Chanoyu

OR

The Tea Philosophy of Japan

A Western Evaluation

By A. L. Sadler, M.A.*

For the last four hundred years there has existed in Japan a very definite point of view, or way of life, associated with the ceremonial drinking of tea. It is called Cha-no-yu, literally—Hot water for Tea; or Chado, the Way of Tea; and its Masters are known as Chajin or Tea-men. It might be called a household sacrament of esthetics, economics and etiquette. It has been and still is practised by a very large number of the most cultivated people in the land, statesmen, soldiers, artists and merchants, as well as by artizans and ordinary people. And so its influence has penetrated very deeply into every detail of the everyday life of all, even of those who do not study it. It is not known abroad, because nothing much has been written about it in European languages, with the exception of a short description by Brinkley, and some pictures of Tea Gardens and explanations in Conder's work on Japanese Gardens. But the importance of its contribution to the civilisation of the country would hardly be gathered from these writings.

By far the best description of its spirit is the short essay of Okakura Kakuzo entitled "The Book of Tea," a work of great charm of style very suitable to the elegance of the subject, but rather stimulating interest in "Teaism," the word he coined to describe it, than giving a detailed account of it. In the tea ceremony the Japanese owed little to China or India; as usual in such cases, the influence of the national spirit of Japan soon asserted itself, so that what was originally an imported taste before long became so completely naturalized and transformed that it now seems to us perhaps the most Japanese of all institutions. China only supplied the stand and utensils imported with the tea, and the method of grinding and infusing it, and these things still survive, associated with and almost hidden by their purely Japanese surroundings and adjuncts, and yet also quite consciously distinct from them, and as such used on occasions of special ceremony or when otherwise considered fitting, much as they were when first introduced from the continent. But the Tea-room and its garden and that typical accessory, the stone lantern, are entirely Japanese, partly inspired though they may be by the spirit of ancient India through the Buddhist Sutras.

Indeed Cha-no-yu may be considered an epitome of Japanese civilisation, for it is a well blended mixture of what is drawn from the two most ancient cultures of the Far East eclectically acquired by extremely able and critical minds capable of discerning exactly how they could best use it for the convenience and profit of the community they represented. And very completely were the Tea Masters justified of their creation, for it has kept the national taste more healthy and sensitive and potent than that of any other country, and this I think is now being

* Professor of Oriental Studies in the University of Sydney.

demonstrated in what is called "Modernism" in (Western) art, architecture and interior decoration. This movement can be called Modern only in Europe, for it is only a copying of the national outlook and taste of Japan in these things, and hardly an unconscious one, for though it may only lately have dawned on the continental artists and decorators that a house is a machine to live in and from which all superfluous and irritating ornaments should be banished, the contact between this part of Europe and Japan has been too close of late to allow of this discovery being entirely an independent one. And the necessity for strict economy in life and the lack of the means for ostentation which the post-war conditions have brought about, combined with the spirit of simplicity engendered by militarism may supply the reasons for such a departure from previous standards. And these reasons were also responsible for a similar feeling in the Japan of the sixteenth century, for this also was the end of an epoch of bitter and exhausting civil wars. But since, even in its smallest details, this "Modernist" work of today is identical with that long produced and regarded as ordinary in Japan, it would really only be a graceful compliment to the source of its origin to call it the Rikyu style. For Sen Rikyu did more than any other artist to stimulate and standardize that sort of architecture and interior decoration, and to expound the creed on which it is based, as may be seen from a perusal of the accounts of those things that he said and occupied his life in doing. And it would be well if the Modernist designer would keep some of the admonitions of Rikyu and his followers in mind, that they may be saved from those tendencies that already begin to show as a result of that attempted originality of the commonplace mind which needed all the conservative restraint of the Tea Masters to discourage.

So Teaism, from being a diversion of the upper classes and retired people, came to be a point of view and a way of life through the penetrating teachings of Sen Rikyu. It became the control of everyday affairs, the making of a house and living in it according to the dicta laid down by the most distinguished Tea Masters. It is therefore a kind of ancestor worship, for these great men are the esthetic ancestors of the nation whose traditions are handed down by their various schools and disciples to this day and are still alive and vigorous.

Thus the country was organized under Teaism as it was under autocracy and bureaucracy, and the result has certainly been a success, for life is principally composed of the details that the Tea Masters have studied and arranged and refined, and if harmony and etiquette are lacking in the meal that is taken three times a day, and in entering and leaving the room and making up the fire and so on, there is little likelihood of their being found elsewhere. What Teaism has done for Japan may be seen from the contrast in other lands where any such disciplined estheticism is unknown. The lack of taste and balance in decoration, the confused ostentation and want of any system of etiquette permeating all classes of society have been and are very noticeable in most western countries, and practically all visitors to Japan seem to be struck by the to them strange phenomenon that good manners are as natural to the peasant and workman as to the leisured classes. No doubt this is partly due to the antiquity of the civilisation and experience in the best way to live, since we find the same thing to some extent in the

more ancient countries of Europe, but equally at least it would seem that the control exercised by the Tea Masters is responsible. And this control was made possible and easy by the strong and centralized administration of the Tokugawa Shoguns.

Japanese historians observe in commenting on the culture of the Tokugawa period as distinct from those that preceded it, that in this era it was not the monopoly of a special class, noble or priest or soldier only, but permeated the ordinary people of both town and country. For more than two hundred and fifty years the land was without war, foreign debts or entanglements, and so, prosperous under a strong government, it had leisure and moderate means to devote to the quest of the most interesting way to live. Even without reading any of the large mass of literature of the Yedo period Europeans can see this in the profuse illustrations of the manners and customs in the books and colour prints of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Without the severe and restrained taste of those whose standard was that of Cha-no-yu these popular masterpieces would hardly have been possible.

If Teaism had only taught people that any display is vulgar and undesirable it would have been justified, for this is no easy thing to instil into any nation, since man is an acquisitive creature by nature, inclined to hoard and show off, and the most troublesome problems in the social and political spheres proceed from these egoistic qualities. Here its Buddhist basis is evident, for the chief theme of Buddhism is the abolition of the ego. An institution that made simplicity and restraint fashionable and at the same time kept itself accessible to all classes, providing a ground on which all could meet on terms of equality, thus combining the advantages of a Mohammedan Mosque and a cricket-field, and, some may feel inclined to add, also those of a Freemason's Lodge and a Quaker Meeting-house, was well qualified to temper very effectively the disruptive forces of society. And how much it came to represent the standard of the ordinary man is evident from the common expression "Mucha" or "It isn't Tea," used in Japan is almost exactly the same sense as we are accustomed to declare "It isn't cricket." And it is very apparent from the various anecdotes of the great Japanese generals that they regarded their battles as won in the Tea-room both literally and figuratively, for not only was it a first-rate training place for the disciplined mentality and resourceful observation so needed in a strategist, but it was also the most convenient one for a quiet discussion of the very disingenuous plans of campaigns such as the decisive one of Sekigahara. Hosokawa Tadaoki and Kuroda Josui who played such an important though not perhaps such a conspicuous part in the arrangements that led to this great victory, were both enthusiastic Tea Masters and it was in the Tea-room that they laid their schemes. Neither must we forget Ieyasu's valiant tea-merchant, Kamibayashi Chikuan, who defended one of the towers of the castle of Fushimi and conducted the parley with the enemy as well, and who held out to the last flying his banner made of tea-bags, and achieved the honour of having his head exposed beside that of Torii Mototada, the gallant commander and hero of one of the great sieges of Japanese history.

Art, says Sir W. R. Lethaby, in his *Form and Civilization,* is service and labour, and we have all no doubt heard that these are noble things, but practical demonstration is not so common. If the common domestic duty of serving a meal is shown to be not inferior to any other act by

the highest in the land performing it with his own hands quite naturally and without any affectation it is not likely to be regarded as humiliating, and the custom of going into domestic service for a few years before marriage to learn etiquette which is so characteristic of Japan is as much part of the spirit of Teaism as is the wearing on all ceremonial occasions by His Majesty the Emperor, of the insignia of the lowest as well as of the highest class of the Imperial Orders. Tokugawa Japan was organized entirely on a basis of labour and service. One rank served that above it and all ranks served their elders in the family and their ancestors who are their elders in the history of the nation. And naturally among these the Imperial Ancestors were supreme, for they were the origin of all. So it is not remarkable that Teaism should so often be described as only another version of Loyalty and Filial Piety. It is something like an artistic presentation of these things. And since Teaism is the art of making a house and living in it, the Tea Master was the architect of older Japan in the widest sense of the word. There was no such profession as that of architect as such in those days, for temples and mansions were designed by Buddhist priests, and built, like the houses of the rest of the population, by artizans and craftsmen, much as they were in the best periods of building in Europe. Chogen Shonin and Eisai Zenji in the Kamakura age, for instance, introduced Sung architecture to Japan and built and designed temples, much as Herbert de Losinga, Alan of Walsingham and Hugh of Lincoln did in England, and later on in the 16th century we find Mokushoku Shonin the priest of Koya appointed to design Hideyoshi's many temples and palaces, though Hideyoshi, Tea Master and amateur architect, played no small part in this himself.

But Chinese styles of architecture have affected the ordinary Japanese dwelling very little, if at all, for this has always preserved the ancient type of building of a much simpler order that we see exemplified in the Shinto shrines of Ise, undoubtedly the Imperial Palace of the earliest days of Japanese history before the residence of the Sovereign was modelled on that of the T'ang Emperor. Naturally this Chinese flavour was most evident in the mansions of the Court Nobility of Kyoto, whereas the military aristocracy preferred a simple thatched house more in accordance with their principles of frugality, self-discipline and restraint. But it was under the rule of Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Rikyu, his esthetic advisor, that there was worked out a blending of the two styles for ordinary dwellings, the finest examples of which are the residence called Hiunkaku which was part of the Taiko's mansion of Juraku, now preserved in the Nishi Hongwangji at Kyoto, and that exquisite building the Daigo Sambo-in, designed with its gardens by Hideyoshi himself. It was to the military nobility and their liking for Zen Buddhism that the Japanese house owes the type of room called Shoin, so characteristic of it since the Higashiyama epoch. This arrangement of the reception room with Tokonoma or alcove and window beside it was introduced by the Zen monks for greater convenience in their studies, for it threw more light into the room.

Whether the Japanese house would have developed differently if there had been no Tea Masters it is not easy to say, but at any rate since their word was law in all things that pertained to the house and every-day life and behaviour their principles of restraint and simplicity as exemplified in the Tea-room and its garden always acted as a correc-

tive to any tendencies to extravagance and ostentatious originality on the part of commonplace people whose only object would be to gain a little advertisement for themselves. And we must remember that the blots on the landscape likely to be made by such people in Japan are not so serious as in Europe owing to the impermanent nature of the buildings. It does not seem to have struck so many European observers that the Japanese house is a standardized one. There is not much need for any complicated design by an architect, for all rooms are multiples of one unit, the mat of six feet by three for area, and the ken of six feet, the width of two sliding doors or shoji, or the space between two pillars, for length. The arrangement of the rooms is strictly according to the convenience of the occupant, and there is not the least ornament of any kind, neither is there any concealment of construction. The only reason why a ceiling is used is perhaps to keep the room more free from dust, and it is rarely seen in the kitchen, where it would be a hindrance to the rising fumes. Everything is arranged so that the working of the house can be carried on in the most effective manner, according to Japanese views, of course, for it may be that some of these would not meet with the approval of outsiders, especially the lack of soft seats and a heating system. And this standardization is not confined to the house but extends to clothes also. Just as a house is assembled of materials of fixed dimensions, and comparatively little labour is required, so also all kimonos are made of bolts of material of the same length and breadth, and so simple is the way of putting it together that every house as a rule makes its own dress. Hence it is not easy for any commercial combine to dictate to the population either male or female, what kind of costume they shall wear for the next three months.

And yet, though there is this uniformity of pattern in both house and costume, there is an infinite variety of detail and arrangement that banishes monotony, and the evident judgment of discriminating Europeans, both in earlier ages and now, is that the Japanese house and garden is beautiful and harmonious, and the costume elegant and dignified, and especially suited to set off the wearer, of whatever age or figure, to the best advantage. A number of Japanese together always look well esthetically, whereas in the case of Europeans this is hardly ever so except with soldiers and nuns, however good an impression individuals may make if the fashion happens to suit them. That only children and young people should wear bright colours is indeed an artistic mercy, and it is only one of the excellent conventions of Japanese life. And as perhaps hardly any house is without young girls and children there is an occasional and temporary touch of colour that relieves the quietness of the monotoned interior.

Now this universal good taste in life could hardly have come about if there had not been an organized education in what was to be considered admirable and what eliminated, and it was the Tea Master who had complete charge of this education—the best kind of education, perhaps, since it could be imparted and practised in the home under the ordinary conditions of life. Okakura calls it "moral geometry," in that it puts man in his proper place in the universe, giving him the Zen outlook according to which one must get outside oneself and regard one's life as a spectator, finding plenty therein to make merry over. The more resourceful the mind the less does one need outside stimulus to enjoyment.

"How supernatural and how miraculous!
I draw water and I carry brushwood,"

said the Zen poet, and so the most ordinary thing in life, the preparation of the fire and taking a simple meal and drinking tea, was chosen as the best way of inculcating good manners and that economy of movement now called simplified practice. When we consider how ridiculous is a large part of modern education which teaches a large proportion of pupils what their neither wish to learn nor will ever get an opportunity of practising, while neglecting those simple things that make life, we can perhaps perceive how much this natural way of educating the Japanese has contributed to the clear-sighted, practical and sane outlook on the world that they have undoubtedly come to possess. If they appear to anyone who lives among them as distinctly lacking in that sentimentalism that is the cause of so much inconvenience to us, the extralogical common sense of Zen can supply the reason, and it is through the teachings of Teaism that Zen became diffused among the ordinary people. Belief in or obsession with a future life seems no very good foundation for order or propriety in this one, according to Zen, and it is instructive to read Father Frois's description, in his "History of Japan," of Nobunaga, that very enthusiastic Teaist, as "one who with Zenshu did not believe in the immortality of the soul or in reward or punishment in the hereafter, but who was very clear-minded and no holder of any kind of superstition, and at the same time exceedingly cleanly, courteous and orderly in his way of living." Of how few in the Europe of the sixteenth century could this latter statement have been made.

Sir W. Fergusson, writing in 1891, considers that in the Far East there is hardly anything that can be called architecture, just as there is "no poetry, properly so-called, and no literature worthy of the name." Possibly ideas as to what is architecture may have changed somewhat, but there may be some truth in this statement though not in the sense this authority meant. It may be that the best architecture is no architecture just as the best colour scheme is no colour scheme. The house and garden built and laid out together as one conception should be the exact expression of the way of life of those who live in them, without any ostentation of affectation or irritating frills.

This is just what the Japanese house is, to a greater extent perhaps than that of any other country. And this because it had to be, for the Tokugawa laws forbade all classes to have dwellings or furniture any more elaborate than their social position required, these laws being the product of an official world educated in Cha-no-yu, since much of the detailed legislation was the work of the third Shogun Iemitsu, an enthusiastic Tea Master himself and pupil of the great Kobori Enshu.

Thus Japanese buildings are in spirit most comparable to those simple types of Tudor and Georgian days in our own country. These are constructive and efficient, and fit in on their sites naturally without making themselves conspicuous, and their simplicity is relieved only by the slight contrast presented by one decorative feature that is entirely in place, such as a door or chimney or window. These are far more attractive and in better taste than the immense mansions built almost entirely for display, up to whose grandeur no one ought to have been able to stand the strain of living for long. Of course there were some such

buildings in Japan, but they were for ceremonial, that is occasional, use only, or, as in the case of temples or shrines, they were political architecture, intended to impoverish the feudal lords who were granted the honour of constructing them, so that their purses might always be too lean to be a menace to the central government.

The great noble preferred to live in a comparatively simple building or buildings scattered round a fine garden, and the impermanent nature of these structures made it easy to vary the monotony of things by shifting them at any time to another site without difficulty. This may be seen from the still surviving feudal residences at Hakone, Kanazawa, Okayama and Kagoshima, formerly occupied by the Daimyos of these places. There is nothing gaudy or consciously impressive about them.

It is evident that this quality of the Japanese residence is not entirely due to the Tea Masters, for the mansion built round and into a garden antedates them, and may have its origin in the Vihara or garden monastery of Indian Buddhism, but it is their influence that has made the garden and house what they have come to be in detail. One of the most unpleasant features of our own interiors has been the attempted imitation in the living room of the ordinary house of the salon of the mansion, without considering that decoration which may be tolerable and even diverting when seen for an hour once a week, is, or should be, quite intolerable when before the eyes every day.

We admit that to be poor and seem poor is the devil all over, but Japanese say the same of being wealthy and a pillar of society. To seem to be these things, at any rate for long, is to lose the proper sense of proportion, and to forget that man is, after all, only a forked radish between five and six feet long. Hideyoshi's recognition of this is very evident in his quick change from taking the part of the central figure in the stately ceremony of welcoming the Korean envoys to strolling into the same scene as a spectator a short time after, in ordinary dress and nursing a baby. And on another occasion also when he gave a garden party in a melon-garden at which the gardener was host and all the great nobles and military chiefs masqueraded as itinerant tradesmen, strolling mendicants and beggars, he himself playing the part of a melon-hawker.

It may seem a little affected for the noble to mimic the way of life of the fisherman or hermit, but it is only looking on existence from a different angle, just as the house is arranged to look on various aspects of the garden from different rooms. Things being as they are, few people can spend their life sitting under a tree thinking themselves into the universal, like Buddha, but they can keep as near the trees as possible and reflect that they are themselves only just such another aspect of nature. So to have a detached cell at the end of the garden in which you can play the hermit for a while when you feel inclined, as people in Japan do when they indulge in Cha-no-yu, is a very refreshing change, and has the advantage over the private oratory that it is not connected with any particular kind of ecclesiasticism. Therefore any idea of acquiring merit is not implied.

"It is difficult," says Tokutomi*, "to understand the Momoyama age without a knowledge of Cha-no-yu. It was not only the amusement of

* *Kinsei Nihon Kokuminshi*—(History of the Japanese People in Modern Times).

the noble, but almost a necessity of life for the ruling class of this time. It was used as a pious device to win over men's minds. And of those who handled the Empire by means of it Hideyoshi is the most prominent example. Nobunaga too had an almost uncontrollable enthusiasm for Tea, and he sprang upon a Tea-bowl or Kettle like a lion on a hare. Just where Cha-no-yu ceased to be an amusement and became a practical affair is a little difficult to determine, *and it is this difficulty that makes it the more interesting.*" And since Tokutomi had to go back as far as the Momoyama age in order to explain the phenomena of modern Japan, some knowledge of Cha-no-yu is evidently necessary to any understanding of the development of the nation, its thoughts and taste. It is strange therefore that so little has been said about it in those European works, of which there are so many, that purport to give us the meaning of Japanese civilisation, and usually merely impress us with their ignorance of it. Even Murdoch's volume dealing with the age of Hideyoshi does not so much as mention Sen Rikyu, which is like writing the history of seventeenth century Spain without mentioning Velasquez or eighteenth century England and leaving out Beau Nash, though Rikyu had a greater influence on his country than either of these. It is true that this history does not profess to deal with the culture of Japan to any extent, but a very prominent part was played in politics and economics by such men as Rikyu and his seven Disciples, several of whom curiously enough were Christians, as well as by the great merchant esthetes, Shimai Soshitsu and Kamiya Sotan, from whose diaries much of the detail of the life of the time has been reconstructed. There is a short note in Dening's Life of Hideyoshi dealing with Cha-no-yu, it is true, but he too hardly realizes its importance, though at the time these works were written, more than twenty years ago, such excellent material as Tokutomi's history and other works were not available. Dening concludes his note by the surmise that "the Tea cult is not likely to survive long in the go-ahead Japan of today." Japan is perhaps hardly less go-ahead now, but Cha-no-yu, like No and some other similar institutions, continues to flourish more vigorously than ever. Should it cease to do so the soul of Japan will have departed from her, and that is hardly thinkable. In England the two Beaux, Nash and Brummel, are perhaps the nearest approach to a Japanese Tea Master, though their interests were far more limited and on the ethical side they fell very short. They are most comparable to such an one as Furuta Oribe, who was more of a specialist and connoisseur than the rest, and whose defects of character and petulance caused a collision with Tokugawa Ieyasu which brought about his destruction. Brummel's severe taste in clothes would have received the decided approval of the Japanese critic, while one can imagine even Rikyu walking the streets of Bath with satisfaction.

But these men were isolated phenomena and left no school. There was no family system to hand down their taste and refine and improve on it and relate it to the life of the people. For they were arbiters of fashion for the upper classes only, and the inevitable defect of confining the sense of fitness to the select few is that when any change in society throws up plutocrats from the people, these will have no ideas but of ostentation and banality. In Japan since the end of the Tokugawa period this process has been active as elsewhere, and it is owing to the spirit of Cha-no-yu and the existence of the Tea Master and Flower

Master and their standards that the result has not been worse than it has. Wherever these teachers exist, and there is no town, however small, that does not hold at least one of them, there is a spot where oil is being quietly poured on the fire of pure Japanese taste, and though superficially there may seem to be a large injection of European influence of the commercial order, more mature consideration will show that this is not anything like so great or as widespread as it might be. As Lafcadio Hearn pointed out some considerable time ago, such a city as Kobe, which has grown up entirely since and as a result of the intercourse with Europe, is yet entirely Japanese.

And now that the new taste of Europe has come under the influence of principles in art and decoration which are so strangely identical with those of the Japanese esthete, even foreign buildings and furnishings and decorations should not be as incongruous as they were in the Victorian era. There is evidently evolving a style that will be suitable both for Japan and Europe. It is interesting to speculate as to what might have happened in this as in other matters if the intransigence of the Portuguese and Spanish friars had not led to their banishment from the country in the early seventeenth century, for the buildings they erected, judging from the few pictures that have survived, had just that simplicity and good proportion that would have made them not unsuitable to the landscape.

In connection with present-day views, Brinkley's criticism of Japanese eclecticism in pottery, written some two decades ago, is rather significant. He writes: "From the catalogue of objects of virtue offered by China and Korea, her implicitly trusted preceptors in so many matters, Japan made a strikingly narrow choice. Instead of taking for porcelain utensils the liquid dawn reds, the ripe grape purples, the five-coloured egg-shells or any of the glowing monochromes and half-tone enamels of the Chinese ceramists, she confined herself to the ivory whites, delicate celadons, comparatively inornate specimens of blue *sous couverte,* and blue full-bodied, roughly applied over-glass enamels such as characterized the later eras of the Ming Dynasty. It has astonished many students of Japanese manners and customs to find that the objects which Europe and America search for today in the markets of China with eager appreciation are scarcely represented at all in the collection of Japanese virtuosi made at an epoch when such masterpieces were abundantly produced within easy reach of their doors. The explanation is to be found in the conservatism of the Tea clubs. But," he adds, "the Japanese adopted to a certain extent the standard set by the Chinese themselves. For a Chinese art critic of the sixteenth century, one Hsiang, compiled a set of illustrations of eighty *chef d'oeuvres* approved by the art critics of the day, of which fifty were celadons." Now it is these celadons and ivory whites that are sought by Europe and America, and that our present-day potters of France, Germany and England are striving very earnestly to imitate. As taste improves, the rather childish love of polychrome is disappearing and there is a closer approximation to the preference for quiet monochrome and sparse unemphatic design that has always been the rule in Japan.

Finally it should be noted that the only reason why such a system of esthetics could be made to penetrate so deeply into society was because the government of Japan has always been of the aristocratic and bureaucratic type, and the average man has had no opportunity of in-

terfering in matters of art. The ordinary man in any country is lacking in the self-restraint and mental energy that make the effective ruler or artist, and is naturally inclined to prefer the art and architecture that requires no thought to appreciate, and the manners that call for the least exertion. What he likes is something to stimulate his emotions and flatter his vanity. Only by severe pressure imposed from above can he be led to appreciate anything but the highly coloured and obvious, and for this a military autocracy is necessary. Periods of artistic production always seem to accompany and follow eras of war both in East and West, and beauty is a by-product of Spartan qualities.

It may be urged that Rikyu was not an aristocrat but a tradesman by birth, but this proves little, for men of outstanding energy and ability have always been able in Japan to win a place among the rulers. But the process of rising is not made easy for them, neither is it considered necessary or desirable that those born in a humble station should *ipso facto* look forward to assume responsibility for which neither their mentality or environment have fitted them. Italy at the present time is now under exactly the same system of administration as was Japan in the days of the Tokugawa Shoguns, and her government is no longer dependent on the votes of the average citizen, so that with a similar inheritance of great art in the past there should be a fine opportunity of making more beautiful the every-day existence of her people. There seems little hope of this in any modern democracy, for a nation of artists is as little conceivable as a nation of saints.

The Burdens of the Chinese Peasantry

By Chen Han-sheng

(Translated from the Eastern Miscellany, October, 1928, specially for *Pacific Affairs*.)

Within the last decade many causes have combined to pull China from a status of hypo-colony, as expounded by the late Sun Yat-sen, down to the position of a full substantive colony. These have been the gradual decrease in the export of silk and tea, the increase in the import of staple food products, the import of tobacco and cotton exceeding the export of the same articles, the bankruptcy of the rural communities, the decline in the production of raw materials, the soaring prices of foreign commodities, the augmentation in the cost of production, the lower purchasing power and the depression of commerce and industry. The rehabilitation of China lies in the solution of the many complicated problems of rural economy of which the most pressing is that of the orgy of taxation. The Chinese peasantry have been mercilessly subject to this taxation for the last few years without any regard for their capability to shoulder it.

This article is devoted exclusively to the question of taxation, though it is regrettable that we do not have more statistics at our disposal. The external and internal loans, the blackmail by the militarists, the debasement of the subsidiary coins, and the unlimited issue of worthless notes were or are another form of taxation and needless to say a very heavy form of taxation. The income tax which failed expectations in the 10th year of the Republic (1921), was again brought up in the 16th year (1927) but was not enforced. The bulk of China's burdens fall