revolutions. A too tight definition or criterion of revolution creates its own kinds of myths. A tough-minded analyst such as Barrington Moore can say of the American Revolution of the late eighteenth century that 'since it did not result in any fundamental changes in the structure of society, there are grounds for asking whether it deserves to be called a revolution at all'.<sup>18</sup> I find such a use of the term as altogether too purist and restrictive and am certainly here using the word in a far looser sense than that implied in Moore's comment. We should not get cabined and confined within such phrases as 'the structure of the society', or swept along too far by words such as 'transformation', but remain ready to recognise that revolution, at least in the sense of social, political, economic changes which profoundly affect the individual lives of men and women over a long period of time, can work in very various ways and directions sometimes downwards from above, as for example in Meiji Japan or the Shah's Iran, or contrariwise, as in today's Iran, to assert non-modernising faiths and objectives which are yet, in a real sense, revolutionary in their impact. The word, the concept, cannot meaningfully be made captive to one view of history or one criterion of historical change.

One final example to help justify my admittedly loose use of the term for China. J.P. Harrison, early on in his text on the rise of the Chinese Communist Party, *The Long March to Power*, writes that 'during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries at least four major revolutions had been proceeding simultaneously in China. It is as if the intellectual, political, economic and social changes that took centuries to occur in the West have been compressed into several decades in China'.<sup>19</sup> These changes constitute for Harrison, the four main streams of revolution in modern Chinese history. He sees them as ultimately all flowing in roughly the same direction, towards a socialist defined, communist party-led model of modernity, so that even for Harrison, it must be said, it comes down to one

revolution in the end. But he does distinguish, as it were, revolutions within the revolution.

That essentially is what my own argument in the end comes down to also, but the revolutions I wish to distinguish are fewer and rather different from those suggested by Harrison. I have already hinted at the main distinction I wish to make, that is between the elite-led, the politically organised and ideologically committed revolution (whether Confucian, Kuomintang or Communist) on the one hand, and the largely unarticulated, at best loosely organised, popular revolution of the masses on the other. There has at certain times and places been a very close interconnection and interdependence between these two revolutions, as during the Yen-an years when the Communist Party did indeed tap the enormous insurrectionary energies of the north China peasants who formed the tide that carried it to power by 1949. About this there can be no disagreement. But it did not thereby absolutely channel and control those peasant popular energies, nor thereby complete the revolution. In important respects the peasant revolution was, and has remained, very distinct from that recorded in the history books around such years as 1911, 1919, 1927 and 1949, and around such organisations as the T'ung Meng Hui, the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party. It has been a revolution concerned with parochial rather than national objectives, with the re-creation of local self-sufficiency, order and justice on a pattern believed to have existed in the recent or an ideal past, before government and landlords and local power wielders became oppressive and grasping beyond tolerable bounds; a revolution inspired as much by religious and moral convictions about the social order as by any politically definable objectives concerned with progress or modernity following some kind of rational, post-Enlightenment model - the Revolution, in short, of what the social anthropologists call the little rather than the great tradition.

I have been led to put this emphasis on the strength and continuing relevance of this alternative, non-elite stream within the modern Chinese revolution by two main considerations. One is the problem of determining where exactly the great Taiping movement fits into the sequence of modern China's revolutionary history; and the second is my reading of a book with the engaging title of *China Turned Right Side Up*, written by Ralph Thaxton and published last year by Yale University Press. Let me look briefly at each of these in turn in an attempt to buttress my main propositions that we should not view the history of the Chinese revolution too narrowly along one particular perspective of change and progress, nor try to

fit it too neatly within one particular package of revolutionary type.

First the Taiping movement, that vast peasant uprising which challenged the existing Confucian orthodoxy and the ruling Ch'ing dynasty over the years 1851-1864, proclaiming a new quasi-Christian religious faith and a social economic order based on agrarian communism; proclaiming itself also to be a new kind of dynasty, whose legitimacy derived not from any mandate from heaven but from its own direct divinity through its leader Hung, the younger brother of Jesus Christ. Although eventually defeated and destroyed, after the loss of millions of lives and the devastation of some of the most prosperous parts of China, the Taiping brought about significant changes in the lower balance within the existing Ch'ing state and helped create the conditions for its eventual overthrow fifty years later. They certainly, therefore, have a significant place in the pantheon of the modern Chinese revolutionary movement.

But historians (and here I have to confess that I am drawing only on Western historians of the movement, though I think that much of what I have to say may apply also to recent Chinese historical writing on the Taiping),<sup>20</sup> seem in something of a dilemma as to where exactly to place the Taiping in the development of the modern Chinese Revolution. J. K. Fairbank for example writes in his *United States and China* 'the Chinese Revolution of today really goes back to the Taiping rebellion of 1851-64, a full lifetime before Marxism entered China ... Modern China's revolution is unintelligible without reference to the Taiping effort to destroy Confucianism and why it failed'.<sup>21</sup> Maurice Meisner in his text *Mao's China* says, 'Taiping rebels in the mid-nineteenth century had been the first to mount a revolutionary challenge to the dominance of the gentry and the entire Confucian socio-political order' although, he adds, 'the modern history of the Chinese revolution did not truly begin until near the turn of the century, when members of the gentry began to turn against the Confucian values and ways of their own class'.<sup>22</sup> Thus, for Meisner, revolution in modern China begins with the Taipings, and they mount a truly revolutionary challenge to the old order, but the modern history of that revolution begins later. Wolfgang Franke sees justification for regarding the Taiping as precursors of the revolutionary movement of the twentieth century, as does Eric Wolf, while Bianco says of them that they were 'in a sense the precursors of the communists'.<sup>23</sup>

Although none of these writers regard the Taiping exactly as *modern* revolutionaries (though some get close to it), it seems fair to say that all are striving to somehow fit the Taiping movement into the line of modern revolution which culminates, as Bianco puts it so clearly later in his book, in 1949. But the Taiping really represent, I suggest, a fundamentally different line or tradition of revolt or revolution - if you are prepared to accord them that label, and many historians still are - i.e. a religiously inspired, non-rational, pre-modern movement which is quite distinct, and indeed far removed from, the essential (I do not say the always consistently maintained, but the essential) rational program of secular revolution which the communist movement basically stands for.

As so often in history, one cannot draw the line with absolute precision and certainty. In the last years of the Taiping one of their leaders produced a very rational, modern looking paper program of innovation, but this stemmed from the special personal experience of this Taiping figure, not from the core of the movement; on the other side there have been Messianic and irrational qualities enough in the course of the communist led revolution. But in the long term and in the ultimate balance, the two movements represent, I maintain, fundamentally very different world views, very different philosophies of revolution, very different ideals of social order. There is truly a great gulf, not just of time, separating the Taiping from the communist revolution, and it is, I believe, one of the myths of modern Chinese history to see them as in any real sense the precursors of the modernising revolution of the twentieth century.

I quote from one of the most revolutionary documents in modern Chinese history.

The methods of government inaugurated by the Sung and Ming dynasties upon investigation reveal nothing that is of any practical use or that may be of advantage to us. Changes must be made according to the necessities of the time. We must select subjects of Western knowledge as will keep us in touch with the time, and diligently study and practice them in order to place our country abreast with other countries. Let us strive towards advancement and progress.<sup>24</sup>

This is part of the edict drafted by Kang Yu-wei and issued by the young Kuang Ksu emperor on 11 June 1898, thus beginning the abortive Hundred Days of Reform. For a Chinese emperor

to be stating in an imperial edict - that is, in the ultimate expression of his administrative status and authority - that we can learn nothing from the past, that we must turn to the outer world and learn from it, that we must commit ourselves to a continuing program of advancement and progress, this surely was truly revolutionary. This edict uses the same kind of language that the present-day rulers use, that is the language of progress, of modernisation, of learning truths from facts; but this is by no means the language of the Taiping, who were intent upon establishing a heavenly kingdom of great peace, a theocratic state concerned less with national wealth and power than with shared agrarian subsistence and with religious orthodoxy. The Taiping have their place in modern Chinese history, and in the history of revolution in modern China; but despite certain superficially shared characteristics and objectives they represent a different kind of revolution from that of the ruling elite, whether that elite bears a Confucian or a communist label.

I turn now briefly to Thaxton's book, which is a study of the peasant contribution to, and relationship with, the communist revolution in north China during the 1930s and 1940s, concentrating on a particular key region or base area, the Taihang mountains. Despite some very real weaknesses in the quality of the evidence available to him and his own often overzealous use of that evidence I think Thaxton's book does show convincingly enough that the non-elite tradition of peasant radicalism - of revolution as he consistently calls it - submerged and unarticulated though it usually was, remained strong within Chinese society into the twentieth century, and was far from being simply taken over, mobilised and tapped by the communist party in its build-up of strength in north China after the Long March and during the war with Japan. Of course, Thaxton agrees, the peasant base and the communist party's ability to draw effectively on this tradition played a vital role in its victory of 1949. But rather than simply looking for the methods used by the party to bring peasant expectations into line with its own ideology and goals, he argues that we need to examine more closely how the peasants imposed their own more local revolutionary objectives upon party programs. Peasant values and practices both set limits on, and shaped the contours of, revolutionary change, he maintains, and the Chinese communists had frequently to endorse in party guidelines peasant outpourings that were by no means originally embraced by party leadership. 'The peasants', he says, 'left the stamp of their own convictions on communist party policy and gave it a uniquely popular twist, a little tradition imprint'.<sup>25</sup>

The detail of Thaxton's argument we have not time to go into, but the book comes down to asserting that there were in a real sense two revolutions developing in the north China plain by the 1940s - developing in close relationship to one another certainly, but yet different and distinct. His book is in fact an application to China of the conclusions derived by James Scott from his study of agrarian revolt in Southeast Asian countries, that within every great tradition revolt having mass support there is also a little tradition revolt that threatens to usurp the movement for its parochial ends. This 'revolution in the revolution', says Scott,

is typically denounced by radical elites as adventurism, deviation, or anarchy...The goals of purely little tradition rebellions have something of an ahistorical, permanent quality to them, like animism. When self-consciously revolutionary elites emerge to link up with these older patterns, they tend to add a new dimension to the revolt but *not* to eliminate the parochial forms in the process.<sup>26</sup>

Thus Scott, and that is the kind of picture of the revolutionary scene in north China which Thaxton seeks to portray. His portrayal is certainly fuzzy, highly coloured, distorted in parts; but the perspective does seem revealing, worth examining carefully. The reviewer of his book in the *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* is critical, but judiciously so, respecting his aim to put forward an important interpretation of the Chinese Revolution and to correct the over-emphasis on party history and the consequent neglect of the main participants, the peasants. 'While the argument presented here is not completely convincing', says this reviewer, 'the thesis itself deserves serious consideration'.<sup>27</sup> I am certainly glad to use it to support my own general argument that the revolutionary process in modern China does not converge clearly along only one path towards one end, under one leadership.

Of course you may object that really there is no separate tradition of peasant revolution as distinct from peasant rebellion; that peasants, whether like the Taiping in the mid-nineteenth century or Thaxton's Taihang peasants in mid-twentieth, do not become genuinely revolutionary unless and until mobilised under a more class-conscious, nationally-aware leadership espousing a far-reaching program of political and social change. It is, I suppose, a matter of definition. In any very long historical perspective, such as the study of Chinese history fosters, great mass peasant uprisings may indeed appear

in the end far more likely to re-create than to transform the old order - though one must admit that they can give it a very vigorous shake-up while they're about it - witness the Taiping. But we need to recall that our historical perspective on these 'rare but momentous' social revolutionary phenomena is a good deal shorter than it is on the long Chinese tradition of peasant rebellion and uprisings, and we may reflect that perhaps revolutions loom larger in our Marxist-modulated minds partly because they are so much closer. The future historian may conclude that, despite their undoubted impact on the societies experiencing them, the transforming capacities of revolution are limited, that like rebellions they re-create as much as they transform. We do not need to wait on the future historian for that elucidation, of course. A contemporary of both Meadows and Marx, quite as subtle and perceptive an observer of revolutions and rebellions as either of them, said it clearly enough about the great French revolution, and his insights seem to me to apply equally well to the Russian and the Chinese revolutions.

For the Revolution has had two phases very distinct - the first in which the French seemed to wish the abolition of everything in the past; and the second, in which they wished to resume a part of which they had given up. There were in the 'old order' a great number of laws and political habits which disappeared at one stroke in 1789, and which reappeared some years later; just as certain rivers plunge beneath the surface of the ground to reappear a little further on, causing the same waters to visit new banks.<sup>28</sup>

Thus wrote Alexis de Tocqueville in his classic on revolution *L'Ancien Regime*.

Although his study is of peasants in north China before 1949, Thaxton does raise a pertinent question about contemporary China when he asks: 'Is it not possible that the conception of folk revolution that characterised the pre-1949 communist party relationships with the peasantry, has survived the intra-party wars over the proper ordering of the post-liberation People's Republic's state? Is that potent tradition still with us today?'<sup>29</sup> I have already drawn attention to the article on the production responsibility system and the future of collective farming which suggests, to me at least, that the answer to that question may be a qualified yes - that slowly, massively, the peasant has helped turn the party away

from the grand transforming policies it attempted during the Maoist period, and that the ultimate structure of Chinese agriculture resulting from the process of revolution is likely to reflect peasant aspirations and objectives quite as much as those of the revolutionary elite of the great tradition.

The recently published autobiography of Liang Heng, *Son of the Revolution* (a fairly prodigal son of the revolution, it must be said), recounts a number of experiences among peasants which seem to me to reflect the continuing strength of this little tradition within the revolution, and I conclude my main argument with an illustration from his account.

When aged about fifteen, Liang Heng was rusticated, 'liberated', with his father for prolonged re-education in the countryside, to help cut off the tail of capitalism by bringing revolutionary knowledge to peasants in one of the most isolated regions of China. The peasants came to respect his father deeply and brought their dilemmas about official policies to him. 'Old Liang', they said 'we don't understand. Why is raising chickens and ducks rotten capitalism? How can we buy oil and salt if we don't sell eggs?' One thirty-five year old bachelor complained: 'I have almost two hundred yuan now but if I can't raise more than one pig a year I'll be sixty before I can look for a wife. Do they want me to dream about women for the rest of my life?'. But at that time old Liang cannot protect them against the power of the local party secretary and a remote central government intent on rooting out every supposed vestige of capitalism, even if represented by only a few privately owned pigs and ducks nibbling on public land. The peasants respond, rebel, as best they can: 'Better to eat a laying hen yourself than surrender to the government, they reasoned', reports Liang, so there was a great slaughter in the village of pigs and ducks. But it is a bitter and at times violent business even in this small village. 'We poor peasants don't know how to write, but we keep our account with our bellies' says one defiantly. But for the time being, at least, the party and its cadres, the 'they' of the thirty-five year old bachelor's complaint, triumph, and the official anti-capitalist policy is enforced. But popular resistance and resentment is clear in this confrontation, observed by this young son of an intellectual set down for a time among peasants struggling still to maintain their kind of revolution.<sup>30</sup>

Recent developments, not just in respect of the peasants whom I have emphasised but more generally throughout Chinese society, suggest that, for good or ill, non-elite generated pressures are still at work upon the course of revolution in China; that the developing actuality of revolution and

change there cannot accurately be depicted as moving clearly along any single, well defined revolutionary path; that the transformation of China's political and social structures is proving to be in fact a very unpredictable, ungeneralisable process and that, if there has been just one revolution in China at least it has been at least many faceted, if not downright chameleon like.

The history of revolution in China, from the Taping onwards, needs to be written with a full awareness, such as Meadows had, of the immense, continuing strength of tradition, both little and great, within Chinese society and the Chinese consciousness. Revolution is indeed one of the means by which human societies have moved on through their histories; but locomotives are not the only means of social transport and progress, and the history of the Chinese revolution, more clearly perhaps than the history of any other major social revolution, reminds us forcefully how very uncertain both their speed and direction can be, and that there is no single gauge or track, either coming out of the past or leading into the future.

My main concern has been to raise questions about the accurate historical understanding of the Chinese and their revolutions. I cannot presume to try to depict the Chinese experience of their revolutions, though an account such as that of Liang Heng from which I quoted serves to illustrate something of the vast range of personal fulfillment and tragedy that go to make up that experience. So does the literature of the wounded, as it has been called, and some of the recently published accounts of Chinese-speaking Western journalists in China. I turn in conclusion, however, to a recent American visitor who spoke no Chinese, was there for only a relatively short time yet wrote a book about it - almost the archetypal tourist one could say, though a favoured, sensitive and observant one.

In his book, *Chinese Encounters*, recording his visit to China in 1978, the American playwright Arthur Miller commented that 'it seems the Chinese have a greater ability than we to endure inconclusiveness'. Simply to endure, one might say. But Miller's comment, which reflects his deeply troubled, tenacious concern to understand the continuing dilemmas and uncertainties of direction in post Cultural Revolution China, seems apt enough. 'The truth was', he concluded, 'that Marxist-Maoism, the science of reality, had left them stunned in a nightmare, a directionless space. All that was sure was that anything was possible'.<sup>31</sup> Now, nearly ten years after the death of Mao, for whom revolution was a drama of passion, the Chinese appear to be moving, cautiously but steadily,

towards a less passionate, more gradualist kind of revolution. 'Deng's Quiet Revolution' *Newsweek* called it in one of its issues reporting on President Reagan's recent visit.<sup>32</sup> Whether that revolution will survive Deng, or whether China will return to some new, heaven-storming Maoist model we cannot yet know. My guess is that it will not; that a generation and more after the triumphs of 1949 and the traumas of all the campaigns and struggles since, a tolerable balance between governed and governing, between 'they' and thirty-five year old bachelors seeking to save the price of a bride, is at last emerging. If that guess is wrong (as Miller clearly fears it may be), if chaos does come again, I will guess further by predicting that overt rebellion from below, of the kind Meadows generalised from, is a not impossible development. 'Rebellion is in China the old, often exercised, legitimate and constitutional means of stopping arbitrary and vicious legislation and administration', wrote Meadows. 'To say that an industrious and cultivated people should have no right whatever, in any way, of checking misgovernment and tyranny which must destroy its cultivation and its industry, and ultimately its very existence as a people, is to maintain a proposition so monstrous that I merely state it.'<sup>33</sup> The long tradition of popular rebellion in the form Meadows knew it, may be now dormant but is not necessarily totally dead or defunct. Of course in modern China, old style, Taiping-type millenarian rebellion would be an anachronism; but even a modern autocracy, claiming its mandate from the people rather than from heaven, is likely, within the Chinese tradition, to be subject to some kind of checks and balances to hold it back from any long term, intolerable despotism.

Arthur Miller was heir to a revolution that was above all else about individual liberty and constraints on the powers of government - which some see as what all true revolutions must basically be about,<sup>34</sup> a view I share. Miller earnestly sought for signs of an emerging rule of law and a right of individual dissent. This is, I think, an unlikely, or at best very limited, prospect in China. Yet I do not doubt that, consistent with their own tradition of autocratic yet morally responsible and ultimately accountable government, the Chinese people will ensure that revolution in China never remains simply what the ruling elite, Communist, Confucian or whatever, decrees.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> L. Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution 1915-1949* (tr. from the French by Muriel Bell), Stanford University Press, Stanford, Calif., 1971, p. 108.
- <sup>2</sup> T.T. Meadows, *Desultory Notes on the Government and People of China*, London, 1847.
- <sup>3</sup> T.T. Meadows, *The Chinese and their Rebellions*, 1st ed., London, 1856; Irish University Press, Shannon, reprint, 1972, p. 25.
- <sup>4</sup> *The Times*, 29 December 1856, p. 10.
- <sup>5</sup> Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1967, p.171 n.16; cf. also R.H. Tawney, *Land and Labour in China*, Allen & Unwin, New York, 1932, p.32.
- <sup>6</sup> For some discussion of the term see Wolfgang Franke, *A Century of Chinese Revolution 1851-1949*, (tr. by Stanley Rudman), Blackwell, Oxford, 1970, pp.1-6.
- <sup>7</sup> Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution*, Vintage Books, New York, 1965, p.1.
- <sup>8</sup> Meadows, *The Chinese*, p.25.
- <sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p.27.
- <sup>10</sup> Greg O'Leary and Andrew Watson, 'The Production Responsibility System and the Future of Collective Farming', *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 8 (1982), p.10.
- <sup>11</sup> Meadows, *The Chinese*, p.457.
- <sup>12</sup> Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979, pp.3-5.
- <sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, pp.236-7.

- <sup>14</sup> See for examples Bianco, 'Peasants and Revolution: the Case of China', in *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 2(3) 1975, pp.313-35, and Skcopol, *States and Social Revolutions*, pp.275-80.
- <sup>15</sup> Leon E. Stover, *The Cultural Ecology of Chinese Civilization*, Mentor, New York, 1974, p.9.
- <sup>16</sup> Fox Butterfield, *Alive in the Bitter Sea*, Times Books, New York, 1982, pp.300-1; cf. also Ian Ward, *Is China Still Socialist?* A.I.I.A. Dyason House Papers 10.3, 1984; Roger Garside, *Coming Alive: China After Mao*, Andre Deutsch, London, 1981, ch.15; M. Selden and V. Lippit (eds), *The Transition to Socialism in China*, M.E. Sharp, New York, 1982.
- <sup>17</sup> Alfred Cobban, 'The Myth of the French Revolution', in his *Aspects of the French Revolution*, Paladin, London, 1973.
- <sup>18</sup> Barrington Moore, *Social Origins*, p.112.
- <sup>19</sup> J.P. Harrison, *The Long March to Power*, Praeger, New York, 1972, p.7.
- <sup>20</sup> See Kwang-Ching Liu, 'World View and Peasant Rebellion: Reflections on Post-Mao Historiography', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XL(2) 1981, pp.295-326.
- <sup>21</sup> J.K. Fairbank, *The United States and China*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1979, 4th ed., p.181.
- <sup>22</sup> Maurice Meisner, *Mao's China*, Free Press, New York, 1977, pp.3, 10.
- <sup>23</sup> Franke, *Century of Chinese Revolution*, p.19; Bianco *Origins of the Chinese Revolution*, pp.4-5; cf also Eric Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*, Faber, London, 1969, pp. 118-23.
- <sup>24</sup> M.E. Cameron, *The Reform Movement in China 1898-1912*, Octagon Books, 1963, New York, pp.36-7.
- <sup>25</sup> Ralph Thaxton, *China Turned Rightside Up*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1983, p.98 and *passim*.

- <sup>26</sup> James C. Scott, 'Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition', *Theory and Society*, 4, 1977, p.222.
- <sup>27</sup> Linda Grove, review of *China Turned Rightside Up* in *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 11, 1984, pp.193-5; cf. also review by Elizabeth Perry in *Pacific Affairs*, 56 (3) 1983, pp.527-9.
- <sup>28</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Regime* (tr.M.W.Patterson), Blackwell, Oxford, 1949, p.xii.
- <sup>29</sup> Thaxton, *China Turned*, p.xv.
- <sup>30</sup> Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, *Son of the Revolution*, Knopf, New York, 1983, chs 14-15.
- <sup>31</sup> Inge Morath and Arthur Miller, *Chinese Encounters*, Penguin, New York, 1979, pp.39, 109 etc.
- <sup>32</sup> *Newsweek*, 30 April, 1984.
- <sup>33</sup> Meadows, *The Chinese*, p.24.
- <sup>34</sup> See esp. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, Pelican, Harmondsworth, 1965.

## THE GEORGE ERNEST MORRISON

### LECTURE IN ETHNOLOGY

The George Ernest Morrison Lecture was founded by Chinese residents in Australia and others in honour of the late Dr G.E. Morrison, a native of Geelong, Victoria, Australia.

The objects of the foundation of the lectureship were to honour for all time the memory of a great Australian who rendered valuable services to China, and to improve cultural relations between China and Australia. The foundation of the lectureship had the official support of the Chinese Consulate-General, and was due in particular to the efforts of Mr William Liu, merchant, of Sydney; Mr William Ah Ket, barrister, of Melbourne; Mr F.J. Quinlan and Sir Colin MacKenzie, of Canberra. From the time of its inception until 1948 the lecture was associated with the Australian Institute of Anatomy, but in the latter year the responsibility for the management of the lectureship was taken over by the Australian National University, and the lectures delivered since that date have been given under the auspices of the University.

*The following lectures have been delivered:*

- Inaugural: W.P. Chen, *The Objects of the Foundation of the Lectureship and a review of Dr Morrison's life in China.* 10 May 1932.
- Second: W. Ah Ket, *Eastern Thought, with More Particular Reference to Confucius.* 3 May 1933.
- Third: J.S. MacDonald, *The History and Development of Chinese Art.* 3 May 1934.
- Fourth: W.P. Chen, *The New Culture Movement in China.* 10 May 1935.
- Fifth: Wu Lien-teh, *Reminiscences of George E. Morrison; and Chinese Abroad,* 2 September 1936.
- Sixth: Chun-jien Pai, *China Today: With Special Reference to Higher Education.* 4 May 1937.
- Seventh: A.F. Barker, *The Impact of Western Industrialism on China.* 17 May 1939.
- Eighth: S.H. Roberts, *The Gifts of the Old China to the New.* 5 June 1939.

- Ninth: Howard Mowll, *West China as Seen Through the Eyes of the Westerner*. 29 May 1949.
- Tenth: W.G. Goddard, *The Ming Shen. A Study in Chinese Democracy*. 5 June 1941.
- Eleventh: D.B. Copland, *The Chinese Social Structure*. 27 September 1948.\*
- Twelfth: J.K. Rideout, *Politics in Medieval China*. 28 October 1949.
- Thirteenth: C.P. FitzGerald, *The Revolutionary Tradition in China*. 19 March 1951.
- Fourteenth: H.V. Evatt, *Some Aspects of Morrison's Life and Work*. 4 December 1952.
- Fifteenth: Lord Lindsay of Birker, *China and the West*. 20 October 1953.
- Sixteenth: M. Titiev, *Chinese Elements in Japanese Culture*. 27 July 1954.
- Seventeenth: H. Bielenstein, *Emperor Kuang-Wu (A.D. 25-27) and the Northern Barbarians*. 2 November 1955.\*
- Eighteenth: Leonard B. Cox, *The Buddhist Temples of Yun-Kang and Lung-Men*. 17 October 1956.\*
- Nineteenth: Otto P.N. Berkelbach van der Sprenkel, *The Chinese Civil Service*. 4 November 1957.
- Twentieth: A.R. Davies, *The Narrow Lane: Some Observations on the Recluse in Traditional Chinese Society*. 19 November 1958.
- Twenty-first: C.N. Spinks, *The Khmer Temple of Prah Vihar*. 6 October 1959.\*
- Twenty-second: Chen Chih-mai, *Chinese Landscape Painting: The Golden Age*. 5 October 1960.\*
- Twenty-third: L. Carrington Goodrich, *China's Contacts with other Parts of Asia in Ancient Times*. 1 August 1961.\*
- Twenty-fourth: N.G.D. Malmqvist, *Problems and Methods in Chinese Linguistics*. 22 November 1962.\*
- Twenty-fifth: H.F. Simon, *Some Motivations of Chinese Foreign Policy*. 3 October 1963.
- Twenty-Sixth: Wang Ling, *Calendar, Cannon and Clock in the Cultural Relations between Europe and China*. 18 November 1964.
- Twenty-seventh: A.M. Halpern, *Chinese Foreign Policy — Success or Failure?* 9 August 1966.\*
- Twenty-eighth: J.W. de Jong, *Buddha's Word in China*. 18 October 1967.\*
- Twenty-ninth: J.D. Frodsham, *New Perspectives in Chinese Literature*. 23 July 1968.\*
- Thirtieth: E.A. Huck, *The Assimilation of the Chinese in Australia*. 6 November 1969.\*

- Thirty-first: K.A. Wittfogel, *Agriculture: A Key to the Understanding of Chinese Society, Past and Present*. 6 April 1970.\*
- Thirty-second: I. de Rachewiltz, *Prester John and Europe's Discovery of East Asia*. 3 November 1971.\*
- Thirty-third: Eugene Kamenka, *Marx, Marxism and China*, 6 September 1972.
- Thirty-fourth: Liu Ts'un-yan, *On the Art of Ruling a Big Country: Views of Three Chinese Emperors*. 13 November 1973.\*
- Thirty-fifth: Jerome Ch'en, *Peasant Activism in Contemporary China*. 22 July 1974.
- Thirty-sixth: Yi-fu Tuan, *Chinese Attitudes to Nature: Idea and Reality*. 3 September 1975.
- Thirty-seventh: Lo Hui-min, *The Tradition and Prototypes of the China-Watcher*. 27 October 1976.\*
- Thirty-eighth: Roy Hofheinz, *People, Places and Politics in Modern China*. 17 August 1977.
- Thirty-ninth: Mark Elvin, *Self-Liberation and Self-Immolation in Modern Chinese Thought*, 13 September 1978.\*
- Fortieth: Wang Gungwu, *Power, Rights and Duties in Chinese History*. 19 September 1979.\*
- Forty-first: Dr Fang Chao-ying, *The Great Wall of China: Keeping Out or Keeping In?* 5 June 1980.
- Forty-second: T'ien Ju-K'ang, *Moslem Rebellion in China: A Yunnan Controversy*. 17 June 1981.\*
- Forty-third: Alan Thorne, *China and Australia: Forty Thousand Years of Contact*. 4 August 1982.
- Forty-fourth: Chan Hok-lam, *Control of Publishing in China, Past and Present*. 24 August 1983.\*
- Forty-fifth: J.S. Gregory, *The Chinese and their Revolutions*. 8 August 1984.\*

\* Available from Contemporary China Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies.

