

China and Japan: A Fresh Perspective

For East Asian scholars in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Pennsylvania, the last decade has been a dynamic time in which our government and the public have done an about-face on China, and Japan has become a major force in world economics and politics.

"While China has become the most successful communist country in the world, Japan has become the most successful capitalist country in the world," declares F. Hilary Conroy, professor of history and international relations. "This is a twist of history that would have been most unexpected 40 years ago when they were both kind of down and out."

"China ten years ago was very much like Russia in the late 1920s," observes Nathan Sivin, professor of Oriental studies and the history and sociology of science. "Nobody in the United States was quite sure that China existed. It seemed likely that if everybody ignored it long enough, sooner or later it would evaporate from the face of the earth."

Professor of Oriental studies and international relations Allyn Rickett, who lived in China and was impressed with the country back in the 50s, remembers many people who wished hard that it would evaporate. He notes the broader interest today in China, particularly the enthusiasm among conservatives who have visited the People's Republic. Not only do they see China representing a counterbalance to the Soviet Union, but they like the puritan virtues, dedication to work, and sense of purpose that are such a visible part of Chinese life.

Sivin observes, "For the American public it is hard to tell what to think. It's clear that China's really there, but it's hard to get reliable information—information that is on the one hand accurate, on the other hand not politically tainted one way or the other."

Anxious to see for themselves, members of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and others at Penn are traveling to China. Last year began with a University trip during which trustees, faculty and administrators toured the People's Republic for three weeks with Allyn Rickett as their guide. Nathan Sivin, who joined the University's faculty last fall, went to China with an official delegation of astronomers and was able to meet informally and privately with fellow historians of Chinese science after a decade in which neither he nor his American colleagues had heard from these scholars.

Recognizing these special resources and the need

for everyone to learn more about China, the Society of Alumni sponsored a conference on China in the spring. Excerpts from three of the talks—on Chinese politics, science and literature—begin on page 2.

Throughout the past year Chinese and Japanese scholars from many departments throughout the University have been meeting to evaluate the current status of East Asian studies and to develop a new focus for this interdisciplinary field of study. The committee's activities, under the direction of Nathan Sivin, include two new degree programs and other plans that are described on page 6.

This summer the Institute of Medieval Japanese Studies, headquartered at the University, sponsored an international conference in Tokyo, Dublin and New York on Japanese illuminated manuscripts. This workshop has led to breakthroughs in understanding the centuries of Japanese culture for which the pictorial scrolls are the main source of information. The academic year began with an important exhibition of medieval Japanese illuminated manuscripts organized by Associate Professor Barbara Ruch, founder and director of the Institute, at the Japan House Gallery of the Japan Society, New York City.



Lenses for Looking at China



Below are excerpts from the talk W. Allyn Rickett gave to the Society of Alumni in April. This Chinese scholar and new chairman of the Department of Oriental Studies returned from another trip to China earlier this month.

The increasingly important role of China in international affairs makes it crucial for Americans to come to a better understanding of this country that represents about one quarter of humanity. But this is not an easy task. So many things appear to be turned upside down that it seems we must always be looking at China through a special lens. We must force ourselves to think of China in terms of its own traditions rather than ours: to view China in a vertical perspective, contrasting what China is with what China was, rather than attempting to make horizontal comparisons with our way of doing things in the United States.

For a person like myself who lived in China before the revolution, a trip back there today is an overwhelming experience. Thirty years ago the land was subject to chronic famine; malnutrition, disease and spiritual depression pervaded; and nowhere were beggars more prevalent or corruption more blatant. Today China is still poor, but the people do have plenty to eat and have excellent medical care. There is a self-confidence and purposefulness that was totally lacking in the society before, and one sees everywhere extremely impressive developments in industry and agriculture. When I was there in 1948, China couldn't even produce a spark plug. Now, of course, it has become one of the small group of nuclear nations.

All of this is impressive, but it doesn't mean that China today represents something totally new. While everything has changed, it often seems that nothing has changed. Traditional Chinese formality, politeness, attitude toward family, concern for status, respect for bureaucratic authority—all of these things that were so much a part of traditional China—are still there. As before, the differences in our cultures can be very frustrating for both parties. When we first began sending groups of Americans to China, we caused the Chinese great difficulty by listing everyone alphabetically. Since the Chinese list everyone according to rank or importance, an American group would arrive to find that Jane Adams, who happened to be a school girl from Baker High, was given the suite, while Mr. Zimmerman, who was president of a major bank and the real V.I.P. of the delegation, was given the broom closet.

It is also very difficult for us as Americans to come to grips with a revolution in process. Most revolutions have a very short life expectancy. People go through a period of tremendous excitement and change only to settle back very quickly into most of the old patterns once the major obstacle has been overcome. Yet in China there has been constant change taking place for almost 30 years. In fact American observers frequently wonder that the Chinese will think of next.

Another problem is the seemingly constant shift in the Chinese line. The Chinese themselves will tell you that their

revolution involves the attainment of two goals. One is to develop an egalitarian society along communist lines which will eventually lead to a society practicing the credo, "from each according to his ability; to each according to his need." The second is to make China into an advanced industrial nation in the shortest possible time. The Chinese will also tell you that these two goals are inseparable. Without a strong economic base, it will be impossible for them to achieve their egalitarian goals: People must clearly see progress toward establishing an egalitarian society that will benefit them and their children, or they will not be willing to make the sacrifices necessary to provide the capital for building new industry.

In actual practice, however, it is impossible to move toward these two goals with the same speed at the same time. At first, emphasis is on one goal and then on the other. And each shift in direction involves tremendous ideological and political struggle. For example, the period 1960 to 1964 stressed technical development. As might be expected during such a period, great emphasis was placed on the training of qualified young scientists and technicians. In 1965, when the Cultural Revolution got underway, the Chinese were shocked to find that 95 percent of the students in Peking University were the children of a small group of families representing either the old elite, which had run China before the revolution, or the new elite made up of important Party members, government officials and bureaucrats. It was a shocking discovery because the revolution was supposed to have been fought for the peasants and workers, not for the old or new power elite. Yet what happened was very understandable. We have faced a similar problem when trying to bring black students from the ghetto to Penn. The children of the elite families have been programmed to take examinations and to go to the universities from the time they were infants. Like children from an American ghetto, however, the sons and daughters of a worker or peasant family received little of this kind of training. While basic literacy is high in China today, the schools in the countryside cannot adequately prepare young people to compete with urban youths in taking the equivalent of our SATs. The problem was especially serious in China because, out of a middle school population of about 40 million, less than 400,000 can expect to go on to college.

Therefore, when universities were reopened after the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese decided to do away with the old system of entrance examinations. All students who graduated from middle school were required to work for two years in a factory or in the countryside before being eligible for college. Then they could be selected for universities on the basis of their work group's recommendation which was based on political, social, and work attitudes as well as general intelligence. While this new system made it possible for more sons and daughters of worker and peasant families to compete, it was not as egalitarian as it was supposed to be—because of political favoritism and various other forms of hanky-panky—and often resulted in an educational nightmare. Since there was no check on the academic qualifications of incoming students, professors in a course such as elementary physics were teaching some students who had had the required calculus, while other students could barely add. What's more, as the poorly trained students found themselves swamped by the pressure of academic work, they tended to become negative and susceptible to anti-intellectual propaganda of the extremist group called the Gang of Four.

In the meantime, as China began again to push hard toward technical and industrial development, people at the top

were demanding well-trained graduates to fill research and technical positions. A major crisis ensued, and it has only been since the fall of the Gang of Four at the end of 1976 that the pendulum has started to swing the other way. During the past year the Chinese have re-established stiff entrance examinations for their universities.

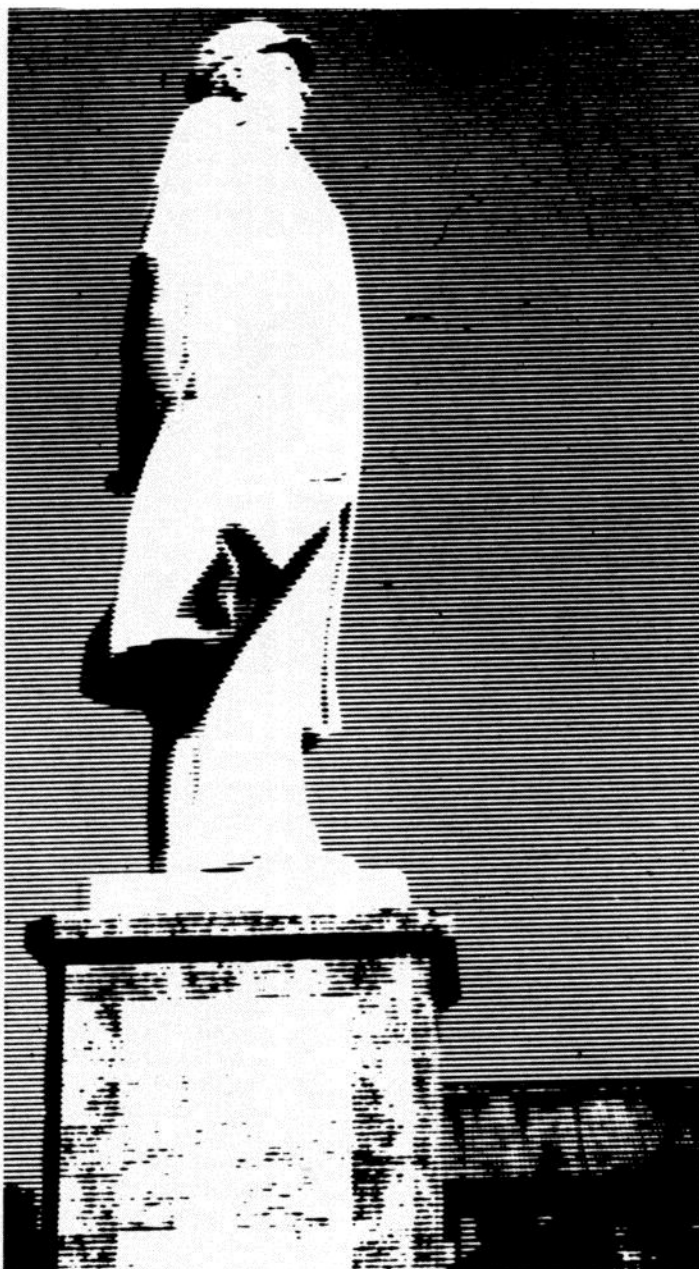
Part of the problem in understanding China is that, as Americans we like to have immediate, absolute and forever solutions to almost any problem we face. It is very difficult for us to look at solutions in terms of process. The Chinese, however, feel that if you try something that doesn't fully work, you have also achieved certain things in trying. In this instance, while they have gone back to a system of examina-

tions, they have also cleared the air of some of the elitism that existed before. There is a qualitative difference now in the kinds of students who are able to go to the university. It is also no doubt true, as the Chinese recognize, that the current system will lead to another development of elitism which will again require correction later on. However, as long as the pendulum is swinging, the Chinese feel there is no major problem. It is only when it becomes stuck in one position that the revolution is in real danger.

Another difficulty in understanding China is the terminology the Chinese use. When Americans hear the Chinese talking about the presence of the bourgeoisie in the party, bourgeois activities and bourgeois factions, it sounds absolutely ridiculous. In a country where private ownership of productive property is outlawed, how can you talk about a bourgeoisie? What the Chinese are talking about is the ease with which a bureaucrat can turn the organization he leads into his own private kingdom and use it for his own self-aggrandizement and special privilege. For example, while there are no privately owned automobiles in China, the head of an organization can have one of his organization's vehicles assigned to him. The Chinese call this bourgeois because the individual is taking over something that should be public as his or her own personal, private property.

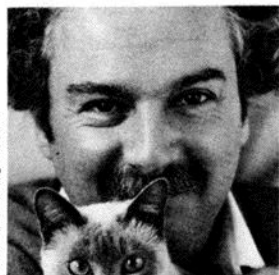
The difficulty the Chinese face is that this is an extremely subtle tendency with very decent people being caught up in it without ever really understanding how they got involved. A good example is provided by a friend of mine who was transferred from Shanghai to become head of a new section at the Foreign Languages Press in Peking. When he arrived, he found his new office was a little cubbyhole—very dirty, with a broken desk and chair, and no lamp. This was obviously not adequate for a section head, and his staff insisted that they obtain new furniture. First it was the desk and chair, but before long the place had been repainted. There were rugs on the floor, curtains in the windows. And my friend found himself with an extremely luxurious office by Chinese standards. The staff also decided he must have an automobile. Why? He really didn't need one. But the staff pointed out that other section heads had automobiles, and if their section head did not, this would mean that their section wasn't as important as the others. My friend hadn't asked for any of these things; they were foisted upon him. But he also admits he did not resist very forcefully, and once there he came to accept them as the accoutrements of his position. Then came the Cultural Revolution, and suddenly he was accused of being a corrupt bureaucrat, wasting the people's property and lording it over the masses. Off he went to spend two years feeding pigs in the countryside.

Finally, I suppose the most important thing in trying to understand China is avoiding stereotypes. China is neither a Heaven on Earth nor a Communist Hell. It is a country of some 900 million individual human beings with an enormously rich cultural tradition going through a period of accelerated change. The Chinese have accomplished some tremendous things. They have also made some mistakes. Their self-assurance and purposefulness are admirable, and the warm friendliness with which they greet guests can be overwhelming. Their seeming inconsistency and unique system of logic can also be maddening. They have not solved all their problems, any more than we have solved ours, but they have come an amazingly long way in the past 30 years, and those of us who have visited China have found it to be a fascinating and exciting land, one filled with hope rather than despair.



Chairman Mao Tse-tung. Statue on the Peking University campus. China trip, 1978, N. Sivin.

Science and Technology: Changing Carefully



Wendy Snyder MacNeil

This talk, which was developed for the April conference of the Society of Alumni, is based on Nathan Sivin's trip to China last fall. Sivin, who came to the University from M.I.T. in the fall of 1977, is chairman of the new Graduate Group in East Asian Studies.

Last October I joined nine of America's leading astronomers in one of the six official delegations that the United States exchanges with the People's Republic of China each year. We were sent in order to fully inform the American people of the state of astronomical research in China today through a report which will soon be published by the National Academy of Sciences as part of a series of books on science and technology in contemporary China.

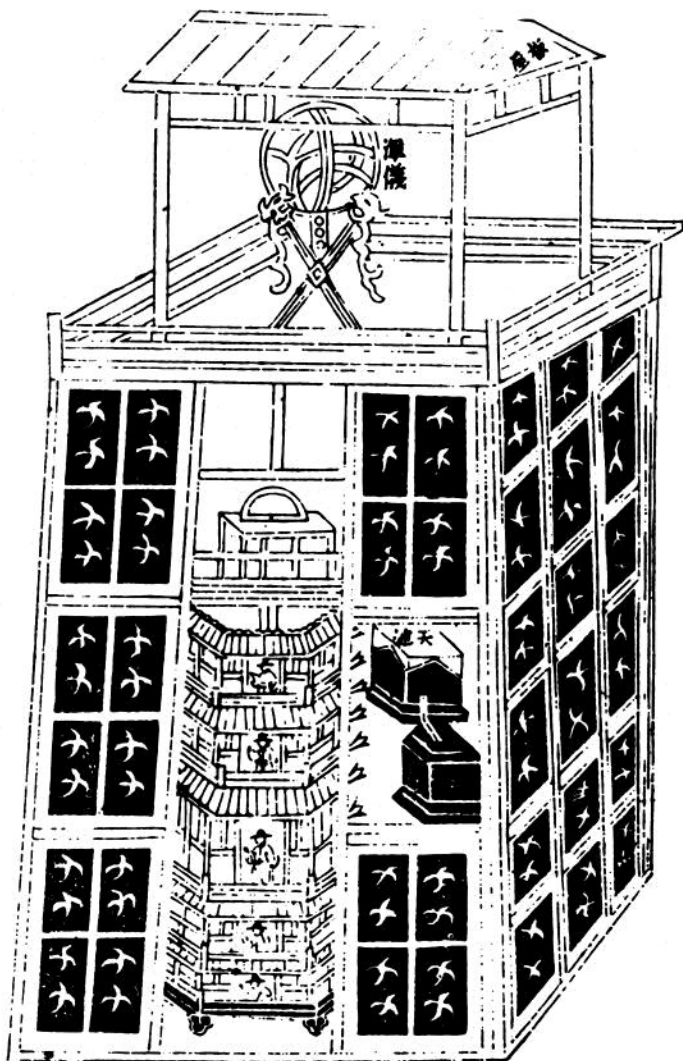
It is clear from my visit that many changes in Chinese science and technology have and will continue to take place. Instead of predictions on the shape of these changes—which have so often been wrong—I would like to share with you some reflections on the continuity between past, present and future that I have found useful in making sense of events as they are developing.

One of the most interesting historical developments of the past generation has been that, in the millennium and a half before about 1600, technological inventions and discoveries tended, on balance, to be made in China and to reach Europe from there. There is no longer ground for doubt that a Chinese visiting London or Paris in 1400 would have found Europe technologically backward in many ways. The Scientific and Industrial Revolutions changed that, of course, while the gradual political and social collapse of China over the last three centuries brought it to such a state of dilapidation that visitors early in this century could not find much to marvel at except relics of the remote past.

So far, despite some bad decisions, zigzags in policy, and a great deal of variation in the effectiveness with which policy is carried out, the Chinese have shown a healthy capacity, unusual in this day and age, to learn from the false steps that others have taken.

We can make better sense of the continued use of herbal medicine and acupuncture in China if we remember that the alternative is not modern medicine for everyone, but no medical care at all for most of the population. There are too few M.D.'s and too little foreign exchange to go into debt for modern drugs instead of carefully exploring what traditional therapies can do. If we evaluate the backyard steel furnaces of 1958 and 1959 as a source of high-grade steel, they can only be judged a quixotic failure, but they make some sense in terms of the much more fundamental problems that China has to deal with: getting a population used to industrial processes, rational economics and political participation—a population for whom these things mean entering a new world.

It is on that level that planning for industrialization has to proceed in China. We have seen in one modernizing society after another that the best intentioned development plans and investment schemes result in social chaos, aggravated



The past of Chinese technology: a 40-foot water-driven astronomical clock, 1080 A.D., with a mechanical escapement that is the ancestor of those in modern watches. N. Sivin.

inequality between those in the modern and traditional sectors, and massive, endlessly escalating national debt. The Chinese have apparently noticed that these outcomes can be avoided only if every individual is prepared for technological change, and if change proceeds according to a consensus that everyone can understand, consciously accept, and benefit from. This cannot happen without changes in the way people perceive the world, for the world they live in is no longer that of the millennial Chinese empire, nor the strifetorn China of the century preceding 1949.

The needs today are universal literacy, which no other poor nation has; the ability to think confidently about change, in a society that once was devoted to maintaining tradition at almost any cost; and habits of thinking about precision work, quality control, maintenance, and so on. If this educational effort does not keep pace with development, China will have to live through the same unnecessary social dislocations and the same ruinous neglect of the poor, rural majority that have been the price other countries have paid for modernization.

One result of this view of economic and social change is that people there do not see agricultural and industrial development as a free ride. They have chosen as a nation to proceed only at a pace they can afford, and to avoid debt and dependency on richer countries in as far as is possible. We have no way of knowing whether this spirit of self-sufficiency will continue as China steps up her industrialization. But it is hard to overlook today. The government, for all its totalitarian rigidity and lack of commitment to human rights, must have its people behind it, or it could not have nurtured this ethic.

One reason for China's relative independence is that somehow they have managed to make the best use of the old before the new is rooted. They have managed to keep in touch with their great millennial traditions of technology and social organization for technology. An astonishing variety of uses for bamboo where we would use metal, for instance, saves material resources and energy for capital-intensive projects where they are most needed. Large groups of people working with cheap local materials, the simplest machinery, and their bare hands are able to change their surroundings in ways that funds are unable to pay for. At the Yunnan Observatory, for example, when a badly needed computer was delivered, there was no building to put it in. Rather than do without the computer until a construction project was budgeted and organized, the astronomers built themselves the simple brick building we saw there.

The other great issue in thinking about China's scientific future has to do with the autonomy of science. Modern science has grown on the supposition that the primary allegiance of scientists must be to an international community of exploration at the frontiers of knowledge, and that the only suitable style of work must be objective and apolitical. Although we still take this image seriously today as an ideal, it is not a realistic description of the world of science today. The leaders of the American scientific community spend a great deal of their time engaged in intense lobbying, attempting to shape public opinion.

As Allyn Rickett has said, China is committed to participation by everyone in politics. It is far from an egalitarian society in practice. But the idea that science and engineering must be governed by a social consensus is kept

in the front of everyone's minds. It is not democratic, since China is not a democratic polity in any sense that we would recognize, but it is a consensus.

This Chinese outlook was epitomized at one of our formal dinners by an official responsible for the provincial science and education office. He remarked that while the truths of science are universal and must be respected, the uses of science are political and must be controlled. I do not believe that this view would be unintelligible to American technologists. Some public spokesmen in this country tend to reject all external constraints on scientific and technical work, although in fact they have come to accept patterns of technical growth dictated by government support priorities (or, in engineering, by corporate policy). Federal budgeting, in turn, is subject not only to the immediate needs of society, but to the desire of presidents and congressmen to attract votes. Where is the just balance between the technologists' freedom and their social responsibility? The Chinese are exploring that issue in practice just as we are. It would be foolish to assume that we have nothing to gain from unprejudiced attention to what happens in that enormous and vital society.

The Chinese are gradually gaining experience in some areas of social consensus that we have only begun to explore ourselves. In the running of laboratories, there is a dialogue between all who work there. People who go to a medical clinic receive clear and unhurried explanations of what is wrong with them, and if they undergo a major operation they know in advance and in detail what will happen to them.

China has made us more aware of the variety of ways that scientific and technical work can be related to society. It has paid a heavy price for some of its experiments. Most recently as a result of the Cultural Revolution, graduate-level technical education has been lost for most of those who would have been eligible. How disastrous that was we do not yet know, since to some extent graduate work was replaced by advanced on-the-job training. I have come away from my meetings with scientists and scientific administrators feeling that the Chinese are learning from their experiences and ours. We need to be much better informed about China in order to learn from their experiences as well as our own.

Literature: Between Politics and Art



A pioneer in the study of contemporary Chinese literature, Adele Rickett will travel to China this fall as leader of a group interested in art and culture. Like the other talks, the comments below were prepared for the Society of Alumni last April.

Westerners tend to dismiss revolutionary Chinese literature as merely an instrument of propaganda with little value as

artistic creation. Basing our understanding of the literature on our own artistic practice, we see the plots as simplistic, the characters as black-and-white cardboard figures, and the resolution of the contradictions as monotonously predictable. A closer study of the literary scene from the point of view of Chinese expectations, however, reveals a complex struggle to reconcile the aesthetic factors that Chinese writers have always considered important with the didactic needs of an emerging socialist society. I would like to present a few of the characteristics of modern Chinese literature and the problems that writers and critics have faced in the creation of that literature.

Ever since 1942 when Mao Tse-tung convened a forum in Yanan of literature and art workers to discuss the role of the arts in a socialist society, the primary function of literature has been to raise the political level of the masses so that each person may participate constructively in the new society.

Writers have therefore looked to the daily life of the peasants, workers, and soldiers for their raw material, and have kept the masses in mind as their primary audience. The content of their writing changed radically from that of pre-revolutionary literature. Particularly in opera, the old literature dealt primarily with generals, princes, prime ministers, scholars, courtesans, and the spirit world, while today it focuses on tales of heroism among factory workers, poor peasants, or army privates. The theory was, to put it simply, that audiences prefer to see and hear stories about themselves.

This approach was reinforced by the retention of old forms for the new content, on the assumption that the familiar forms would make the message more acceptable. Chinese theatergoers, for example, were accustomed to stylized gestures and movements in traditional opera. A general would lift his knee so that his thigh was parallel to the ground and then take an exaggerated step forward to indicate that he had stepped across the threshold of a house that existed only in his and the audience's imagination. Thus theatergoers could readily relate to an actor portraying the revolutionary zeal of a peasant leader through a clenched fist raised high or a fierce glare from eyes that seemed almost ready to burst from their sockets.

From 1942 on, this function of literature has not changed nor has its basic content. But within the framework of the Yanan Forum guidelines, there have been shifts in interpretation, zigzagging back and forth to change the emphasis in the content. The latest zigzagging has taken place in the last ten years with the rise and fall of the Gang of Four. The struggle during that period revolved around two lines. Some critics argued that literature should describe people who were neither all good nor all bad, the so-called "middle characters," who constitute the bulk of the Chinese population. By portraying characters with problems common to the majority of the people, such as land reform and the gradual communization of the land, writers could help readers solve their own problems. Another element argued, however, that if literature was to function as a truly educative tool, it could only do so by providing models for the masses to emulate. Stories that were written in accordance with this line were characterized by a kind of nervous excitement. A typical story would start out with a man bursting into a room, his eyes glowing with excitement, his voice loud and jovial, his hand extended to slap a comrade on the back. This nervous tension and air of excitement would be sustained throughout the story, leaving the reader with a feeling of breathlessness at the end. The heroes of these stories never seemed to sleep. They seemed to run around 24 hours a day patching up this little problem here and sticking a finger in the dike over there.

It was this latter line that won out in the 1960's during the Cultural Revolution. However, in focusing on the super-heroes, writers did have to confront the problem that only so many stories will inspire an audience if the characters are so far removed from everyday life that the audience can no longer relate to them. It does not seem strange to us, therefore, that with the fall of the Gang of Four, the pendulum has begun to swing the other way, and stories are appearing in which middle characters are again given a prominent role.

In this zigzag process different interpretations of societal patterns have also been reflected. One example is the way in which women have been portrayed in the new society. In the 1950's stories often described women who had joined the revolution but who were still caught in very real problems, such as love triangles. During the Cultural Revolution, love

stories were considered too bourgeois. Writers were urged to avoid them because they detracted from the sense of mission toward the noble goals of the revolution. From 1966 to 1976 hardly a single story dealt with male-female sexual relationships. Since 1977, however, hesitant attempts toward portraying romantic involvements have begun to appear once again.

Even though love stories receded into the background, a changing awareness of the importance of the role of women in building the new society has gradually emerged in both physical descriptions of women and stories about them. In traditional society a female central figure was always described in the beginning of the story with cherry-red lips, dark, lustrous eyes, hair that was as black as a raven's wing, and moth-like eyebrows. Today that type of woman has vanished completely and has been supplanted by a young woman with bright, snapping eyes and rosy cheeks, and with two braids that flop around her shoulders as she rushes from one place to another. Her whole description implies purpose and knowledge of her role in society. She and the reader both know that her contribution to society will be significant.

One rather exemplary story of this type concerns a young woman coal miner who is sent to a neighboring coal mine to teach the miners a new method. As she swings

Reshaping East Asian Studies

From such unlikely corners of the University as biology, Oriental studies and international relations, a group of faculty and graduate students are coming together to develop a new interdisciplinary program.

The common interest of this diverse interdepartmental combination is East Asian studies. Brought together by Dean Vartan Gregorian of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, with Professor Nathan Sivin as chairman, the new graduate group has been rethinking the University's programs on China and Japan. Among the most tangible results of their work are a new M.A. program and a three-year experimental B.A. program in East Asian studies, approved last spring.

This gathering of scholars comes from a long tradition of strength. The overall rank of the East Asia unit of the Oriental Studies Department has oscillated between fifth and tenth nationally while its Chinese Language Program has always been considered one of the best in the United States. Its faculty include such well-recognized scholars as Derk Bodde, now emeritus, considered by many the outstanding non-Chinese scholar in classical Chinese thought; Robert M. Hartwell, outstanding for his work on economic history of traditional China; Schuyler Camman, distinguished for work on meaning of Asian symbols; and Nathan Sivin, the leading American authority on Chinese science. The Oriental Studies Department pioneered the study of modern Chinese literature under Adele Rickett, and offered the first course in Chinese law in a U.S. law school. Its Japanese scholars are strong in traditional Japanese culture, particularly literature. Associate Professor Barbara Ruch is probably the leading U.S. expert on illustrated Japanese narrative scrolls, the primary literary form in Japan for centuries, and Professor E.

herself up into the cab of the truck that will deliver her to the mine, she leans down to say goodbye to her husband. "By the way, I've just cut out some pants for the little one," she says. "Would you mind sewing them up on the machine while I'm gone?" The driver of the truck drops his jaw in amazement at this display of independence on the part of the woman. When she arrives at the mine, she finds that the leader of the brigade is infuriated by the idea of having to learn from a woman. The story then turns to the resolution of the struggle between the two of them.

Stories of this sort are lively and entertaining, and yet they have a clear educational purpose. They represent a sincere attempt on the part of talented writers to produce a synthesis of the aesthetic and didactic aspects of literature. The study of these Chinese models of socialist realism has been and continues to be fruitful for an understanding of literature's role in society as well as the social and political processes of China that the literature reflects. And in a broader context, our study here at Penn of the Chinese experiments with new approaches is fitting into research on the general nature of socialist realism as it has developed in the West. Where our research will take us undoubtedly will be influenced by subsequent zigs and zags in the literary scene in China.



Workers in light textile mill near Anyang, China trip, 1978, Britton Harris.

Dale Saunders is well-known for his writing on Buddhism and his translations of modern Japanese novels.

The program's weaknesses include the small size of its Japanese and Chinese library, which is ranked 25th in the country. Not only has much departmental Ph.D. research had to take place at the Library of Congress or Princeton, but the small library has made it impossible to organize a center for East Asian research that would attract postdoctoral fellows and faculty on leave to come and work at the University. Another problem has been inadequate funds for graduate students. Promising applicants have often been forced to accept better offers from other universities—a problem faced by many Penn departments. Many applicants from Taiwan and Japan who might someday become leaders in their countries simply cannot afford to come to Penn after they are accepted without support.

Traditionally, Penn's East Asia graduate program in the Department of Oriental Studies has been less dependent for its growth on government sponsorship than many other top programs, which were strongly influenced by the government's position during the Cold War.

"We felt it was very important to maintain an independent approach. It doesn't mean that an independent approach is always right and the other people are always wrong. What is important is the marketplace of ideas. And at a time when government tends to assert undue pressure on academia, being an institution funded by the government tends to shape the orientation of that program," comments Allyn Rickett, professor of Oriental studies and international relations, and new chairman of the Department of Oriental Studies.

Like other fields taught at the University, East Asian studies is facing a shrinking job market for Ph.D.'s and a consequent decline in applicants. Furthermore, the discipline itself is changing.

Traditionally, Chinese and Japanese were so difficult to

learn that a scholar who mastered one of these languages was considered an authority on all aspects of the culture, history and politics of the country. Now that many problems of teaching the language have been resolved, scholars are expected to master the research methods of other disciplines. The field now requires, for example, that a specialist in Chinese literature be versed in Western literary theory and criticism as well as Chinese language; or that a Japanese economic historian be a competent economist.

The first concern of the new Graduate Group was to attempt to reach more students who could benefit from the program. Many students, the group realized, are interested in learning about China and Japan, but are not interested in academic careers. Students in Wharton or Engineering want to learn about China and Japan so that they can work more effectively in these areas. Chinese and Japanese Americans are eager to learn their ancestors' language and discover their heritage.

A regional studies program that offers both master's and bachelor's degrees seemed the logical solution. It complements the established specialist programs in Oriental studies and other departments, and capitalizes on the many interdisciplinary approaches available in departments ranging from biology to history.

"We were aware in planning our program that regional studies programs elsewhere have tended to slight the interests of students who don't want to become specialists in China or Japan," notes Sivin. "These students, who are preparing for important professions, have often been treated as second-class citizens."

The new interdisciplinary program will offer such students a general understanding of the area, while Ph.D. candidates continue to work under the aegis of the history, Oriental studies and other departments and develop highly specialized research skills.

In keeping with its interdisciplinary interests, the new Graduate Group is making a special effort to cross-list courses with more than one department so that students from many disciplines will join those in this multidepartmental program. This year, the Graduate Group plans to work out formal joint programs with other professional schools. Thus, the Wharton student who wants to do business with Japan will be able to learn about Japan through an M.A. program or limited course work in East Asian studies while he or she is getting an M.B.A.

"It is important to emphasize that the new East Asian studies program is not a departmental program. In fact it will be administered by a graduate group organized from several schools of the University which reports, like other interdisciplinary graduate groups, to the dean," observes Sivin.

For students who wish to become specialists on East Asia, the Oriental studies faculty is making its Ph.D. program more demanding. Noting that the number of students who can be accepted and supported in Chinese and Japanese studies is shrinking, Nathan Sivin says, "We don't see that as a catastrophe. What we want to do is to find the size at which we can prepare only people who will be good enough to survive in the academic world today and over the next decade as the situation in the humanities becomes even worse."

Members of the Graduate Group are also considering another possibility for strengthening the Ph.D. program. They are now taking a look at the way faculty research interests might be combined to create a joint research program. Several scholars have been studying the relationship between the high cultures and popular cultures in traditional Japan and China. If this interest coalesces, it could attract students interested in this topic and help in seeking funds to support them adequately. It could also serve as a basis for special library collections that would draw visiting scholars in this research area to Penn.

There is a strong feeling among Penn's East Asian studies faculty that there are exciting opportunities for widening the circle of students in Chinese and Japanese studies. It is a time when their expertise can help to develop informed alumni who will influence our relations with China and Japan, as well as specialists flexible enough to contribute to public understanding of East Asia.

"There is no getting around the fact that programs and departments like Oriental Studies are expensive," says Allyn Rickett. "You can't keep score on the number of students versus costs. The University community simply must be convinced that this kind of program—even though it cannot justify itself in number of students—does justify itself in providing a viable contribution to the University community as a whole. And I think generally we have that kind of support."

Sivin adds: "The greatness of a research university can't survive simple-minded, cost-benefits analysis, which has demonstrated its value in other contexts only as a way to enforce a uniform level of mediocrity. That is why Penn supports its programs according to the excellence they demonstrate. The East Asian studies program grew out of a belief shared by the faculty and administration that Chinese and Japanese studies could become useful to many more students than in the past if, with imagination and forethought, we could relate our field to their goals. We have satisfied ourselves in the process that doing so will strengthen, not weaken, the traditional work of Oriental studies and other departments to which we belong."

Scholars in East Asian Studies

Schuyler V. R. Cammann, professor of Oriental studies, specializes in the meaning of symbols in many different facets of the Asian cultures—from Persian rugs to official Chinese uniforms.

F. Hilary Conroy, professor of history and international relations, studies modern Japan and its relations with the United States.

Robert M. Hartwell, professor of history, works in the area of traditional Chinese social and economic history and in applying social science disciplines to quantitative history.

Chong-sik Lee, professor of political science and international relations, is a specialist in contemporary East Asian politics and modern Korea.

Hui-lin Li, professor of biology, wrote the standard book on China's garden flowers and articles on Chinese medicinal plants and is considered by some to be the outstanding expert on Chinese botany outside of China.

Hiroshi Miyaji, associate professor of Oriental studies, is a Japanese linguist who is also interested in the history of the native Japanese religion Shinto.

Susan Naquin, assistant professor of history and Oriental studies, whose field is late imperial and modern Chinese history, is currently studying Chinese millenarian rebellions.

Adele Rickett, assistant professor of Oriental studies, and a scholar of Chinese literature, has pioneered the study of early Chinese literature in this country.

W. Allyn Rickett, professor of Oriental studies and international relations and chairman of the Department of Oriental Studies, specializes in early Chinese thought and modern Chinese history. He is currently translating one of the great Chinese philosophic classics.

Barbara Ruch, associate professor of Oriental studies and director of the Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies, works in medieval Japanese literature and society. She has been studying Japanese illuminated manuscripts to reconstruct the popular literature of the medieval period.

E. Dale Saunders, professor of Oriental Studies, has wide interests including Japanese Buddhism and the modern Japanese novel, and has translated several of these novels into English.

Nathan Sivin, professor of Oriental studies and history and sociology of science, and chairman of the Graduate Group in East Asian Studies, is the leading scholar of Chinese science. His studies converge on the way the Chinese understood nature before they were strongly influenced by the West. He edits and publishes *Chinese Science* and is general editor of the *MIT East Asian Science Series*.

A. Ronald Walton, assistant professor of Oriental studies, specializes in Chinese linguistics and is particularly interested in phonological theory.

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Page 1 Photo: *The Buddha in Meditation* Yuan Dynasty, 1280-1368 A.D.
University Museum records.