WENG T'UNG-HO AND THE REFORM MOVEMENT OF 1898

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INTRODUCTION

This study is undertaken on the assumption that an important development such as the reform movement of 1898 cannot be adequately understood without a knowledge of the historical circumstances under which it arose, and that a convenient way to gain this knowledge is to take a crucial figure of the time as the center of reference and to trace therefrom the pertinent forces and influences that bore on the situation.

That Weng T'ung-ho serves our purpose admirably can be readily seen. As Emperor Te-tsung's tutor for over two decades, Weng had played a decisive role in shaping the mind of the youthful ruler; and later, as one of the active high officials in Peking, he enjoyed the emperor's confidence for a number of years up to the time of his abrupt dismissal in the spring of 1898. Moreover, for about thirty years Weng also had the confidence of the Empress Dowager Tz'u-hsi who, in addition to giving him a number of notable assignments, twice appointed him to serve as imperial tutor and entrusted him with the task of helping to make momentous decisions during the troubled days of 1890, when the Sino-Russian treaty negotiations were in progress.

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1886 and 1898 he rose to great official eminence, holding the posts of the president of the Board of Revenue, grand councillor, member of Tsungli yamen, and associate grand secretary. He was thus in a position to exert considerable influence on important policies of the empire, if not actually to determine them. He was politically important in another way. As one of the two leaders of the so-called southern party among the officials in Peking, he constituted a focal point of high-level factional and personal rivalries that prevailed in the closing decades of the dynasty. A knowledge of Weng's attitudes, activities, and personal relations, therefore, particularly those which he displayed in the 1890's, should serve as a useful introduction to a study of the reform movement of 1898.

The evidence to be presented here, it is hoped, will justify the following tentative conclusions: (1) that the reform movement of 1898 did not materialize merely because a number of well-intentioned and well-informed persons wished to save the empire from destruction, but was brought about by a complex of divergent human motives and various institutional forces; (2) that the movement was, consequently, supported or opposed by men not simply because they were "conservative" or "progressive" in their outlooks but also because they felt that reform would have been conducive or detrimental to their immediate interests; (3) that the movement did not produce the results which its supporters desired not merely because it met with strong opposition from "conservatives"—those who opposed reform out of personal conviction together with those who wished to preserve their vested interests—but also because it called forth serious objections from persons who refused to go beyond a certain limit in reforming the existing state of affairs; that, in other words, the movement faced insurmountable difficulties because it met opposition from the "moderates" as well as from the "conservatives"; (4) that the advocates of moderate reform in the 1890's, including Weng T'ung-ho, represented the general trend which began in the 1860's, and continued down to the end of the dynasty, whereas K'ang Yu-wei's program constituted a departure from this general trend and that, therefore, the coup d'état of 1898 did away with K'ang's program without terminating this trend; (5) that the historical circumstances being such the reform movement of 1898 could not have saved the tottering dynasty, even if it had been carried out in accordance with the wishes of Weng T'ung-ho and other moderates.

To some extent Weng was a controversial figure. His contemporaries and historians of later times did not hold the same view of him. He was, for instance, sometimes regarded as a promoter of reform but, at other times, identified simply as a conservative. Recent scholars have dealt with some of the
divergent interpretations and varying accounts of the man and his historic role. Further inquiries into the matter, however, may still be useful. The present writer makes no pretense to originality but proposes to trace, with special attention to details, some of the promising trails already marked out, hoping thus to present a more or less coherent view of the total situation.

Weng Tʻung-ho's monumental diary, reproduced in facsimile in forty volumes, constitutes the most important single source of first-hand information. It may not be a completely accurate or faithful record of events; it certainly does not give all the information that a historian wishes to have. There is no reason, however, to question its general reliability. Assuming that some alterations were made in it by its author, these do not appear to have been extensive. Of course, Weng's diary, like other contemporary writings, such as those of Kʻang Yu-wei and Liang Chʻi-chʻao, must be used with discretion. Allowances must be made for partisan prejudices, personal predilections, and the common failings of human memory. Different accounts must be compared and weighed against the known facts. When these and other precautions are taken, the diary and other pertinent works of the period should furnish much of the vital information necessary for drawing valid conclusions. As, however, a number of sources has not been available to the present writer, the conclusions which will be offered here can be no more than tentative.

I.

Weng Tʻung-ho's Intellectual Outlook and Personal Attitudes

Weng Tʻung-ho was characterized by some historians in these interesting words:

Tʻung-ho served as imperial tutor for a long time and took part in conducting the affairs of state. He sought to make his views prevail on every matter and often fell into disputes with those who were close to him. Many criticised him for presuming on power. In his last years he suffered slander and defamation, and almost met with unfathomable calamity. He died eventually in exile.

This judgment of Weng can hardly be taken as complimentary. A careful reading of his diary, especially those portions which he wrote in the early years of his career, leads one to think that he had given some ground for such a judgment. Unwittingly, in recording some of his most intimate thoughts and sentiments Weng revealed himself as an ambitious official, anxious to “forego ahead” in his career, as well as a serious-minded scholar deeply concerned about the affairs of the troubled empire.

An entry in his diary made on the Chinese New Year's eve, when he
was thirty-two sui and had passed the examinations for the chin-shih only six years before, is particularly revealing:

Sat quietly late in the night; the sound of fire-crackers was very sparse. An insignificant, tiny creature [in the official world], I turned my thought upward to our recently demised emperor, now beyond the fleecy clouds and separated [from his servants], and downward to the conflagration and deluge in the southeastern part [of the empire] —a hundred emotions filled my breast.....I made a resolution: to direct my efforts to [the cultivation of] my mind and my personality. For only when all thoughts concerning wealth, honor, advantages, and promotion are completely swept clean, shall I be able to bear true responsibilities and to perceive the true principles.9

Two years later, he wrote this on the Chinese New Year’s day:

Considering that grey hair begins to show on my head and that enduring fame has not been established, I shall strive hereafter to regard this as my first task: to show sincerity and to do away with all that is vain and false.10

When, however, he advanced to the position of a vice-president of the Board of Revenue ten years later, he became confident of his success in officialdom and promptly took steps to prepare himself for the day when further promotion would bring to him the coveted privilege of “riding a horse in the Forbidden City”. Thus he confessed in 1876 that he practiced horsemanship partly to attain speed in going about and partly to help cure an ailment, but “actually the purpose lies elsewhere”.11 Barely two years had passed when the anticipated imperial favor came through.12 Another seemingly unimportant behavior also gives a clue to Weng’s ruling passion. He took pains to narrate every bit of consideration or honor shown him by the imperial rulers. On many occasions he described the details of imperial banquets which he was commanded to attend, including the arrangements of the seats, the “guests” present, and the particular seats assigned to him and his colleagues.13

When national or personal interests were at stake, Weng often resorted to superstitious practices, just as many of his fellow countrymen were accustomed to do. For instance, he interpreted a divinatory piece circulating in 1871 in some parts of south China as ominously suggestive of the invasion of the empire by foreigners and was greatly disturbed by it.14 On many occasions he interpreted awesome natural phenomena as omens of impending misfortune.15 In one instance, when his concubine fell seriously ill, he personally went to a temple of the “god of war” in Peking and resorted to divination.16 As late as in 1894, when the peace treaty with Japan was in the process of negotiation,
he interpreted a dream of his as portending ‘submissiveness to the barbarians’.\textsuperscript{17}

Weng’s everyday behavior, therefore, did not differ in any appreciable way from that of the average ambitious, serious-minded scholar-official of his time. The same may be said of his intellectual outlook. Like virtually all of his fellow scholar-officials Weng was thoroughly steeped in the Confucian tradition as it was generally accepted. He did not, however, consistently follow the doctrines of the Ch’eng-Chu school which was the brand of neo-Confucianism upheld by the imperial government and was represented in his time by a number of high officials in Peking, especially by Wo-jen and Hsü T’ung.\textsuperscript{18}

For a while Weng was interested in the rival Lu-Wang school,\textsuperscript{19} although soon afterwards he also became appreciative of the doctrines of Chu Hsi.\textsuperscript{20} His eclectic attitude later persuaded him to subscribe to the tenets of Li Kung, one of the most outspoken and influential critics of neo-Confucianism.\textsuperscript{21}

Perhaps it was partly due to the influence of Li Kung who stressed the importance of active engagement in the practical affairs of the world in opposition to the study of the theoretical problems of “reason” and “nature” as posed by the Ch’eng-Chu school,\textsuperscript{22} that Weng began to take serious interest in the affairs of the empire. Previously, Weng hardly took notice of the wars with England and France. He merely recorded in his diary that “barbarian troops” invaded the imperial capital, and continued calmly to pursue his scholarly routine, including composing poems and practicing calligraphy, as if nothing of importance had happened to the empire. He showed a similar lack of concern when the imperial government was engaged in a mortal struggle with the T’ai-p’ing and Nien rebellions.\textsuperscript{23} As late as in 1862 he appeared to have been still leading the leisurely life of the average scholar-official.\textsuperscript{24} By 1870, two years after he expressed his admiration for Li Kung, however, he had begun to show serious concern for the troubled affairs of the empire. Thus, when he heard of the news that mobs in Tientsin murdered the French consul and destroyed missionary churches, he spent a sleepless night in speculating about the consequences of the incident.\textsuperscript{25} He was equally concerned about the Korean situation in 1871.\textsuperscript{26} Five years later, when he was a vice-president of the Board of Revenue, he studied books that had direct bearing on the economic affairs of the empire.\textsuperscript{27} In 1888, then a president of the same Board, he formulated his basic financial policies, namely, “a surplus of ten million taels in the imperial coffers; complete replacement of the regulation cash (coins) in the imperial capital, and full collection of the land and grain taxes in the whole empire. Increased administrative responsibilities, reinforced by Li Kung’s intellectual influence, had obviously transformed Weng into a full-fledged man of affairs.
Weng’s attitude toward foreigners and foreign policy also underwent changes during his long official career. Essentially a “self-righteous patriot”, he placed China above all countries and regarded conciliatory policies toward foreign powers as decidedly shameful. He condemned foreign religions, especially the Catholic, describing the converts in Peking as “jackals and wolves that infested the capital”. He did not conceal his disapproval of Tseng Kuo-fan’s conciliatory approach to the Tientsin incident of 1870. His increased interest in the practical affairs of the empire did not bring about any basic change in his anti-foreign attitude. In fact, as late as in 1891 (then a president of Board), he spoke of the anti-foreign riots in various localities of Kiangsu and Anhwei as expressions of “popular indignation”, although he was not unaware of their adverse effects on imperial peace. Even in 1900 the news of the Boxer uprising and the occupation of Peking by foreign troops aroused in him more resentment against the intruding “barbarian soldiers” (i ping) and the “foreign barbarians” (wai i) than against those who misled the empress dowager into the calamitous blunder. His profound contempt for foreigners is best illustrated by a remark which he made in the 1880’s. As a member of high officialdom he attended the New Year reception in the Tsungli yamen where the diplomatic corps went to extend their greetings. Weng wrote in his diary that the Western diplomats whom he met there were no better than “a confused flock of geese and ducks.” He gave vent to his detestation of foreigners again in 1891 when, as a member of Tsungli yamen, he was present at the sessions in which Li Hung-chang took a leading part in negotiating with the British and French ministers concerning mining and railway construction. He was irritated by the demands of these diplomats and described them as “greedy like wolves and stubborn like goats—truly not of our own kind!”, and his meeting with them as tantamount to “associating with dogs and swine—a misfortune in a man’s life.” As it is well known, Weng’s anti-foreign attitude did not remain an idle sentiment. It was translated into action when he urged war against Japan in 1894, vehemently opposed the ceding of Formosa, and wept bitterly when he realized that his views could not prevail.

Weng, however, did not consistently maintain this hostile attitude. A significant change occurred in 1880. During the tortuous days of negotiating the treaty with Russia Weng sided with Prince Kung, against Prince Ch’un and Hsü T’ung who favored war, arguing that “to negotiate peace after waging war would be more disastrous than to maintain peace.” Again, in 1883, when the imperial court was making decisions concerning the dispute with France over Yüeh-nan, Weng showed a remarkably cautious attitude. “Many
claimed,” he said, “that our wishes could be fulfilled by sending troops into Yüeh-nan. Why don’t these people appraise our own strength?” An even more significant departure came in 1897, in connection with the negotiations with the German minister to settle the Shantung incident. After receiving reports that German warships had entered Kiaochow Bay, Weng issued two telegrams under the emperor’s name, instructing the governor of Shantung not to fire the first shot, and the Chinese minister at Berlin to negotiate with the German government. Another telegram sent the following day instructed the governor again “not to speak lightly of war thus bringing calamity to the empire.” That Weng was chiefly, if not solely, responsible for this conciliatory policy may be inferred from the fact that he was authorized to negotiate with the German minister in Peking and that Li Hung-chang was not even informed of the matter, although Li was on hand in Tsungli yamen on the same day. Commenting on the terms of settlement which Weng with the assistance of Chang Yin-huan negotiated with the German minister, Weng said, “I really could not bear to let these words [of concession] come from my mouth; but I wished to avert a great disaster and had to stoop and compromise.”

A question naturally arises. Why did Weng change his anti-foreign attitude in 1880 and 1897 in dealing with Russia and Germany?

An obvious explanation is that as Weng came into more and closer contact with Westerners and as he gained more knowledge of Western countries, he was able to take a more “realistic” view concerning foreign affairs. Moreover, when he himself was sharing the direct responsibility of making important decisions, he realized that it was never wise to be rash in dealing with foreign powers. This explanation, however, may be valid without being adequate. It does not satisfactorily explain the fact that many years after 1880 Weng aligned with “the war party” and precipitated the conflict with Japan. It also fails to account for Weng’s deliberate exclusion of Li Hung-chang in 1897, a man who was the most experienced in international negotiations, a past master of settlement by concessions, and one most likely to be helpful in the situation. That Li Hung-chang was kept out of the matter and was resentful for being excluded may be gathered from Weng’s admission that the preliminary results of the negotiations which Weng so laboriously achieved were virtually sabotaged later by Li.

One is naturally led to seek an additional explanation in Weng’s involvement in the factional strifes and personal rivalries that prevailed in Peking. His conciliatory attitude toward Russia in 1890 may have been prompted by his desire to place himself in Prince Kung’s favor and, at the same time, to frustrate his political rival, Hsü T’ung. We have no direct evidence to sup-
port this conjecture, but the general circumstances (with which we shall deal at some length in a later section) lent plausibility to it. Weng’s action in 1897, however, can be more definitely traced to the well-known enmity between Weng and Li Hung-chang.42 The Sino-Japanese war left Li a discredited man, a target of much scholar-official criticism. His official career might have been abruptly ended but for the protecting hand of the empress dowager. Assuming that Weng had the ambition of eventually replacing Li as the most influential official in Peking, the years that immediately followed 1895 would have seemed to Weng the most opportune time for realizing this ambition. One of the best ways to retire Li was to make him no longer indispensable in the service for which he was famous, namely, conducting foreign affairs. It is conceivable that Weng, using the Shantung incident of 1897, tried to steal the diplomatic thunder from Li. Unluckily for Weng, however, he got his fingers badly burned, despite the assistance of Chang Yin-huan who had more knowledge of foreign affairs than Weng. To Weng’s chagrin, Li Hung-chang was eventually called upon to clear away the diplomatic mess which resulted from Weng’s bungling hand.

It appears, therefore, despite Weng’s basically anti-foreign sentiments, he did not maintain a consistent attitude toward foreign affairs but shifted his stand as the immediate situations dictated. He allowed personal considerations to guide his judgment and made decisions not always on the basis of imperial interest. He was, in other words, as much a calculating politician as a sentimental patriot.

The same may be broadly said of his attitude toward reform. Similar motivations prompted his actions, and changing circumstances swayed his views and attitudes, with the result that at one time he took active interest in reform but at another time he worked against it, so much so that he could not be characterized as “conservative” or “progressive” with any degree of accuracy.

In a certain sense Weng may be regarded as a conservative, namely, as a man determined to conserve the traditional values of imperial China and resolutely opposed to Westernization.43 Being a product of the age-long scholar-official tradition he naturally had no wish to alter China’s cultural and institutional system. This explains the fact that he paid no attention to yang-wu, “foreign affairs”, until 1875;44 even then he remained unreconciled to the idea that the empire could be benefited by the adoption of “Western methods” as leaders of the “self-strengthening” movement had been advocating since the 1860’s. He maintained such a “conservative” attitude as late as in 1898, as the following words which he wrote on the Chinese New Year’s eve clearly
Earthquakes occurred in the fifth moon of this year, a flood in the Western Hills came in the seventh moon, and a fire broke out in the T’ai-ho Gate—all these were premonitions [of evil] revealed through natural phenomena—-Moreover, steamboats ply the Lake [in the Summer Palace], a railway runs through the Forbidden City, and, in addition, noisy discussions concerning the construction of railways were heard in the imperial court. The views of the princes begin to change [from disapproval to acceptance of the innovations] and the proposals made by Pei-yang still stand. A survey of the current situation saddens my heart. As a high official can I not but be ashamed and feel remorse [for not being able to remedy the situation].

There is nothing to distinguish these sentiments from those entertained by the most extreme conservatives. The “proposals made by Pei-yang” Weng mentioned came from Li Hung-chang who wished to see a railway built between Tientsin and T’ung Chou (near Peking). Weng raised strong objections to Li’s proposals; he likewise opposed Chang Chih-tung’s alternative recommendation that a line be constructed in “the interior” (i.e., between Hankow and Lu-kou-ch’iao) in lieu of the line suggested by Li. Weng’s arguments echoed those of the diehards of the 1860’s and 1870’s, who brought much frustration to Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang.

Strangely, however, Weng exhibited a dramatic change of attitude toward yang-wu at about the same time. The sixteen books on “Western learning” (translated under the supervision of Robert Hart) which Tseng Kuo-ch’üan presented to Weng in 1887, probably exerted considerable influence on Weng’s thinking. It appears that Weng was soon converted to the cause of reform and undertook to initiate the young emperor into it. In 1889, shortly after he wrote the disheartening passage quoted above, he went with Sun Chia-nai, in their capacity as imperial tutors, to offer New Year’s greetings to their pupil and took the occasion to submit to him this important advice: that “it is unnecessary to apply all the methods of government formulated by the sages of the past”. On the next day Weng presented to the emperor a copy of Feng Kuei-fen’s Chiao-pin-lu k’ang-i, a collection of essays on reform. About a month later, Weng brought this book to the attention of the empress dowager also. He wrote in his diary (February 23, 1889):

Favored by the empress dowager and the emperor with an audience…. [After other matters were discussed] yang-wu came up; replied: “This is the first urgent task which the emperor ought to study. Feng Kuei-fen’s K’ang-i, a copy of which your servant had presented the other day, is
useful in this very connection.... Then the railway [question] came up. Strongly asserted that the Tientsin—T'ung Chou [line proposed by Li Hung-chang] should not be built.... As to [Chang Chih-tung's suggestion to build a line in] the interior, it is merely to seek profit; what has it to do with any farsighted plan?29

In the winter of the same year Weng wrote again in his diary concerning Feng's Kang-i:

Went to the [emperor's] study.... Read the Kang-i. I said yesterday that this book is most pertinent to current affairs [and suggested that the emperor] select several essays [from the book for special study].... Today his majesty had the six essays which he selected bound in one volume.... This is sufficient indication that [the emperor] is giving his attention to the study (of this book) —gratifying indeed30

It may be recalled that Feng Kuei-fen, one of the most outstanding advocates of reform prior to 1898, wrote the Kang-i around 1860. In addition to urging fairly extensive administrative reform (in particular fiscal and economic reform) and changes in the examination-school system, Feng stressed the necessity of adopting what he called "Western learning", manufacturing "foreign implements", and acquiring the knowledge and technique of dealing with "the barbarians". Feng made it clear, however, that "Western learning" should merely supplement but not replace "the moral principles and ethical teachings of China" which should remain the foundation of imperial reconstruction.32 Feng's book was widely acclaimed as the most judicious and pertinent work on reform;33 it may have actually sowed the seed of reform thirty years before 1898, as some writers were inclined to think.34 There can be little doubt that in presenting this book to the emperor Weng had taken the first step to indoctrinate his pupil in what he regarded as the correct ideas of reform. By 1889, therefore, Weng had ceased to be a conservative, in the sense that Hsü T'ung or Hsü Ying-k'uei were said to have been.

It appears strange that Weng showed so much antagonism to the railway proposals of Li Hung-chang and Chang Chih-tung—proposals that were definitely in line with modernization and would have been acceptable to men like Feng Kuei-fen—at the same time when he undertook to acquaint the emperor with Feng's Kang-i. Weng's behavior is particularly difficult to understand when we recall that his arguments against the railway proposals ran directly contrary to the substance as well as spirit of the Kang-i. The explanation lies perhaps again in the perennial rivalry between Weng on the one side and Li and Chang on the other side. It is highly probable that just as Weng tried in 1897 to wrest from Li his leadership in conducting the for-
eign affairs of the empire, he tried to wrest leadership in modernization from Li and Chang in 1889, by hamstringing their efforts in order to leave more room for himself later to assume such leadership.

As a matter of fact, Weng’s behavior in later years indicates that he continued to play a two-faced role: to promote and support reform on his own and at the same time to frustrate modernizing undertakings sponsored by his political opponents. Between 1889 and the early days of 1898 Weng increasingly became identified with the cause of reform. In addition to the intellectual influences exerted on him by the sixteen books which Tseng Kuo-chüan gave him in 1887 and by Feng Kuei-fen’s K’uang-i (and a few other works to which we shall refer later), the defeat of 1894 deepened his conviction that the empire could be saved only by timely reform. He completely reversed his stand concerning railway construction in 1895. He joined Prince Kung and others in authorizing railways, Western-style military drill, and modern military schools for Banner soldiers. He received the appointment as director of T’ung-wen College with unconcealed satisfaction and immediately declared his resolve to make that institution a prosperous and efficient one. His active interest in reform became known to many. Chang Chih-tung who himself was actively engaged in modernization on a provincial level, acknowledged Weng as a promoter of reform. In a letter to Weng written in October 1895 Chang said:

Your excellency... resolutely leads the world with great counsels of reconstructing [the empire] and repelling [foreign aggressors]. Within [the imperial court] plans attending to what is fundamental are set in motion, while outside [the court] methods of reform are applied. Whatever direction you care to issue to me will be followed with sincere efforts. Allowance should of course be made for overgenerosity in lip-service customarily practiced by Chinese officials on their colleagues and superiors. It is nevertheless certain that Chang Chih-tung could not have credited Weng with actions which the latter did not actually take. Other writers of the time generally corroborated Chang’s view of Weng. For instance, Fei Hsing-chien, a man who had firsthand information, testified to Weng’s active role in promoting reform and Richard Timothy who discussed matters personally with Weng on more than one occasion, stated that Weng was in full sympathy with “the reform party”.

Meanwhile, as Weng moved rapidly along the road to reform between 1889 and 1895, he continued to stymie the efforts of Li Hung-chang and Chang Chih-tung, two high-ranking officials who by virtue of their prestige and knowledge could challenge Weng’s leadership in reform. Chang Chih-tung, who was
at the time more actively engaged in modernization than Li, seems to have received the most attention from Weng. In a short work allegedly written by Chang’s students but actually by Chang himself it is said:

Between 1889 and 1890 (when Chang was governor-general of Liang-Kuang), a certain president of the Board of Revenue in high central officialdom was determined to make trouble (for Chang). Every matter drew from him questioning or censure, regardless of fact or reason. Practically each one of the administrative measures of Kwangtung province was reversed or contradicted; each word or sentence in the dispatches sent (from Kwangtung) was subject to minute scrutiny with a view to finding fault.\(^{61}\)

The “certain president of the Board of Revenue” was none other than Weng T’ung-ho who held that post since 1886 for twelve consecutive years. 1889 and 1890 were the same years in which Chang proposed or undertook a considerable number of modernizing measures in Kwangtung, including the establishment of an arsenal, a mint, a textile factory, an iron foundry, and a naval school\(^{62}\)—the same years when Weng was earnestly indoctrinating the emperor with Feng Kuei-fen’s essays on reform. The contrast between Chang Chih-tung’s letter and this statement is indeed glaring.

It may be argued that the letter was written in 1895 when Weng’s attitude toward reform had become much more positive than in 1899. The difference in Weng’s attitude toward Chang may therefore be explained by a change of convictions on Weng’s part. There is, however, some ground for suspecting that during these years Weng had been consistently trying to frustrate Chang and that Weng continued to do so as late as in 1897. In fact, the rivalry between the two men became so patent that it may have induced enemies of Weng to enlist Chang’s help to sidetrack the reform movement which Weng undertook to foster. A curious episode in Chang’s career deserves notice. After serving at Wuchang for about five years during which time Chang proposed and inaugurated an even larger number of modern enterprises than he did at Canton,\(^{63}\) he was transferred late in the autumn of 1894 to Nanking as acting governor-general of Liang-Chiang to cope with the situation created by the Sino-Japanese war. In addition to carrying out his mission creditably he pursued with unabated speed the same program of modernization in the region now under his jurisdiction; in fact, he extended his program after the end of the war to include measures that paralleled many of Feng Kuei-fen’s suggestions.\(^{64}\) Chang was, however, not allowed to remain in Nanking long. Liu K’un-i, the original incumbent, was ordered to resume his post, and Chang returned to his own post at Wuchang in 1897. He resumed his modernizing program there.\(^{65}\)
Then, in the spring of 1898, the curious episode occurred. He was summoned to an imperial audience for the purpose of being consulted on some unspecified matter. When he arrived at Shanghai on his way to Peking, however, he was instructed to return to Wuchang, to take care of an anti-foreign incident in Shashi, Hupeh; he was to appear for the audience after the incident was settled.\textsuperscript{66} The incident was speedily settled,\textsuperscript{67} but the audience never took place.

Su Chi-tsu, a contemporary of Chang, offered an explanation for this rather strange action of the imperial court:

Governor-general Chang... had been singled out for imperial attention for a long time. Even greater confidence was placed in him since he acted as governor-general of Liang-Chiang in \textit{chia-wu} year (1894. The imperial rulers) wished to call him in to assist the administration, but he was prevented (from serving in Peking) by Weng T'ung-ho and Sun Yu-wen...\textsuperscript{68} In the present spring, after the emperor had resolved to carry out reforms, he summoned Chang to come to the capital, to assist him in the task of reform. Conservative high officials, afraid that Chang would prove incompatible with themselves, resorted to every available means to prevent him (from gaining access to the emperor). They used the missionary incident of Shashi as a pretext to send Chang back to his post.\textsuperscript{69}

This explanation contains two interesting points. First, that between 1894 and 1898 Weng T'ung-ho undertook to prevent Chang from being admitted into the inner circle of central officialdom, and second, that it was "conservative high officials" who spoiled Chang's chance again in 1898. As we shall see presently, both points come near to the actual facts.

Weng T'ung-ho gave an apparently different version of this episode. He made a total of eight entries concerning it in his diary, the first of which, dated KH 24\textsuperscript{70}/interc. 3\textsuperscript{71}/2, reads as follows:

Two telegraph-edicts: one in reply to governor-general in Kwangtung...; the other ordering governor-general of Hu-Kuang (i.e., Chang Chih-tung) to come to the capital for imperial audience,—complying with the request of Hsü T'ung. (Hsü's memorial) was submitted to the empress dowager; such is her majesty's wish.\textsuperscript{70}

As it is generally recognized, Hsü T'ung was one of the arch conservatives of the time, sometimes identified as a leader of the so-called "northern party" and therefore a political enemy of Weng.\textsuperscript{71} The third entry in Weng's diary, written nine days later, is also noteworthy:

One telegram: Chang Chih-tung memorialized that he will not be
able to begin his journey [to Peking] until over ten days later; he requested that the matter on which he is to be consulted be made known to him [beforehand].

The remaining six entries concerning the episode indicate in very brief terms the contents of the telegrams exchanged between the central and provincial authorities concerning the Shashi incident, the unrest along the Yangtze Valley, and Chang’s return to Wuchang.

According to Weng, then, it was Hsu T’ung who initiated the move to bring Chang Chih-tung to Peking and the empress dowager who approved of the move. There is no reason to question Weng’s veracity here; it is difficult to find a motive on his part to attribute to Hsu T’ung a move which he did not make. Moreover, Weng was in a position to know the facts.

The question is, why did Hsu T’ung, a confirmed hater of innovations and “foreign ways”, undertake to bring Chang to Peking?

A recent writer suggested that Hsu T’ung’s move was intended to undermine Weng T’ung-ho by bringing one of his major political opponents to the capital. This seems to be a correct surmise, but it does not explain why Chang Chih-tung was made use of for this purpose. From what is known of the situation at the time, it can be safely inferred that Hsu T’ung chose Chang because the latter, as a recognized leader of moderate reform, promised to be the most suitable man to counteract Weng’s influence on the emperor and to divert into a different channel the reform movement which Weng helped materially to launch. By calling Chang to the emperor’s side there was a chance to install him as his majesty’s mentor of reform, replacing at once Weng T’ung-ho and K’ang Yu-wei.

It may be recalled that largely thanks to Weng T’ung-ho’s recommendation (a matter which will be examined in detail at a more appropriate place later) K’ang Yu-wei came into the confidence of the emperor and persuaded the latter to adopt a reform program which thoroughly alarmed those who were opposed to “altering the house rules of the ancestors”. Two courses of action were open to these men who understandably desired to put a stop to such a development. Some of them offered direct opposition to reform, while others tried to deflect it, but substituting changes of a less drastic and, from their point of view, less objectionable type. Hsu T’ung may have been one of those who were persuaded that the second course was tactically more advantageous than the first. Now, Chang Chih-tung had recently severed his short-lived cordial relation with K’ang Yu-wei. As a matter of fact, his Ch’ien-hsüeh p’ien (“Exhortation to Learning”) was written for the express purpose of refuting K’ang’s reform views and of stating Chang’s own theory
of moderate reform. Chang was emphatic in affirming the superiority of China's moral tradition and in reiterating that "Western learning" should merely supplement but not modify "Chinese learning". To the diehards, therefore, Chang's brand of reform was a lesser evil than K'ang Yu-wei's. This may have constituted one of the reasons for Hsü T'ung's choice. Li Hung-chang, as a veteran leader of the self-strengthening movement, was of course eminently qualified to guide the emperor to travel the road of limited reform. Unfortunately, however, Li was discredited since 1895, while Chang was not similarly "tainted" (in fact, Chang was one of those who loudly criticised Li's performance in 1895).

The "audience episode", therefore, appears to have resulted from the convergence of two struggles: the personal strife between Weng and his political enemies, and the conflict among officials holding different views concerning reform. The fact that Chang Chih-tung demanded to be informed of the precise nature of the matter on which his counsel was desired, suggests that he was wary of the action taken by the imperial government. Important provincial official, it is well known, were accustomed to installing confidential "correspondents" in Peking to keep themselves informed of the doings and intrigues at the imperial court. Chang undoubtedly had such agents; it is likely that he had an inkling of the political background of the summons to audience. He might not be adverse to undermining Weng T'ung-ho and K'ang Yu-wei, but it is doubtful that he thought it prudent to involve himself in one of the major factional strifes in Peking, particularly when ultra conservatives who were actually his own enemies, were "pulling the strings". He could not refuse to comply with the imperial order, but he bade his time, purposely delaying his trip for about two weeks. The Shashi incident gave an excuse to those who did not wish to see Chang in Peking, for ordering him to postpone the trip. If Weng T'ung-ho did not actually make use of this excuse, he would certainly have welcomed the postponement. Su Chi-tsu's explanation, quoted a moment ago, is after all not contradicted by Weng's seemingly divergent account but is in reality corroborated by it, especially if we think of Weng as one of the "conservative high officials" (in the sense that he persistently opposed Chang's modernizing enterprises).

The supposition that Chang Chih-tung was regarded by some as an effective agent to undermine Weng's influence on the emperor receives an indirect confirmation by the action of another anti-reform official. The day after the telegraph-edict summoning Chang to audience was issued, Yü Yin-lin, provincial treasurer of Anhwei, submitted a "memorial on current affairs" in which he recommended Hsü T'ung, Chang Chih-tung, Ch'en Pao-chen, and a
few others as “upright officials” who could be depended upon to bring the affairs of the empire to a turn for the better and, at the same time, impeached in very strong language, Li Hung-chang, Weng T'ung-ho, and Chang Yin-huan, changing them with bringing the empire to the verge of ruin. It is interesting to note that Yü mentioned in the same breath an ultra conservative and two men widely known for their enthusiastic support of modernization. Yü’s action may have been taken independently of Hsü T'ung's. Yet their actions had one effect in common: to bring Chang Chih-tung to a vantage position in the imperial government.

It appears, therefore, that Weng’s two-faced role, as patron of reform under his own leadership and as obstructionist of modernizing undertakings promoted by his political opponents, did not always work to his own political advantage. It rendered Weng unwelcome to many modernizers as well as to all conservatives.

The vacillating stand which Weng took on the question of reform induced Ku Hung-ming, Chang Chih-tung’s foreign-language secretary, to remark caustically that in a crisis “bigoted ultra conservatives” (of whom Weng was taken as a representative) “might out of sheer despair join hand with ultra radicals” (i.e., K’ang Yu-wei and his associates). A man of strong prejudices and stronger language, Ku Hung-ming was accustomed to making overstatements. The present remark is decidedly an exaggeration and an oversimplification, but it underscores the fact that Weng, as a career politician, acted on considerations other than consistency in personal views and attitudes—an aspect of Weng’s mental makeup which must be taken into account for a correct interpretation of his behavior. We must, however, supplement Ku’s observation by pointing out that Weng sincerely wished to serve the empire as much as he earnestly desired to attain his political ambition. Such a mixed motivation made him a man of accommodating views, ever ready to trade off his convictions as practical situations required. Sometimes he acted as a patriot. He was concerned about the waning fortunes of the dynasty and was dedicated to preserving the empire with all the traditional values and institutions that were inseparably bound up with it. The defeats and humiliations suffered by China from foreign powers in the closing decades of the century awakened Weng to the urgent need of administrative reform. He shed his early complacency and “conservatism”, and set about to prepare the young emperor for making the changes which he deemed necessary. At other times, however, he acted as a politician, as a man interested in achieving personal success in officialdom. He undertook to promote reform because he saw in it the prospect of making himself the undisputed
leader among his colleagues, safe from the assault of his rivals and opponents. That being the case, he took pains to obstruct the modernizing efforts of men like Li Hung-chang and Chang Chih-tung who could effectively challenge his leadership in reform. He did not seek their cooperation or assistance but instead attempted to develop a reform movement of his own—to recruit his own assistants and followers. In order to make Peking the exclusive center of reform he opposed the modernizing enterprises of provincial officials, even though these were energetically carried out and with some tangible results. For, having identified his interests with those of the central government he could not tolerate any regional development even it moved in the same general direction toward which his own reform program aimed.\textsuperscript{79} Patriotic sentiments and personal ambition thus converged to prompt Weng to behave as he did in the years 1895-98. To label him simply as "conservative" or "progressive" is to miss much of the concrete realities of the man’s personal motivation and his political environment.

II

Weng’s Relations With Some Of His Colleagues

And Contemporaries

Behind the facade of studied civilities in the officialdom of imperial China lay a partially exposed maze of personal rivalries, factional strifes, tenacious partisanship, and shifting loyalties among the high officials both in Peking and the provincial capitals. Political principles and moral convictions were not absent in determining personal associations and factional alignments, but these were often overruled by or commingled with purely selfish considerations, especially when one’s political survival or advantage was at stake. Apparent friendship might camouflage deep enmity; a worthy cause might serve as a convenient pretext to embarass or ruin one’s opponent, irrespective of the latter’s personal merits or service to the empire. Few, if any, could rise above the situation, for the simple reason that in order to succeed in the political arena one must learn and follow the rules of the game.

Weng T’ung-ho’s attempts to impede or undermine Li Hung-chang and Chang Chih-tung, already indicated above, are illustrative of the conditions that prevailed in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Weng, however, was not the most unscrupulous of the politicians of the period. Some of his contemporaries and predecessors treated their rivals in equal, if not in
even more dishonorable fashion. It was said, for example, that Ch’i Ch’ün-tsaо slandered Tseng Kuo-fan by insinuation so successfully that the latter was hamstrung for a number of years during his campaign against the T’aiiping rebels. Later, in the 1860’s, another high official did the same thing to Tseng who was thus deterred from actively contributing to the tasks of post-campaign rehabilitation. In Weng’s own time the rivalries and maneuverings among Li Hung-chang, Chang Chih-tung, Li Hung-tsao, and other high officials were quite notorious. For instance, when Chang Chih-tung sided with Li Hung-chang in the 1870’s, he joined others to denounce Liu K’un-i for his criticisms of Li. In 1884, however, Chang shifted his political alignment and joined another group of partisans to denounce Li for his foreign policies. Li Hung-tsao was ousted from the Grand Council as a result of impeachments instigated by his opponents who used the crisis created by the war with France over Yüeh-nan to undo him. The empress dowager, according to some sources, joined in the game; she took this opportunity to throw out Prince Kung who had by that time fallen out of her grace. A particularly nefarious case involving Li Hung-chang was reported in 1894. Wen T’ing-shih, highly regards by Li Hung-chang as well as Weng T’ung-ho, chose to join Weng’s “war party” and impeached Li for his “cowardly attitude” in dealing with Japan. Naturally, Li was incensed; Wen prudently left Peking upon the advice of a friend. Liu Ch’i-hsiang, intendant of Shanghai, a relative of Li Hung-chang, made a point to entertain Wen in his official residence, secured by ruse the draft of one of Wen’s secret memorials to the emperor, and sent a copy of it to Li who promptly showed it to the empress dowager. Meanwhile, Li persuaded Yang Ts’ung-i, a censor, to impeach Wen and thus quickly brought about the latter’s dismissal.

Such, in general, was the atmosphere of imperial officialdom in which Weng T’ung-ho moved and by which, in fact, his reactions and behavior were shaped. A man brought up in the established Confucian tradition, he of course shared the basic moral precepts with the bulk of the scholar-officials of the time. But as an astute and ambitious politician he did not adhere rigidly to the “correct principles”, in disregard of the realities of the political environment. He was ready to adapt his views and attitudes to the circumstances, in order to secure advantages or avoid damages. Like many of his colleagues, he identified his best interests with those of the dynasty; in that sense he was loyal to the existing regime. He, however, did not hesitate to shift personal friendships or to transfer private loyalties whenever the practical situation demanded. His relations with men were often maintained more on utilitarian considerations than on the basis of genuine sentiment. As a histori-
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an put it, Weng "liked to have protégés but insisted that they be useful to himself; widely he made ties of friendship but he could not tolerate anyone who did not comply with his wishes or beliefs." All these factors contributed to making Weng a man of complex motivations, unsteady convictions, and vacillating personal loyalties.

A brief survey of his relations with some of his contemporaries bears out the above observation. Weng apparently was willing to show respect to veteran scholar-officials with whom he had no conflict of interest. Wo-jen and Wen-hsiang afforded the most outstanding instances in this connection. In the early years of his career, Weng took interest in the Lu-Wang school of neo-Confucianism; around 1876, however, he was partially converted to the philosophy of Chu Hsi. This change was probably due to the influence of Wo-jen, a staunch defender of the "orthodox" neo-Confucian tradition and senior imperial tutor with whom Weng associated for a number of years and to whom Weng showed respect. Weng held Wen-hsiang in high regard. Weng was probably impressed by his firm attitude toward foreigners, a stand which Weng took until the 1870's. Meanwhile, Weng showed appreciation of some of the high officials who in various ways contributed to the "self-strengthening" movement of the 1860's. He admired, for instance, Lin Tse-hsü and discovered the "greatness" of the man upon reading his collected works in 1878. Weng expressed profound regret upon receiving the news of Tso Tsung-t'ang's death in Foochow in 1885. He had a number of intimate contacts with Tso in 1881 when the latter was in Peking serving in the Grand Council.

Weng, however, did not hold Tseng Kuo-fan in such high regard. Scant mention was made of Tseng in his diary. On hearing Tseng's death in Nan-king in 1872 he merely noted that "Grand Secretary Tseng Kuo-fan died in Liang-Chiang", without even following the customary practice of using Tseng's tau ("courtesy name")—a marked contrast to the deferential manner in which he recorded Tso Tsung-t'ang's death. Another mention of Tseng was made fifteen years later, in 1887, when he read Tseng's diary without comment. All these men, Lin Tse-hsü (1785-1850), Wo-jen (d. 1871), Tseng Kuo-fan (1811-1872), Tso Tsung-t'ang (1812-1885), and Wen-hsiang (1818-1876), were Weng's seniors in official service as well as in age (Weng was born in 1830). Probably for two reasons Weng found it difficult to place Tseng on the same level with the rest. One arose from personal grudge. Tseng's accusation of Weng T'ung-shu, Weng T'ung-ho's elder brother who achieved distinction in the campaign against the T'ai-p'ing rebels, resulted in the latter's dismissal and exile to Tli. The other reason was difference in opinion. As already
said, Weng strongly objected to Tseng's conciliatory attitude toward foreigners in dealing with the Tientsin incident of 1870. One is not sure, however, that this objection did not have its roots in the personal grudge which Weng bore against the elderly statesman.

It appears, therefore, that Weng's judgments of men were not always guided by impartial standards. One gains the same impression in examining his relations with other contemporaries. Perhaps the most revealing was his relation with Li Hung-tsa, who was regarded by some as one of the top leaders of the so-called "northern party" and was therefore one of Weng's chief political opponents. Weng was ostensibly on very cordial and even intimate terms with Li. Weng frequently visited Li, sometimes chatting for hours far into the night. He lamented Li's death in 1897, eulogizing him as "an upright man". It may seem strange that Weng befriended a man who not only belonged to a rival faction but held opposite views on important matters. Li's influential position in Peking officialdom offered a possible explanation of Weng's behavior. By allying himself with Prince Kung, Li attained considerable influence up to the early 1880's when his antagonism to Prince Ch'un incurred the wrath of the empress dowager. In 1885, however, Li began to regain her favor. Obviously, he was a man whose good will would have proved useful to any ambitious official. Weng himself indicated the extent of help he once received from Li. On several occasions in the 1880's, he enjoyed Li's support in his conflict with Hsü T'ung over instructional procedures, in their capacity as imperial tutor to the T'ung-chih emperor. Thanks to Li's strong support, Weng won a decisive victory over Hsü.

Weng's relation with Jung-lu, who was destined to play a decisive role in the coup d'état of 1898, is also noteworthy. Weng had been on intimate terms with him since 1876, when both men were vice-presidents of the Board of Revenue. Close personal contacts were frequent. For instance, Weng visited Jung-lu immediately upon learning the latter's dismissal in 1879. On a number of occasions he accepted Jung-lu's gifts without hesitation; he, however, was accustomed to refusing presents from persons whom he did not consider his intimate friends. This seemingly cordial relation, however, did not last indefinitely. The first clear indication of estrangement came to light in 1898 when Weng refused to accept a gift Jung-lu sent him before he departed from Peking after his dismissal. When Jung-lu died in 1903, Weng disclosed his disappointment in his one-time friend in the following remarks:

I felt depressed on hearing the news of his death. He was an old friend of mine. The Sage (Confucius) did not terminate his friendship with Yüan-jang who stood on the coffin of his deceased mother and
Some writers alleged that Jung-lu was responsible for Weng’s summary dismissal in 1893, a matter which we shall have occasion to investigate. For the moment it suffices to admit that it is difficult to ascertain the reason for Weng’s change of attitude toward Jung-lu, and that it is equally difficult to determine the precise ground upon which their previous friendship rested. One may well suppose that their relationship was from the first an alliance for political expediency rather than a comradship based on mutual affection and understanding.

Weng’s relations with men who in various ways were connected with the “self-strengthening” movement or versed in yang-wu, throw additional light on Weng’s character. His admiration of Wo-jen and high esteem of Li Hung-tsao, both arch conservatives, did not prevent him from coming into friendly contacts with men of entirely different persuasions and experiences. A few of the most notable among the latter group may be mentioned here.

Kuo Sung-t’ao may well have been one of the first to arouse Weng’s interest in reform. Before Kuo set out late in 1876 for London as minister to England, he had several conversations with Weng and presented his views on reform, expressing his “wish to see iron and coal mines opened and railways built in every part of the empire”. He gave his “essay on foreign countries” for Weng to read. Weng indicated general approval of Kuo’s views and evidently was on very friendly terms with Kuo.

Weng’s cold attitude toward Tseng Kuo-fan did not prevent him from appreciating the abilities of Tseng Kuo-ch’üan, the marquis’s younger brother who distinguished himself in the T’ai-p’ing campaigns. When Tseng Kuo-ch’üan was on sick leave in 1875, Weng had a long discussion with him and was convinced of Tseng’s “sound scholarship” and “correct understanding” of the problems of administration. Nine years later, when Tseng was called to Peking to serve as an acting president of the Board of Rites, Weng again came into contact with him. Weng was so favorably impressed by the man that he viewed his death in 1890 as having crucial influence on “the entire situation in the southeast”. Weng’s relation with Tseng Chi-ts’e, Tseng Kuo-fan’s heir, was even more cordial. The two men first met in 1870; Weng took notice of Tseng’s “outstanding personality and intelligence”. Many years later (1898), Tseng presented Weng with sixteen books on “Western learning” which, as already said, may have helped Weng to crystallize his thoughts on reform. Six months after he received these works, he joined with Sun Chia-nai in introducing the emperor to the idea of reform.

Weng showed interest in Ting Jih-ch’ang, despite the latter’s association
with Li Hung-chang. Weng had a number of “long chats” with Ting in the spring of 1875, when Ting was called to Tientsin to assist Li to negotiate the treaties with Japan and Peru. That Weng thought highly of Ting, one of the younger officials of the time noted for his knowledge of “foreign affairs”, may be inferred from the fact that Weng was distressed to hear in 1877 a rumor of Ting’s death and rejoiced when he found out that the report was false. Similar sentiments were expressed when Weng was informed of Ting’s death in 1892. Weng was also friendly to Ma Chien-chung, a protégé of Li Hung-chang who sent him to study in France, and author of a number of essays on reform. Weng met Ma in the summer of 1897 and, after commenting on the latter’s “eminent abilities”, entered in his diary the names of a number of men (including Yen Fu and Ch’en Chih) who were “versed in Western techniques”.

By 1897 Weng had become actively engaged in promoting reform. Naturally, he looked for competent persons to assist him in the important task. Thus, in the few years immediately preceding 1898 Weng brought himself into contact with many younger men among whom (in addition to those already mentioned) were Sung Yü-jen, a Hanlin compiler who served for a time as counselor to the Chinese legation in England and France; T’ang Chen (i.e., T’ang Shou-ch’ien), a magistrate and author of Wei-yen which he wrote in 1890; T’an Sue-t’ung, destined to be one of the six “martyrs” of 1898; P’eng Kuang-yü, an expectant intendant who for eight years had assisted Chang Yin-huan in his diplomatic mission to the United States; Lo Feng-lu, an intendant who followed Li Hung-chang on various diplomatic missions; and Huang Tsun-hsien, an intendant serving for sometime as consul-general at Singapore and author of the famous work on Japan, Jih-chen kuo-chih. Personal contacts with these men were made by Weng between 1895 and 1897. It was during these years also that Weng made the acquaintance of a few Westerners whom he regarded as friendly and trustworthy, especially Robert Hart and Timothy Richard.

As already said, Weng began to guide the emperor into reform in 1889. The defeat of 1894 persuaded him to quicken his steps in that direction, in order to save the languishing dynasty before it was too late. His interest in reform, however, was not unmixed with ulterior motives. There is reason to believe that he saw in reform a road on which his imperial pupil and he himself might travel together to eminence—provided he could assume unchallenged leadership in the task. It was necessary, therefore, to draw as many qualified persons as he could to rally around himself and, at the same time, to exclude all who by virtue of their prestige or seniority in officialdom could dispute his leadership. This explains Weng’s antagonism to Li Hung-chang and Chang
Chih-tung and his friendship to younger men, some of whom being their junior associates. This explains also Weng's patronage of K'ang Yu-wei, as we shall see, despite wide differences in philosophical outlook and views on reform between the two men.

Weng's attempt to enlist younger men to develop his reform program brought relatively little positive result to him personally. In some instances, the results were decidedly disappointing or disastrous to him. His ability to read human character did not always match his will to lead. Yüan Shih-k'ai and Chang Yin-huan afforded two of the most unfortunate examples. Weng mentioned Yüan for the first time in 1894 when he commented upon Yüan's "fine reputation" as China's emissary to Korea where he served from 1895 until the outbreak of war. Upon meeting Yüan in the summer of 1895 Weng was impressed by Yüan's obvious talent but "lack of sincerity." Further contacts, however, changed Weng's opinion. Less than three months later, Weng felt that Yüan was "not slippery" and "could be relied upon", and that "after all this man is frank and honest". Weng's favorable opinion was strengthened by another interview shortly before the One Hundred Days, when Yüan "pledged with noble words" to dedicate himself to serving the empire. Before three months had passed, Weng was dismissed and returned south by way of Tientsin. Yüan who was still in Tientsin, sent Weng a letter with gifts, but did not see fit to pay Weng a visit as many of Weng's friends did. Weng promptly answered the letter, saying that he decided "absolutely to refuse to accept" the gifts. Apparently, Weng no longer regarded Yüan as a close friend.

Weng's association with Chang Yin-huan was even less gratifying. Chang was seven years younger than Weng and was among the junior members of high officialdom in Peking. As early as in 1890 the two men seem to have already been on rather intimate terms. They were in frequent contact since then, socially as well as in their official capacities. The first indication of Weng's disillusionment occurred in 1897 when the Shantung incident proved a diplomatic hornets' nest for Weng. Commenting on the episode Weng wrote in his diary:

Mr. Chang and I are conducting the same affair, but at one moment he stands close to me, while at another he stands aloof. Each time I went to his place he [chose to] lie in bed, chatting and laughing. I simply cannot understand [his behavior].

This, in reality, is not difficult to understand. It may be recalled that at one point in Chang's career (around 1869) he worked with Li Han-chang, Li Hung-chang's elder brother, then serving as governor-general at Wuchang.
Since 1875 Chang had associated with Li Hung-chang on various missions. Although strictly speaking not a protegé of Li’s, Chang may have deemed it unwise to align himself with Weng and to act against Li, when Weng was jockeying for diplomatic leadership against the veteran diplomat. Indeed, there is some ground for suspecting that it was Chang who divulged to Li the terms of the negotiation which he ostensibly helped Weng to conduct, and thus place Li in a position to sabotage them.

Whatever cordial feelings that may have previously existed between Weng and Chang must have dissipated themselves before the year 1897 came to an end. In fact, Weng’s ill-feeling toward Chang became so evident that the emperor suspected Weng of instigating the impeachments which were brought against Chang in the spring of 1893. By then Weng had definitely regretted his former association with Chang. He wrote in his diary:

Fragrant and fetid plants are placed in the same vase; clear and muddy waters flow in the same stream; the filth of a scoundrel contaminates a good man—isn’t this lamentable?

It would be hasty to conclude that the fault was all Weng’s. Chang was not necessarily a man of pure motivations. It was reported, for example, that Chang lent vigorous support to K’ang Yu-wei at first but soon turned against him, revealing himself as a Janus-faced double-crosser. Nevertheless, Weng must bear the blame for allowing himself to be “contaminated” by Chang. It appears that Weng made another unhappy choice in his attempt to recruit his own assistants in reform.

In the case of the strained relation between Weng and Li Hung-chang, and that between him and Chang Chih-tung, Weng must be held largely if not solely responsible, as our previous discussion shows. It remains to add here that according to Weng himself, he held Chang in high esteem and was on cordial terms with Chang until at least 1884, when Chang was appointed governor-general at Canton where he initiated a series of modernizing enterprises. And, according to Chang, by 1889 Weng’s hostile attitude toward him had become painfully evident. This drastic change of attitude on Weng’s part, from friendship to enmity, is somewhat surprising but not inexplicable. It was due not simply to difference in opinion concerning reform, for Weng began to oppose Chang’s modernizing activities precisely at the time when he himself undertook to promote reform and, as we shall presently see, the direction and scope of Chang’s efforts did not go beyond or contrary to Weng’s general idea of reform. Personal jealousy and political rivalry must have played an important part in changing Weng’s attitude toward Chang.
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It may also be added that Weng was definitely responsible for the conflict between Li Hung-chang and himself, although Li came to despise Weng as much as the other way round. Timothy Richard related that in an interview (September 25, 1895) Li Hung-chang remarked to him “that Weng T’ung-ho was very suspicious and that he had no head and only a half-doubting heart.” Weng reciprocated at about the same time (1894) in describing Li as “crooked” and criticizing him for “falling behind at every turn” in managing the affairs of the empire. Meanwhile, Weng “resorted to diverse methods to tie Li’s hands”, much like he did to Chang Chih-tung. Chang Chien, Weng’s favorite protégé, cooperated with Weng in 1895 to work for Li’s undoing by charging him with “bringing the empire to the brink of ruin”. As in the case of Chang Chih-tung, the relation between Weng and Li deteriorated from cordiality to hostility as Weng advanced in his career. The two men were bound by a tie known in imperial China as shih-chiao, “friendship in several generations”. A shih-chiao relationship was normally maintained with scrupulous care among officials and their families, both for sentimental and utilitarian reasons. Outwardly, Weng and Li did nothing to mar this relationship between themselves. Friction, however, eventually developed and by 1896, when Weng became a president of the Board of Revenue, his dislike for Li had become unmistakable. Differences in view concerning imperial financial matters contributed to their quarrels. An open break occurred in 1888 when Weng opposed Li’s railways proposal and Li criticised Weng in very harsh language. The controversy over war and peace with Japan brought their feud to a climax; neither concealed the resentment felt of the other’s actions and words.

It would be oversimplification to say that the conflict between Weng and Li was merely a matter of difference in view. There was a deeper and less tangible case. A recent writer has suggested that Weng bore an ancient grudge against Li because the latter had blackmailed the Weng family with damaging information involving it—information which Li happened to come upon during the Taip’ing campaign when Li was operating in the regions surrounding Weng’s home locality. Li may not have been above such practice, but there is no direct evidence to prove that he actually engaged in it. There is much better evidence to support the view that Weng’s political ambition made Li a major target of his maneuverings.

The above discussion strengthens the conclusion suggested in the preceding section: that as a practical politician Weng T’ung-ho often permitted considerations of expediency to outweigh moral principles and that, consequently, he often chose friends or made enemies according as the individuals in question
were regarded by him to be useful for his purposes or detrimental to his interests, rather than on the merits of their personal character or convictions. This conclusion, we believe, will prove helpful in explaining some of the important actions which Weng took on the eve and at the beginning of the One Hundred Days of reform.

III

The Imperial Rulers And Weng’s Relation With Them

Historians generally agree that the conflict between Emperor Te-tsung and the empress dowager constituted a major factor that determined the course of events in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The coup d’état of 1898 marked the climax not only of the struggles between reformers and their opponents but also of the clash between Te-tsung and his supporters, ći tang (“the emperor faction”) and Tz’u-hsi and her supporters, hou tang (“the empress faction”).

A number of men were identified as members of these rival factions. Outstanding on the side of the empress dowager were Jung-lu, Kang-i, Hsü T’ung, and Sun Yü-wen, and in the opposite camp, Ch’ang-ling, Wang Ming-huan, An Wei-chün, and Wen T’ing-shih. Weng T’ung-ho was regarded by some as virtually the leader of “the emperor faction”, although speaking accurately he was pro-emperor without being anti-empress dowager. Weng was, however, personally concerned about the conflict between the imperial rulers and his course of action during the years immediately preceding the One Hundred Days was influenced considerably by that conflict.

It was a patent fact that the relations among the immediate members of the imperial family had been far from harmonious during the T’ung-chih and Kuaag-hsü reigns. The T’ung-chih emperor had incurred the lasting resentment of his own mother, Tz’u-hsi, in failing to comply with her wishes in the choice of his imperial consort. The Kuang-hsü emperor, not being Tz’u-hsi’s own son, found himself in a situation even less congenial than what his predecessor faced. Prince Ch’ün (I-huan), the emperor’s father, must have had foreknowledge of what was in store for his child when he wept and fainted upon hearing Tz’u-hsi’s decision to choose Tsai-t’ien to ascend the throne.

Personal traits of the empress dowager contributed much to the unsatisfactory atmosphere in the imperial palaces. Whatever may have been her
qualifications as a ruler,\textsuperscript{154} it appears certain that a domineering woman with a strong will but weak affections, Tz'u-hsi was too often more shrewd than truly wise. She was, like many “outstanding women” in history, of the “tiger-cat type.”\textsuperscript{155} To make the situation particularly difficult for the young emperor she was said to have possessed “unquenchable ambition”, a “love of power”, and “a physical vitality which almost never failed.”\textsuperscript{156} In addition, she was inordinately vain and fiercely cruel toward those who dared to displease her.\textsuperscript{157}

Tz'u-hsi's austere attitude toward the emperor was proverbial. Liang Ch'i-ch'ao charged her with having actually being cruel to him. Quoting the words of K'ou Lien-ts'ai, a eunuch loyal to the emperor, Liang alleged that the emperor was subjected to reprimand and whipping, and was made to kneel for long hours at a time as a disciplinary measure. As a result, “the emperor faced the Western Empress as if she were a lioness or tigress”.\textsuperscript{158} No one could prove the accuracy of these words, but other sources generally confirm the view that Tz'u-hsi was devoid of motherly tenderness toward the emperor.\textsuperscript{159} She may not have been purposely or particularly “cruel” to the emperor. But as she was noted for her ability to inculcate fear into those who surrounded her,\textsuperscript{160} it is probable that she made no effort to spare the child emperor of her accustomed treatment of her inferiors.

The strained relation between the aunt and the nephew (officially, mother and son) was complicated by the strained relation between the emperor and his imperial wife (Tz'u-hsi's niece) who was chosen by Tz'u-hsi “less with a view to the emperor's felicity than to the furtherance of her own purposes”. “From the first”, it was said, the young empress “was on bad terms with the emperor. It was no secret at court that they indulged in fierce and protracted quarrels.” The emperor developed a marked preference for the society of the imperial concubines, Chin-fei and Chen-fei,\textsuperscript{161} who inevitably earned the resentment of the empress dowager,\textsuperscript{162} and rendered the entire situation worse than before.

The situation was further aggravated by actions of those officials and eunuchs who willfully or unwittingly sowed discord between the imperial rulers. The officials belonging to the so-called “emperor faction” and “empress faction” must be held partly responsible. But the greatest damage seems to have been done by some of the eunuchs.

Despite “ancestral regulations” which aimed at minimizing the potential influence of eunuchs on imperial affairs,\textsuperscript{163} and despite repeated impeachments brought up by officials against the reportedly offensive conduct of palace servants,\textsuperscript{164} the power of these men had a tendency to wax as the dynasty went
on. Their interference with matters outside of the Forbidden City went unnoticed until it became too flagrant to ignore. Even as early as in Chia-ch'ing times, a eunuch was said to have ruined a high official in the emperor's confidence. With the empress dowager holding the reins of government eunuchs rapidly attained unprecedented importance at the imperial court. The decapitation of the notorious An Te-hai in 1879 did not alter the general trend. In fact, owing to the strategic position which the eunuchs occupied under the empress dowager, some of them acquired immense power and influence. They were persons who had constant and direct contact with Tz'u-hsi: often it was through them that officials gained access to her. In addition to facilities for "peddling influence", a practice in which they were said to have widely indulged, there existed many opportunities for them to speak well or ill of officials as they chose. Moreover, they made themselves indispensable to the suspicious Tz'u-hsi by spying upon officials and getting information (or misinformation) from outside the palaces. This alone would have been enough to make the eunuchs feared even by the most powerful of the officials. It is hardly surprising that Li Lien-ying, Tz'u-hsi's chief eunuch, became widely known as the most powerful person at court, a center of extensive corruption, and a major influence on the empress dowager. The charges made by K'ang Yu-wei and by Wen Ching were not without corroboration by unbiased, well-informed writers.

Nor is it surprising that Li Lien-ying and many of his associates sided with the empress dowager and "had little respect" for the emperor. In fact, they had no scruples in helping Tz'u-hsi to make the life of the emperor miserable. Li Lien-ying, in particular, was thought by some to have been largely responsible for instigating the enmity between the imperial rulers. His hatred of the emperor may have been "one of the first causes of the coup d'état of 1895". We should of course guard against overestimating the importance of the chief eunuch, but there is little doubt that he had done more to worsen the relation between Tz'u-hsi and Kuang-hsiu than any official belonging to "the empress faction".

Li Lien-ying, it was said, had more than one reason to dislike the emperor. He was flogged by the emperor's order in 1890 for showing disrespect to his majesty. Even without such an episode the fact that the emperor's increased interest in reforming the administration was bound to bring him into sharp conflict with Li whose corrupt practices could continue only if the status quo was maintained. On several occasions the emperor actually undertook to undo the offensive deeds of some of the eunuchs. Finally, when the emperor showed too much consideration for foreigners and too much appreciation of
foreign ways to suit the empress dowager, Li Lien-ying added fuel to her xenophobia by spreading anti-foreign rumors, thus indirectly further intensified her suspicion of the emperor.\textsuperscript{190} Even without express order from her, Li Lien-ying must have been quite ready to report to her the emperor’s supposedly unfilial ways—to set to naught the rules and institutions of the imperial ancestors—by spying upon him.\textsuperscript{191} It is conceivable that the emperor’s premature demise in 1908 was welcomed by the pro-empress eunuchs, even if they did not hasten it.\textsuperscript{192}

Not every eunuch, of course, stood against the emperor. K’ou Lien-ts’ai, a hitherto obscure individual, was “summarily beheaded for venturing to advise the Emperor to select his own staff of personal attendants, so as to avoid the constant espionage of the Empress Dowager.”\textsuperscript{193} It appears, therefore, that the partisan division among court officials had its counterpart among the eunuchs. Indeed, K’ao Lien-ts’ai may well have been a mouthpiece of officials belonging to “the emperor faction.”\textsuperscript{194} The support offered by the few eunuchs like K’ou, however, was too feeble to be useful; it merely made the circumstances worse for the emperor.

The root of the trouble, it must be emphasized, lay in the basic conflict of interest between the two rulers. Tz’u-hsi’s motive in choosing Tsai-t’ien, a child of six (1875), to succeed the T’ung-chih emperor was none other than to prolong her role as empress dowager, namely, to continue “to listen reports on affairs of state behind screens.” Her reportedly cruel treatment of the child emperor may have been calculated to instill fear in his mind so that he would remain forever obedient to her. She apparently succeeded in this to a remarkable extent, although later developments proved that her success was short of complete. She went through the gesture of kuei-cheng, “returning the rulership,” to the emperor in 1887. She was, however, “beseeched” to assume the task of hsün-cheng, “giving instruction in administration” to the emperor for two years, thus delaying the formal relinquishment of an authority which she had been wielding more or less freely for over a quarter of a century.\textsuperscript{195} She was then (1889) in her middle fifties, while the emperor was a young man of eighteen. Still strong in body and will, she “had no intention of becoming a negligible quantity.”\textsuperscript{196} Meanwhile, events and circumstances quickly convinced the emperor of the urgency “to do great things” in order to salvage the sinking empire.\textsuperscript{197} An inevitable struggle for power between the two rulers developed rapidly, reaching the climax in 1898.

The first crisis came in 1894-5, five years after the empress dowager formally ended the hsün-cheng regime. But instead of leaving the emperor (now over twenty-three) to shoulder the responsibilities of a full-fledged ruler, she
continued to make important decisions, including those concerning international relations. For instance, early in 1895, when Prince Kung called her attention to the emperor’s reluctance to summon Li Hung-chang to Peking for consultation, she said, with apparent displeasure, “I can make one half of the decisions.” Her overbearing attitude toward the emperor was too obvious to escape the notice of officials who sympathized with the emperor. Some of these men tried to put a stop to Tzu-u-hsi’s interference by urging the emperor to assert his independence. Instead of improving the situation, however, they were cashiered by the Empress Dowager for what they dared to try.

The emperor himself, it appears, was not in a position to take the advice of these men. In an edict (KH 21/10/17) which dismissed Ch’ang-ling, a vice-president of the Board of Revenue, and Wang Ming-luan, a vice-president of the Board of Civil appointments, and threatened with severe punishment any other official who dared to follow their examples, the emperor is represented as saying:

We have been enjoying the benefit of the Empress Dowager’s motherly instruction. In matters great and small, ranging from military affairs to details in daily living, she has taken meticulous care of Us. But ignorant, uninstructed persons who misconstrued Our intentions, such as vice-presidents of Boards Wang Ming-luan and Ch’ang-ling, uttered indiscreet words while in audience with Us;... their action came near to sowing discord (between her majesty and Ourselves)...

But the the emperor did not remain docile for long. His mother (Tzu-u-hsi’s sister) died in 1896, and “the last bond of amity and possible reconciliation” between the nephew and his aunt disappeared. The occupation of Kiaochow Bay by German troops (December 1897) so aroused the emperor that he was reported to have threatened to abdicate unless he was given free hand in conducting the imperial administration. According to one account, his threat was presented to the Empress Dowager through Pring Ch’ing (I-k’uang). According to others, she consented to let the emperor do things as he chose but reserved the right to have her say when he failed to achieve results. It is difficult to ascertain the accuracy of these reports, but they afford a reasonable explanation of the fact that despite his lack of authority and habitual fear of the Empress Dowager, the emperor eventually launched the reforms of 1898.

This did not mean, however, that she had given whole-hearted approval of his reform program or that she had decided to grant him complete freedom of action. Her consent mentioned above could have been only a qualified one grudgingly given. Subsequent events showed that she was ready to resume power at the earliest opportunity. Moreover, her love of power, her inveterate
dislike and suspicion of the emperor, and her unreasoned xenophobia afforded ample opportunity to anti-reformers whose bigotry or selfish interests were affected by reform. These “conservatives” rallied around her and resorted to every available means to undermine the emperor in order to put a complete stop to his reform program. There was some ground, therefore, for the view held by a number of the reformers that to remove the empress dowager or to render her powerless was an indispensable condition of successful reform.

It may also be said that the conflict between the two imperial rulers had some of its roots in difference of temperament and outlook. For one thing, the empress dowager had little confidence in the emperor’s abilities as a ruler and did little to cultivate them. During the period of hsìn-chêng (1887-9) all the dispatches transmitted through the Tsou-shih-ch’u (with eunuchs in charge) went to her; she only “occasionally showed one or two of these documents to the emperor who could not touch any of them without her permission.” On the eve of the emperors’ “assumption of rulership” in 1889, she tried to tie his hands by extorting from him a promise that he would never “alter the established rules”. As late as in 1904, long after the dust of the Boxer uprising had settled, the empress dowager continued to hold a low opinion of her nephew’s knowledge and acumen. “Do you know”, she said, “I have often thought that I am the most clever woman that ever lived....What does the emperor know?”

Her contemptuous opinion, however, was not shared by all who had come into contact with the emperor. Der Ling thought that “He was a most intelligent man with a wonderful memory and learned very quickly.” In contrast, the empress dowager had no aptitude for learning, despite her self-confidence. Weng T’ung-ho, the emperor’s tutor for many years, generally confirmed Der Ling’s appraisal of the emperor.

The emperor was not exactly an angel. Since his childhood he had been a person of strong emotions and hot temper. When he was about eight years old he impressed Weng T’ung-ho as an intelligent boy with a dislike to being compelled by others and a taste for flattery. Weng found it necessary to speak to him long and earnestly on the undesirability of being headstrong and suspicious. The young emperor frequently became irritated by trivial things and readily gave violent demonstrations of his ire. He was, however, frankly affectionate and sentimental. He wept in front of his tutor when he referred to his father (Prince Ch’ün) who was seriously ill but whom he could not visit. He broke into tears when he discussed with court officials the impossible situation which the empire faced in 1895, and when he read the
account of the partition of Poland, presented to him by K'ang Yu-wei in the spring of 1895. A man of such disposition could not have found it easy to live in harmony with the empress dowager.

Incompatibility of views further widened the chasm between Kuang-hsü and Tz'u-hsi. It is easy to over-stress the importance of the struggle for power between them, as, for example, K'ang Yu-wei did when he charged that the conflict between them had nothing to do with political principles. Wang Chao held a similar opinion. Chang Ping-lin accused the emperor of the same lack of principles and further alleged that he used the reform movement merely as a means to consolidate his shaky personal position. These were unadorned partisan opinions and cannot be accepted without reservation. For, while it is inaccurate to describe the empress dowager as a “conservative” or the emperor as a “progressive”, it would be oversimplifying matters to rule out differences in their views concerning imperial policies or to disregard the differences in general outlook that existed between them as individuals of widely different ages. In the years 1895 to 1898 the emperor was in his middle twenties, whereas Tz'u-hsi was in her early sixties. It would have been unusual, indeed, if this discrepancy in age was not reflected in their ways of looking at things, which in turn influenced their actions.

The empress dowager, it must be pointed out, was not opposed to adopting “Western methods” for the purpose of “self-strengthening.” She was adverse only to altering or a bandoning the accustomed ways and traditional values of imperial China. She held fast to these not only because she was deeply steeped in them but also because she saw that much of her authority and prestige stemmed from the basic precepts of the traditional ethical code — in particular, the precept of filial piety. As late as in 1903 she declared, “I don’t mind owning up that I like old ways the best, and I don’t see any reason why we should adopt the foreign style.” Another statement made at about the same time is even more significant:

I may be conservative in saying that I admire our custom and will not change it as long as I live. You see our people are taught to be polite from their earliest childhood, and just look back at the oldest teachings and compare them with the new. People seem to like the latter the best. I mean that the new idea is to be Christians, to chop up their Ancestral Tablets and burn them.

Shortly after she made the above statement, she confided to Der Ling: “K'ang Yu-wei... tried to make the Emperor believe that [Christian] religion. No one shall believe [it] as long as I live.”
The youthful emperor, however, had much less interest in honoring the "ancestral tablets" and less antipathy to "that religion." He became deeply engrossed in books on Western learning, especially during 1895-7 and, thanks to the zeal of some missionaries, he became interested in the New Testament, a fact which lent point to Tzu-hsi's remark quoted above. He developed a taste for toys made in foreign countries and showed keen interest in learning the English language—a predilection which displeased Weng T'ung-ho.

It seems that novelty which usually appeals to youth, was at work here; it may have reenforced the emperor's fervent wish to make China prosperous and strong by fashioning the imperial institutions after western models. Psychologically, he was thoroughly conditioned for making the bold moves of 1898, as his aunt was for condemning these very moves. Thus, about a half dozen years before he met K'ang Yu-wei, the emperor had already displayed a tendency toward Westernization.

The differences in outlook between the two rulers were of course not absolute. As already said, the empress dowager was not completely opposed to adopting "Western methods". According to one source, she even told the emperor, sometime before the One Hundred Days of 1898, that reform had been her own wish for a long time. That this statement was not without substance may be seen from the fact that it was she who approved, at the beginning of the T'ung-chih reign, Tseng Kuo-fan's proposal to send students abroad, to build steamships, and to manufacture Western style weapons of war, although she warned against "committing sins against the ancestors" by imitating Japan's course of reform. Many years later, when the Kuang-hsi emperor showed her Feng Kuei-fen's K'ang-i, she was favorably impressed by the ideas of reform it contains, although again she cautioned the emperor against taking rash steps. It was only then that he and Weng felt free to go ahead with reform. All this points to the fact that Tzu-hsi stood close to the position of the leaders of the "self-strengthening" movement and of those officials who were in favor of moderate reform. She shared with them the view that "Western methods" should be adopted but at the same time the empire's own cultural heritage must be upheld. She subscribed, in other words, to the theory of reform as summarized in the famous formula, "Chinese learning for the foundation, Western learning for application". She opposed the reform movement of 1898 partly because the emperor and his advisers pushed their reform program too far beyond the limits which she had set, and partly because their moves threatened to relegate her to political oblivion.

As a matter of fact, it appears that before the conflict between the two imperial rulers became irreconcilable, the empress dowager's conditional
acceptance of reform gave hope to some officials who saw the possibility to reconcile the emperor to her and to induce them to work together for the cause of saving the dynasty through reform.

Weng T'ung-ho was one of those who saw this possibility and tried actually to exploit it. From the practical point of view, it was evident to anyone who was familiar with the fact that during the years covering the T'ung-chih and the first part of the Kuang-hsü reigns the empress dowager had firmly consolidated her power and occupied an unshakable position at court. It was sheer folly to try to dislodge her. Moreover, from the ideological point of view, it was clear that as the "mother" of the emperor she had the indisputable claim to filial obedience from him. It was a serious breach of one of the most sacred precepts of "imperial Confucianism" for the emperor to question her authority over himself as well as over the affairs of state. The high position of the empress dowager, therefore, resulted from certain essential features of the imperial system, quite apart from "the strength and vigor" of her personality. Assuming on the one hand that the person and authority of Tz'u-hsi were inviolable and, on the other hand, that the emperor's legitimate aspirations should not be ignored, the only sensible way to deal with the misunderstandings and conflicts between the two rulers was to resolve these difficulties through conciliation.

Weng T'ung-ho was of course not alone in correctly interpreting the situation. Others were known to have been in favor of reconciliation. Timothy Richard, for instance, raised this question with K'ang Yu-wei, shortly before the coup d'etat of 1898: "Is it really impossible to reconcile the two imperial rulers?" An editor of Chih-hsin Pao, "The Reformer China" (organ of K'ang Yu-wei's group published in Macao), echoed the same view in an editorial entitled "That Today's Reform Must Begin with the Conciliation of the Two Imperial Rulers". Yang Jui, one of the "martyrs" of 1898, was reported to have given the emperor this advice: "The empress dowager personally gave the throne to your majesty; your majesty ought to set an example to the empire in the performance of filial duty, by paying due respect to her wishes." According to one source, the emperor himself favored conciliation as a condition to bringing prosperity and strength to the empire. He, in fact, tried actually to live up to this conviction. The reform movement of 1898 was not launched without her knowledge. Before the emperor proclaimed each new measure he invariably reported to the empress dowager, although she sometimes showed her displeasure by remaining silent
or indicated her conditional approval by saying: “So long as you keep the ancestral tablets and do not burn them, and so long as you do not cut off your queue, I shall not interfere.”

In a few known instances efforts were made by officials to effect the desired conciliation. One of these men was Wang Chao who, in the summer of 1893 and at the height of the reform movement, submitted a memorial proposing, among other things, that the emperor accompany the empress dowager on an inspection tour of neighboring countries. Wang supported his proposal with these words:

Since China’s communication with the West, our Empress Dowager has been conducting the affairs of state for thirty years. All the changes and reforms (effected during this period) have been initiated by the Empress Dowager and carried on by the Emperor. At present, it seems suitable (for the Emperor) to accompany the Empress Dowager to tour neighboring countries, with a view to studying the merits and shortcomings (of their institutions and practices), and to deciding what to adopt or not to adopt. In this way, the Emperor carries out reforms in compliance with the wishes of the Empress Dowager, attributing every good deed to the Imperial Mother. By thus ruling the empire with the principle of filial piety, who dares to voice dissent?

Wang Chao explained in a note that the proposal he made was in reality a pretext for introducing his main point, namely, to bring about conciliation of the imperial rulers. Since, Wang reasoned, the conflict between them was essentially a struggle for power, the path to reform might be made easier by giving satisfaction to Tzu-hsi’s vanity and “will to dominate.”

The most sustained effort at conciliation, however, was made by Weng T’ung-ho. He was, in some ways, in an especially favorable position to make the attempt. Prior to his dismissal he had enjoyed simultaneously the confidence of the emperor and the empress dowager. And he had more than one reason for taking the action. He, like the empress dowager, was committed to upholding the traditional moral values. There is some ground for saying, therefore, that Weng “took filial piety as the basis on which a reconciliation of the imperial rulers might be effected.” Moreover, he owed much to the empress dowager for his rise in officialdom, perhaps even more than to the emperor. Even in the last years of his career every major imperial favor was granted him only with the knowledge and consent of the empress dowager. Thus, in 1897, when the emperor had nominally assumed full authori-
ty, Weng was made an associate grand secretary only after the emperor received her express approval.

By the very nature of the case, Weng's attempt at conciliation must be made unobserved and unobtrusively. A number of actions which he took between the crucial years 1886 (when the empress dowager announced her intention to relinquish authority) and 1894 (when the relation between the imperial rulers took a turn decidedly for the worse) suggest that Weng had been trying to keep the emperor from arousing Tz'u-hsi's suspicion or incurring her displeasure. For example, Weng advised the emperor to entreat the empress dowager to postpone her retirement. The emperor followed his advice, thereby bringing about the hsüan-cheng regime (1886-8). Weng perhaps intended this move to be a gesture to show Tz'u-hsi that the emperor was not anxious to grab authority and that he regarded her guidance as indispensable. Weng probably did not advise the emperor to entreat her to postpone the termination of the hsüan-cheng regime in 1889, but he continued to counsel the emperor to respect the feelings of Tz'u-hsi who had by then officially retired from government. One revealing instance occurred in 1894 when the emperor was confronted by the exasperating situation created by the Korean crisis. Weng advised the emperor against issuing an "edict of self-censure" suggested by some officials. He pointed out that to do so would have unavoidably cast unfavorable reflections upon the empress dowager. He argued:

Could matters such as the construction work (i.e., the Summer Palace built in compliance with the empress dowager's undeclared wish) and the eunuchs be mentioned? or should these be left out altogether? To leave them out would be dishonest; and to mention them, improper.

The view, therefore, that Weng was the leader of "the emperor faction" while not entirely groundless, is somewhat misleading. It is true in so far as it points to the fact that since 1889 (namely, after the emperor assumed nominal authority) Weng worked loyally for the cause of the emperor. It would be false, however, if it is interpreted to mean that in serving the emperor Weng worked for the elimination of the empress dowager. It is more accurate to say with a Chinese historian that Weng "gained the favor and confidence of the empress dowager as well as of the emperor, by mediating between them."

This does not imply that Weng urged the emperor to remain content with being "nothing more than a boy" or "being of no consequence at all." That would have made Weng a member of "the empress faction" instead of a mediator between the two contenders for imperial power. The logic of the situation
may have convinced Weng of the wisdom of being patient, assuming that in
the late 1890's he began to side secretly more and more with the emperor.
Tz'u-hsi, after all, was thirty years older than her nephew who could therefore
afford to wait. The most prudent course of action, obviously, was to avoid an
open break with the empress dowager and, at the same time, to make the condi-
tions favorable for the emperor's eventual assumption of full sovereignty, in
fact as well as in name.

The chief means whereby Weng sought to prepare for the emperor's assump-
tion of real authority seems to have been the promotion of administrative
reform which promised to serve the emperor's cause in two ways. It would
reduce the empress dowager's power and influence by doing away with some
of the inept personnel, vested interests, and corrupt practices that existed under
her rule; and, at the same time, enhance the emperor's power and prestige by
identifying him with a movement which avowedly would give prosperity and
strength to the empire. As every astute politician knows, one of the best ways
to achieve preeminence is to become the sponsor of a worthwhile cause. In
the case of China of Weng's time, a program of reform would command the
support of many. Moreover, it was a line of action acceptable to Tz'u-hsi
herself. Properly pursued, it should afford a common objective for both the
emperor and the empress dowager. Accordingly, during the Chinese New Year
season of 1889 when the hsien-cheng regime came to an official end, Weng
T'ung-ho and Sun Chia-nai introduced the emperor to the concept of reform—
the first preparatory step to help him to attain eminence. The emperor proved
extremely receptive. Although at times he showed too much zeal in "Western-
ization" to suit the moderate views of Weng who was no more willing than
the empress dowager to see the ancestral tablets burned, his attitude made
it possible for Weng to take aggressive measures in promoting reform. Early
in 1894, presumably on the advice of Weng, the emperor began to implement
minor administrative reforms, with a view to putting a stop to some of the
most flagrantly sluggish or corrupt ways of Peking officialdom. For instance,
within one month's time, two high officials were punished for taking unduly
long leaves of absence. A number of other officials were cashiered or demoted
for various offences. All presidents and vice-presidents of Boards were
sternly commanded to appear regularly in their offices each day. These ac-
tions dealt with some of the malpractices which Weng had previously observed
with concern. He understandably remarked with satisfaction "that a new
atmosphere now prevails in officialdom" as a result of the emperor's action.

Everything, however, did not turn out as Weng hoped. The emperor's en-
thusiasm for reform exceeded the bounds which Weng (and Tz’u-hsi) wished to set. And, as we shall explain later, K’ang Yu-wei whom Weng intended to be his chief assistant in reform, worked against Weng’s concept of reform as well as contrary to his political interests. The friction and ill-will generated by the One Hundred Days’ reform which Weng in a real sense helped to bring about, aggravated already tense relation between the imperial rulers, instead of easing it. Weng, who had hitherto enjoyed the emperor’s confidence, became the prime target of “the empress faction”; and in his eleventh hour attempt to dissociate with K’ang Yu-wei, he discredited himself in the eyes of the reformers.

Weng T’ung-ho’s endeavor to reconcile the emperor and the empress dowager through reform thus proved to be an impossible task. The misunderstandings between the imperial rulers grew out of an inherently difficult situation; no amount of statesmanship or political maneuvering could remove them. The temperaments and outlooks of the elderly aunt and the youthful nephew were so incompatible: that any action taken by either one beyond the usual routine was likely to arouse the suspicion or resentment of the other. It is not surprising at all that the emperor’s resolve to renovate the administration was, according to some sources, interpreted by the empress dowager as a concealed scheme to wrest control from her.23c Enemies of reform promptly rallied around her, adding strength to the forces that moved inexorably toward the catastrophe of 1898. Ironically, Weng T’ung-ho who sought to serve the emperor by promoting reform, contributed unknowingly to the emperor’s undoing.

Weng’s friendship with the emperor,23d somewhat ironically also, rendered him an unsuitable agent of conciliation. He enjoyed the emperor’s confidence to such an extent that he was naturally taken as the emperor’s man. As some foreign observers had it, he was “practically the emperor of China”;23f although the sovereign who at the time occupied the throne, did not have much power himself. Between 1894 and 1898 the emperor sought Weng’s guidance on practically everything of importance.24c He was in all probability chiefly responsible for the emperor’s decision to wage the disastrous war with Japan, against the counsel of a large number of high officials.24d In the eyes of Tz’u-hsi (and of all his political opponents), Weng must have appeared to have too much influence over the emperor. Significantly, less than three months after the defeat of 1894, the empress dowager ordered the termination of the services of all imperial tutors; tutors in Chinese studies were allowed to continue on a reduced schedule for a while longer, only upon the earnest
entreaty of the emperor and Weng himself. Tz'u-hsi's move, according to some, was an attempt to diminish the opportunities of contact between Weng and his pupil.

The empress dowager seems to have become suspicious of Weng after she dismissed Wang Ming-luan and Ch'ang-ling in 1895. K'ang-i alleged that Weng was a member of "the emperor faction" as much as Wang Ming-luan, and that Weng was the leader of a small "anti-empress clique". These allegations may not be completely justified. Yet the fact that such allegations were made shows that despite Weng's desire to be a mediator, his personal behavior and his relation with the emperor made him readily an object of partisan suspicion.

The emperor did things that hardly improve the situation. Contrary to his best intentions, he widened the gulf between his aunt and himself. In the summer of 1894 he began to make a few minor decisions without consulting her. The important decision to make war with Japan was reached without her positive support. When he revealed his willingness to modify the accustomed ways of the empire (1896-7), he took a further step that led to the final break with the empress dowager. These moves may have been made without the advice of Weng T'ung-ho. Taking the decision of 1894 as a clue, one is inclined to think that Weng probably was in favor of some of these moves. After all, the hsin-cheng regime had ended years before and the emperor must at least partially justify his role as a full-fledged sovereign. As the mediator between the imperial ruler, Weng naturally wished to see the contenders of authority meet each other halfway. Meanwhile, he continued to promote reform and was soon to introduce K'ang Yu-wei into the scene, thus supplying the final factor that made the tragedy of 1898.

IV

Weng T'ung-ho And K'ang Yu-wei

(a) Their Views on Reform

We shall now ascertain the role which Weng T'ung-ho played in the reform movement of 1898 and the factors that led to his dismissal on June 15 of that year. Our inquiry may conveniently begin with his relation with K'ang Yu-wei. Two questions pose themselves: (1) To what extent did Weng accept or support K'ang's ideas of reform? and (2) To what extent was Weng responsible for starting K'ang on his reform career?

The answer to either of these questions is far from simple. Records are relatively meagre and accounts do not always agree. Some of these are obviously biased or possibly colored by partisan feelings; and it is not easy to
evaluate the claims or counter-claims of their authors. The first question stated above, however, may be answered with a fair degree of accuracy by comparing the views of the two men in so far as these are ascertainable. K'ang's ideas on reform are well known. Although Weng did not formulate in writing his views in any systematic way, he had given sufficiently clear indications of the general drift of his thinking.

It can safely be assumed that since 1889 when Weng began to indoctrinate the emperor with the concept of reform, he had been in general agreement with K'ang as to the necessity of reform. Agreeing with K'ang also, Weng seems to have believed that reform should go beyond the mere adoption of Western technology and implements and should, as Weng put it, "begin with the fundamentals of internal administration". There was, however, a vital difference between the views of the two men: K'ang had much less respect for the established imperial tradition (both in its ideological and institutional aspects) than Weng who stood quite close to the position maintained by Feng Kuei-fen, Ch'en Chih, T'ang Chen, and Chang Chih-tung. In other words, K'ang was willing to modify the imperial system by taking advantage of modern Western experiences in government, education, and social life in general as well as in science and technology, whereas Weng refused to go beyond the adoption of "Western methods" which should serve merely to supplement "Chinese learning" but not to modify it.

That Weng was in essential agreement with Feng, Ch'en, and T'ang may be inferred from the fact that he presented to the emperor in 1889 Feng's K'ang-i and about five years later, Ch'en's Yung-shu and T'ang's Wei-yen, all these works containing specific recommendations of reform and covering a wide range of topics. Weng would not have used these works to indoctrinate the emperor in the theory and practice of reform, if he had not approved of the leading ideas outlined in them. A brief survey of these works, therefore, should give us a reliable clue to Weng's own views.

Feng Kuei-fen's K'ang-i was published in its entirety in 1884, although portions of it had appeared before that year. After arguing that China was confronted by a completely new situation brought about by the arrival of the Westerners and that, as a consequence, she must adopt the things in which Westerners excelled in order for her to survive, Feng set forth his basic theory of reform in this rhetorical question:

If we let the moral principles and ethical teachings of China serve as the original foundation and let them be supplemented by the methods
used by various [Western] countries for the attainment of prosperity and strength, would it not be the best of all procedures?²⁵⁴

The ultimate objective of reform as envisaged by Feng, therefore, was to enable the empire to achieve political equality with foreign powers. It was not to alter China's moral tradition or institutional system in order to bring her into a cultural rapprochement with the West. As Feng put it:

We must try to discover some means to become their equal.... Regarding the present situation there are several major points: in making use of the ability of our manpower, with no one neglected, we are inferior to the barbarians; in securing the benefits of the soil, with nothing wasted, we are inferior to the barbarians; in maintaining a close relationship between the ruler and the people, with no barrier between them we are inferior to the barbarians; and in the necessary accord of word with deed, we are also inferior to the barbarians. The way to correct these four points lies with ourselves, for they can be changed at once if only our emperor would set the general policy right....

What then we have to learn from the barbarians is only one thing, solid ships and effective guns.

Feng then went on to quote with approval Wei Yüan's well-known formula: "Learn the superior techniques of the barbarians in order to keep them in check."²⁵⁵ Whatever administrative, economic, and military reforms were required should be effected by China's own efforts and within the frame work of the existing system.

There is little doubt that Weng T'ung-ho attached great importance of the Kang-i. For a few months after he presented it to the emperor he read it again and commented enthusiastically that Feng's suggestions were "most pertinent to the needs of the time."²⁵⁶ It is also probable that his statement made in 1898, in reply to the emperor's question concerning reform, namely, it should begin with internal administration,²⁵⁷ reflected the influence of Feng Kuei-fen.

Ch'en Chih's Yung-shu, "Trite Writings", was written probably soon after the war of 1894.²⁵⁸ Ch'en went somewhat farther than Feng Kuei-fen in his proposals of reform, but he took a general standpoint essentially identical with that of Feng. Ch'en made a sharp distinction between tao, "principles", and chi, "instruments", and asserted that China was anciently in possession of both. She lost the latter as the result of placing exclusive emphasis on
the former. Western countries, on the contrary, have never possessed “true principles” that govern human personality and human relationships (tao), but have developed the practical arts and sciences (ch’i) which latter, he reiterated, had their origins in ancient China. The increasingly close contact of China with Western countries was an indication that “heaven would return the ch’i to China and make tao prevail in the West”. In practical terms, this meant that China should preserve her moral tradition (i.e., Confucianism) which was eternally valid and unchangeable, but meanwhile should adopt the techniques and instruments that had made Western countries prosperous and strong. With the fundamental principle of reform thus established, Ch’en proceeded to recommend a wide range of changes, educational, administrative, military, economic, and diplomatic—suggestions which foreshadowed many of the hsin cheng, “new measures”, of 1895.

T’ang Chen’s Wei-yen, “Words of Warning”, is shorter work than either of the above mentioned books, but it represents substantially the same standpoint and covers similar topics on reform. T’ang repeated the familiar argument that “the governmental and educational systems of the Westerners were mostly based on the Chou-li, “The Constitution of Chou”, and that their science and technology stemmed from the writings of ancient Chinese philosophers, such as Kung-tzu, Mo-tzu, and Hui-nan-tzu. China succeeded in maintaining tao, the basic principles of morality, but allowed ch’i, knowledge and skill in material life, to fall into oblivion, leaving Westerners alone to excel in the latter. That being the case, it would not have been shameful for China to adopt “Western methods”, for this would in reality amount to receiving back what she had given to the West. In T’ang’s own words: “They have built upon what we had invented, why should we not make innovations of what they copied [from us]?” Reform, accordingly, was to be effected in two directions. First, China must modernize herself by freely borrowing Western “instruments” (ch’i) but, at the same time, zealously preserve the “principles” (tao) that were her own. Second, China must rid herself of the time-worn, useless or harmful practices that beset her educational, administrative, and economic system. This, T’ang made clear, did not mean that Chinese traditional values should be replaced by Western religion. On the contrary, those values should be preserved; and when the empire regained strength and prestige as the result of judicious reform, the way was open to the realization of ta-lung, “the great harmony”, namely, the conversion of the West to Confucianism.

The views of Ch’en and T’ang, we think, should prove equally congenial
to Weng T'ung-ho. And there is good reason to suppose that Weng also subscribed to the general views of Chang Chih-tung, although Chang's major work on reform, *Ch'iao-hsien p'ien*, appeared in 1898, too late to exert formative influence on Weng's thinking.\(^{265}\)

A Western missionary once characterized Chang Chih-tung as “a Chinese to the backbone” and justified his opinion thus:

To him [Chang] there is no country like China, no people like the Chinese, and no religion to be compared with the Confucian...He rests his hope on two things—namely, the renaissance of Confucianism and the adoption of Western science and methods. The old is to form the moral basis, and the new is to be used for practical purposes.\(^{266}\)

This, we think, is a remarkably accurate characterization of Chang's intellectual outlook and a precise restatement of his famous formula, *Chung-hsüeh wei t'ai, hsi-hsüeh wei yung*. For, according to Chang, “reform” did not mean the alteration of the established tradition of the empire; it meant, in reality, the preservation of that tradition by wisely selecting and adopting those elements of Western civilization that had proved efficacious in giving Western countries their material resources and military might. Reform, in other words, was not a step toward Westernization but an indispensable means to insure the continuance of the Confucian empire.

It is interesting to note that Ku Hung-ming who associated with Chang for a number of years, underscored Chang's characteristic position by contrasting it with that of Li Hung-chang. According to Ku, one of the basic differences between the two men was that while the former had a profound respect for China's moral heritage, the latter devoted his attention exclusively to matters of immediate, practical advantage. The defeat of 1894 convinced Chang that China could not be preserved unless she adopted what he called "Western learning", but the true purpose of reform always remained the preservation of the Confucian tradition which alone made China "superior" to all other countries. To impair or abandon that tradition was to defeat the very aim of reform.\(^{267}\)

It appears that, speaking generally, this was also the position taken by Weng T'ung-ho. Weng as much as Chang Chih-tung was a product of the established Confucian tradition, and was equally proud of it. To Weng, therefore, "reform" could have been nothing more than adopting some of the devices and implements of the "barbarians" with which to defend the morally superior Chinese empire against foreign aggression, and refurbishing the administrative
practices so as to prevent the benefits of these "Western methods" from being lost in the notoriously inefficient and corrupt officialdom of Peking. His cultural pride, reinforced by his anti-foreign sentiments, prevented him from perceiving anything worthwhile in Western civilization beyond those elements which men like Feng Kuei-fen, Ch'en Chih, T'ang Chen, and Chang Chih-tung had recognized as useful within definite limits. His appreciation of the friendship of a few Westerners did not change his basic attitude toward the West; for he held fast to the assumption that all foreigners were despicable unless they proved themselves to be otherwise.

Furthermore, there was some similarity between the intellectual outlooks of Weng and Chang. Chang was on the whole an eclectic, committing himself to no one single school of Confucian thought. He held the doctrines of Chu Hsi in high esteem, but this was due more to his wish to uphold the orthodox ideology of the existing regime than to any desire for doctrinal purity. His eclecticism, however, did not embrace the doctrines of the Kung-yang school, which to him were decidedly unorthodox and therefore unacceptable. As a matter of fact, he detested the Kung-yang doctrines so much that for forty years he had been consistently refuting them, regarding them as "capital for seditious subjects and undutiful sons". From his point of view, to subscribe to these doctrines, especially as they were propounded by contemporary followers of that school, was tantamount to throwing overboard the very ideological tradition which had made China "superior to all barbarian countries". Naturally, therefore, Chang Chih-tung could not remain long on cordial terms with K'ang Yu-wei whose exposition of Kung-yang doctrines ran directly contrary to what Chang thought to have been decent and correct.

The similarity between Weng and Chang in this connection is also remarkable. Weng, too, was essentially an eclectic, although his eclecticism embraced somewhat different elements from that of Chang. For our purpose, it is important to note that in common with Chang, Weng showed appreciation of Chu Hsi and the "imperial Confucianism" that developed from his philosophy, and was repelled by K'ang Yu-wei's "wild-fox" interpretations of the Confucian classics, based on the Kung-yang doctrines as K'ang understood them.

The foregoing discussion, we hope, affords some useful clues to Weng T'ung-ho's views concerning reform. In addition to the persons just mentioned, however, there were a few others who had exerted some influence on Weng or whose ideas proved congenial to him. One of these was Sung Yü-jen. Before Sung sailed for Europe to take up his duties as secretary of the Chinese legation at London and Paris, he showed Weng his work on current affairs. Weng
indicated that he was favorably impressed by Sung’s suggestions, but he doubted the practicability of the proposal “to alter the institutions” of the empire. Unfortunately, we have no way to ascertain the contents of this work of Sung’s. Some of his ideas on reform, however, may be gathered from his work on the countries of Europe, *T'ai-hsi ko-kuo ts' ai-feng chi*.\(^{278}\) One of the most important recommendations he made is that China should adopt the parliamentary institutions of European countries. Sung was convinced that among the institutions of the West the parliament and the school were the most useful, for the former gave expression to the wishes of the people and the latter trained scholars to serve as the people’s leaders.\(^{274}\) He admitted that owing to the absence of what he regarded as true moral principles and correct conceptions of social relationships in Western nations, their parliamentary systems were not without some grave shortcomings. The parliamentary institution, however, should work perfectly in China where “the dicta of the sages” would serve as the infallible criterion by which all opinions could be judged.\(^{275}\)

It may be not noted that Ch’ en Chih and T’ang Chen also recommended the establishment of *i-hui*, “parliaments”, in China. They differed from Sung, however, in their conceptions of “parliament”; Sung was somewhat more radical in this respect than either Ch’ en or T’ang. Ch’ en Chih’s “parliament” for China was to be composed of the gentry on the local level and by the gentry and some of the officials on the central level.\(^{276}\) T’ang Chen’s “parliament” was a bicameral affair composed of officials of various ranks.\(^{277}\) The “parliaments” envisaged by these men, therefore, remained within the broad conceptual and institutional frame work of the imperial system, amounting in reality to little more than institutionalizing the age-old practice of discussing public affairs by the gentry and officials. Sung went one step farther than both men in arguing that “parliaments” of the empire could function properly only when they were composed of persons who had been educated in the modern style schools. The implication of this argument is obvious. To Sung Yü-jen, the parliament and the school constituted the warp and woof of the social fabric, and, as a result, basic educational reform must precede political reform. This twofold reform was probably the same institutional change to which Weng T’ung-ho raised objections.

Timothy Richard also furnished some information which throws light on Weng’s idea of reform. Richard was known as a friend of China and an advocate of reform before he met Weng personally on October 26, 1895.\(^{278}\) Weng listened to Richard’s suggestions with interest, but he did not accept them without reservations. Weng recorded the main points of Richard’s con-
versation and commented upon them as follows:

"The true principles (tao) of Yao, Shun, Chou, and K'ung" (Richard said) "are valid everywhere on the globe. . . . When government policies that benefit the people fall into decay, the true principles of the sages will no longer prevail. . . . There are four major policies, namely, educating the people, nourishing them, giving them peace, and renovating them. The method of educating the people consists in making the five constant virtues prevail in all countries; of nourishing the people, in sharing benefits with all countries. . . .; of giving the people peace, in avoiding war; and of renovating the people, in reform. The first task of reform is the construction of railways; the training of troops comes next. China should employ Western personnel along side [with Chinese personnel] and give instruction in Western subjects [in the schools]." I raised objection to the two [last-mentioned suggestions].

Weng's comment implied that he accepted the other points made by Richard. As a president of the Board of Revenue, Weng was naturally interested in fiscal and economic reform, particularly in such matters as currency, railways mining, manufacturing, etc. That he undertook actively to promote reform in these fields may be seen from the fact that he showed personal attention to men known as experts in industrial or commercial enterprises, among whom Chang Chien seems to have enjoyed his greatest confidence. Weng probably accepted many of Chang's recommendations concerning industrial development. As Weng was aware of the habitually bungling, and corrupt ways of Peking officialdom, he must have come to the conclusion that no economic reform could be successfully carried out without administrative reform. This was probably what he had in mind when he said, on January 13, 1898 in reply to the emperor's question, that reform should begin with the basic task of internal administration. He, however, wished merely to sweep away the malpractices of imperial officialdom; he had no desire to bring about any institutional change in the imperial system, such as the introduction of "parliaments," employment of foreign personnel, and establishment of modern schools would have certainly involved.

There is, therefore, ample evidence to support the statement ventured earlier in the present section, that the reform which Weng T'ung-ho envisaged was of limited scope; he was willing to modernize China in economic and military matters and to introduce a degree of efficiency and honesty into imperial officialdom as a necessary condition of modernization, but he was opposed to modifying the institutional structure or abandoning the traditional
values of the empire. He could not permit "Westernization," in other words, beyond the adoption of those "methods and implements" which constituted the secret of "the barbarians'" overwhelming material strength. His concept of reform may thus be characterized as "moderate," in contrast to the more "radical" program of K'ang Yu-wei, which called for more extensive changes in the existing system and a higher degree of Westernization.

Weng's basic attitude was made clear in a remark addressed to the emperor on June 11, 1898, the very day on which the edict formally announcing the inauguration of the reform regime was issued. Upon hearing the emperor's declaration that "from now on undivided attention should be paid to Western learning" Weng retorted that "we cannot do without studying Western methods, but it is even more important not to forget the moral and philosophical teachings of the sages and wise men" of China.\(^{283}\) The same thought was expressed in this document itself which, as a matter of fact, was drafted by Weng who was still performing his duties as a high court official:

Changes must be made in accord with the necessities of the times..... Let this, therefore, be made known to one and all in the four corners of the empire: let us keep in mind the moral and philosophical teachings of our sages and wise men, and make these the foundation [of imperial reconstruction.] We must also select over a wide range such subjects of Western knowledge as are pertinent to the current needs and diligently study and apply them in order to correct the evils of empty, impractical, and deceptive ways [which have hitherto prevailed].\(^{284}\)

It is noteworthy that the phrase "the moral and philosophical teachings of the sages and wise men" (sheng hsien i ti chih hsieh) appears both in Weng's oral statement and in the imperial edict. This reflects Weng's firm resolve to uphold the moral tradition of imperial China—an attitude which may have induced some writers to identify him as a "conservative," despite his unmistakable desire to implement reform in the sphere of financial, military, and administrative affairs.

It hardly needs stressing that K'ang Yu-wei's position differed appreciably from that of Weng Tung-ho. As we shall undertake to show, K'ang was, during the closing decades of the nineteenth century, a "radical" in his views concerning not only the practical affairs of state but also doctrinal and ideological matters. The difference was, of course, largely a matter of degree; in fact, there was an area of agreement between the views of the two men, especially those which concerned reform. It has been pointed out that some of K'ang's ideas of reform coincided with the suggestions made by Ch'en Chih
in his *Yung-shu* and by T'ang Chen in his *Wei-yen*. Assuming that Weng also subscribed to some of the views of Ch'en and T'ang, there may have been points of contact between K'ang and Weng even with regard to certain details of reform. In so far, however, as K'ang's ideas went beyond Ch'en and T'ang, and in so far as K'ang revealed his desire to alter the traditional ideology and the imperial system, even though all this was proposed with the avowed intention of showing "the true Confucius" and of "preserving the country", Weng could no longer allow himself to remain in K'ang's intellectual company.

The most important expression of Weng's disagreement with K'ang, already mentioned before, was given in 1894 when Weng read the latter's *Hsin-hsüeh wei-ch'ing Kao*. The general drift of this book as Weng understood it was as follows:

[K'ang Yu-wei] holds that every bit of the old text of Liu Hsin is spurious—who interpolated and adulterated the six classics—and that all [commentators] after Cheng K'ang-ch'eng had been deceived [by Liu Hsin].

Weng then commented upon K'ang's view:

Truly a wild-fox meditator among the commentators of the classics! No end to my astonishment.

Weng's astonishment is readily understandable. For, although K'ang claimed that his merciless attack of the old-text school was motivated by a desire to rid Confucianism of "false ascriptions", he was implicitly attacking the entire neo-Confucian tradition which since Ming times had served as the foundation of the established imperial ideology. His attack, moreover, amounted to an assault not only on the followers of Chu Hsi but practically on all Confucianists who did not subscribe to the doctrines of the Kung-yang school. These latter would include Weng T'ung-ho and the overwhelming majority of the scholars and officials of the time. Such an assault could hardly remain unnoticed. About two months after Weng read the *Wei-ching Kao* K'ang was impeached by an official who accused him of "reviling his predecessors and misleading future scholars". The offending book was quickly banned by imperial order.

Differences of opinion between Weng and K'ang concerning the details of administrative reform were also substantial. A full examination of K'ang's views must be reserved for another opportunity, but it is useful to indicate here some of the major disagreements between the two men.

Among the many suggestions which were submitted in his memorials writ-
ten in the years 1888-98, three were repeatedly stressed by K’ang. The first of these was the proposal that the emperor should follow the examples of Russia’s Peter the Great and Japan’s Meiji. The earliest mention of the successful reforms of Japan was made by K’ang in his “first memorial” to the emperor, submitted in the autumn of 1888. This, by the way, was the same memorial which Weng refused to transmit to the throne. This “follow Japan” proposal was reiterated with added emphasis in another memorial submitted early in 1898. In this later document K’ang put forward three alternative courses of action, the first and “best” of which was for the emperor

To adopt the methods of Russia and Japan with which to fix the policies of the empire, to accept the intentions of Peter the Great as “the law of the mind”, and to take the Meiji government as the model of administration.

K’ang explained that Russia and Japan were able to emerge from weakness to strength by simply “following the footsteps of the West” and “altering the institutions and laws”. Since, however, “Japan is geographically near to us and her governmental form and social customs are similar to ours”, it would have been easier for China to imitate Japan than Russia. Substantially the same arguments were repeated by K’ang in subsequent memorials and in his treatises on Russia and Japan.

K’ang’s suggestion that in effecting reform China should follow the examples set by Russia and Japan is not without some cogency. It, as a matter of fact, appealed to a considerable number of persons, apparently including the emperor himself. It had, however, certain implications which made it unacceptable to men like Weng T’ung-ho. To begin with, K’ang’s unreserved admiration for Peter and Meiji must have readily led Weng and others like him to suspect that K’ang was willing to commit the empire to a program of extensive Westernization, involving drastic changes in the existing institutional and ideological system. K’ang’s argument that Japan was close to China culturally as well as geographically, did not mitigate this suspicion, for the Japan which he wished to take as China’s paradigm of reform was not the traditional Japan which indeed had cultural affinity with imperial China, but the post-Tokugawa Japan which had given up much of that affinity and had, in K’ang’s own words, followed the footsteps of Western countries. It has been said that

In spite of being an insular people ever zealous to maintain the integrity of their national life, the Japanese have always shown compromise
and assimilative attitude toward foreign cultures and religions.293

That attitude made it easy for Japan to adopt Western ideas and institutions in the nineteenth century as it had made it easy for her to accept Chinese ethics and philosophy many centuries earlier.294 It partly explains the fact that Japan was able to modernize herself and transform herself into a powerful nation within a short period of time. From the viewpoint of men like Weng T'ung-ho, however, her readiness to give up her traditional cultural affinity with imperial China and to Westernize herself must have proved definitely distasteful.

That Weng did not favor the idea of "following Japan" may be gathered partly from the fact that he refused to share the emperor's interest in Huang Tsun-hsien's work on Japan, jih-pen-kuo chih, widely esteemed as an authoritative treatise on Japanese history and a standard reference for men interested in yang-wu.296 Weng flatly turned down the emperor's request for a copy of this work—an episode which occurred within a few days after K'ang Yu-wei presented to the emperor his works on Russia and Japan.297 Weng could not prevent K'ang from sending in his own works but gave a hint of his disapproval of the "follow Japan" approach to reform by refusing to furnish the desired work of Huang Tsun-hsien. It may be noted that Huang had been cooperating with Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and T'an Ssu-t'ung, two of K'ang's more prominent "disciples," in the reform undertakings sponsored by Ch'en Pao-chen, governor of Hunan.298 Huang's relationship to K'ang (though a somewhat indirect one) and the fact that he was engaged in reform on a provincial level may have constituted additional reasons for Weng's reluctance to send in the jih-pen-kuo chih.299

A second proposal to which K'ang attached much importance was pien cheng, "to change the governmental system". Chang Chien, a close friend of Weng's, was so scared of K'ang's views in this connection that he decided to leave Peking, at the heightide of the reform movement.300 In all probability, Weng shared Chang's misgivings.

K'ang's recommendations concerning political reform went far beyond Weng's idea of administrative reform. This became increasingly clear in the months just before the reform regime was officially announced and during its progress. When K'ang was summoned to appear in Tsungli yamen on January 24, 1898, Liao Shou-heng, a president of the Board of Punishment, asked him, "How to implement reform?" In reply K'ang said, "Changing the laws and institutions is to be the first task."301 Later, in a number of memorials
to which reference has already been made, K'ang specified the sort of legal and institutional changes he had in mind. He was highly critical of the existing system which, as he said in his “first memorial” of 1898, was nominally a heritage from the imperial ancestors but in reality “the decayed governmental system” of previous dynasties. This system, evolved in the days when China knew no civilized countries outside herself, was based on the principle of internal security. Political institutions and administrative methods were designed primarily to prevent or forestall rebellion. This basic objective constituted the rationale of the examination system and the system of checks and surveillance in which several officials were appointed to one single position and one official concurrently occupied several administrative posts. With the coming of the Westerners the situation drastically changed. Internal security was no longer the sole concern and, as a consequence, the imperial system became utterly outmoded. The conclusion, according to K'ang, was inevitable: “Unless old practices are all abandoned and a new structure is erected, there is no way to rid of the inveterate evils” that had rendered the empire helpless against the encroachments of Western powers.

It is no surprise, therefore, that K'ang made a number of proposals concerning administrative reform which, if carried out, would have affected some of the vital parts or the operative principles of the imperial system. One of the most important among these was made in his “sixth memorial” (January 29, 1898). He strongly urged the establishment of a chih-tu chū, “bureau of government institutions”, which was to be a central organ to assist the emperor to plan and decide basic policies of reform. To carry out the policies thus formulated, K'ang suggested the creation of twelve administrative bureaux, each of which resembled a ministry in the cabinet of a European government and was to be charged with a specific administrative function, such as finance, education, military affairs, etc. The adoption of such an administrative structure, obviously, would have rendered the Grand Council, the Six Boards, and a host of other imperial government offices useless. The only important organization which K'ang left untouched was Tsungli yamen which he allowed to stand and to continue to deal with foreign affairs. It is important to note that the underlying principle of K'ang's chih-tu chū and the twelve bureaux was administrative efficiency to be achieved through specialization and expert personnel instead of the old principle of security through check and surveillance.

In the same memorial K'ang made another proposal which may have frightened many a conservative official and displeased Weng T'ung-ho. K'ang urged
the introduction of embryonic institutions of local self-government and local representation, in the form of a min-chengchü, "bureau of the people's affairs", one for each circuit, and a min-cheng fen-chü, "branch bureau of the people's affairs", one for each of the districts in the circuit. The district magistrate was to retain authority to deal with lawsuits and revenue collection. All other administrative matters, education, public health, agriculture, police, etc., were to be entrusted to the "bureau" in which the local gentry and government appointees worked together to carry out measures of reform. An even more radical proposal was made in K'ang's "fourth memorial" (1895) in which he urged the establishment of a "parliament" in Peking. He reasoned that one of the chief sources of the strength of Western countries lay in the parliamentary institution which gave expression to the wishes of the people; he was convinced that parliaments facilitated tax collection, the promotion of public welfare, and the prevention of official corruption. And, finally, in the summer of 1898, K'ang went so far as to advocate the establishment of a kuo-hui, "national assembly", and the drafting of a constitution for the empire. Parliamentary and constitutional government, according to K'ang, had made European countries strong, whereas chuan-chih, autocracy, was the chief cause of China's weakness. The only way to save the empire, therefore, was to put into practice the principle of "the separation of the three powers" so that the legislative, judicial, and executive powers would no longer be concentrated in one man or one organ. In other words, K'ang urged the transformation of the imperial system as it developed during the past two thousand years into a Western-style "constitutional monarchy"—a transformation amounting to a veritable "revolution" in the Aristotelian sense. All this was good political theory, much of which had been put into practice in Western countries. But viewed in the context of the general way of thinking in K'ang's own time, it was nothing short of terrifying to the average scholar-official. The "changes in internal administration" which K'ang recommended, implied a sweeping condemnation of the existing system; it is no surprise that it was regarded as totally unacceptable. Weng T'ung-ho gave no direct indication of his reaction to these ideas of K'ang; the fact, however, that he objected to the much milder proposals of Sung Yü-jen justifies the conjecture that he would have definitely rejected K'ang's chih-tu chü, national assembly, and constitutional government.

K'ang made other equally radical proposals, including the introduction of Western learning in the new schools that were to be established throughout the empire, the modification of the examination system, the revision of the
imperial legal code, and the adoption of Western-style dress and the cutting off of the queue (a visible symbol of Manchu rule). In proposing legal reform K’ang argued that the only way to removing the “national shame”—the extraterritorial jurisdiction exercised in China by foreign powers—was to adopt appropriate principles of Roman law and the laws of England, France, Germany, the United States, and Japan, and to evolve on the basis of these principles a new legal code for the empire. In order to insure that legal reform was properly carried out, K’ang urged that a foreigner be engaged to work with him, “to revise the laws and the Government administrative departments” of the empire—an idea which reminds us of one of the two unacceptable suggestions made by Timothy Richard to Weng T’ung-ho in 1895.

It can be safely concluded, therefore, that K’ang Yu-wei advocated Westernization beyond the adoption of “Western methods” and urged institutional reform beyond the refurbishing of the existing administrative structure, to an extent unmatched by any other leading exponents of reform. It becomes clear also that K’ang’s statement that “changing the laws and institutions” was the first task of reform, and that “unless old practices were all abandoned and a new structure erected” the chronic diseases of the empire could not be cured, were no empty rhetoric but expressed his personal convictions and served as guiding principles of his reform efforts.

Such an approach to reform was bound to clash with Weng T’ung-ho’s concept of limited reform. It is of course doubtful that Weng had knowledge of the entire range of K’ang’s philosophical and reform ideas. But there is no question that he was sufficiently acquainted with the general drift of K’ang’s thinking to reach the final decision to part company with K’ang even before the One Hundred Days had begun. Whatever general agreement that once existed between the two men, was soon dissipated by the wide differences in intellectual outlook, theory of reform, and personal temperament. It was simply impossible for Weng, a shrewd, prudent, “down-to-earth” official, deeply steeped in the established imperial tradition, to tolerate for long a man who wished to amputate the imperial system, who authored the Weier-ying K’ao and the Ta-t’ung shu, the impact of which on the intellectual world of the time assumed cataclysmic proportions—a man who dreamed of the abolition of the family, marriage, private property (the most characteristic, if not essential, social institutions of imperial China), and who even allowed his “utopian tendencies” to project themselves into “a study of roaming through the heavens.”

Weng was prevented from remaining in agreement with K’ang for another
reason. As we have seen, Weng strove to effect conciliation between the emperor and the empress dowager. K‘ang Yu-wei, however, somewhat like Wang Ming-luan and Ch‘ang-ling, sided with the emperor and became increasingly hostile to the empress dowager as the reform movement developed, eventually coming to the view that “the Empress Dowager was the only obstacle to reform” and therefore should be eliminated, by assassination if necessary. Even long before the coup d‘état of 1898 K‘ang was convinced that the hope of realizing reform rested with the emperor alone. Thus, as early as in 1893, K‘ang said frankly in his “first memorial” that “the affairs of the empire remained in a sorry state as a result of the evil influences of eunuchs and palace maids”, and that, consequently, the emperor should “carefully choose officials who are in immediate contact with him” to assist him to ameliorate the situation. Later, K‘ang suggested in his “fourth memorial” (June 30, 1895) that the emperor should take drastic steps to clear the administration of useless, decrepit officials (who were, it may be noted, appointed and retained by the empress dowager) and “to make decisions according to his own sagely wishes alone”. And when K‘ang realized that the emperor did not possess adequate power to do what he wished, he counseled the emperor “to use whatever authority your majesty now have to do things that reform requires.”

The implications of these utterances is clear: K‘ang wished to see the emperor assume full sovereignty, by wresting control from T‘zu-hsi. There was, therefore, some basis for the charge that K‘ang Yu-wei and his associates plotted against the empress dowager. Understandably, Weng was one among those who lent credence to that charge. Thus, when Weng heard the news of the coup d‘état of September 20, he remarked with apparent indignation that “the seditious schemes of scoundrels had misled the Sagely One into a pitfall.”

A little later, when Weng heard that he was accused of having strongly recommended K‘ang to the emperor, he wrote that if he had not left Peking he would have certainly prevented “that scoundrel” from plotting for the empress dowager’s downfall. It is of course doubtful that Weng could have changed the course of events even if he had remained in Peking during the One Hundred Days. But we have no reason to question Weng’s sincerity in thus indicating that he could not share K‘ang’s anti-empress attitude despite his loyalty to the emperor.

It may be speculated that if Weng had been allowed to assume full leadership in reform (a possibility precluded by the historical situation), he would have pushed reform in a manner and direction different from what K‘ang did in the One Hundred Days. This conjecture finds some support in the fact
that two crucial documents, one issued when Weng was still able to exert his influence and the other when K'ang Yu-wei dominated the scene, reflected two theories of reform which corresponded respectively to the viewpoints of Weng and K'ang. In the "reform edict" of June 11, 1898, which came from Weng's hand, the emperor is represented as saying:

Let us keep in mind the moral and philosophical teachings of our sages and wise men and make them the foundation [of imperial reconstruction].

In the edict dated September 12 of the same year, issued many days after Weng left Peking, it is said:

In revitalizing the various administrative departments our government adopts Western methods and principles. For, in a true sense, there is no difference between China and the West in setting up government for the sake of the people. Since, however, Westerners have studied [the science of government] more diligently [than us, their findings] can be used to supplement our deficiencies. Scholars and officials of today whose purview does not go beyond China, [regard Westerners] as practically devoid of precepts or principles. They do not know that the science of government as it exists in Western countries has very rich and varied contents, and that its chief aim is to develop the people's knowledge and intelligence and to make their living commodious. The best part of that science is capable of bringing about improvements in human nature and the prolongation of human life.

It is impossible to ascertain the authorship of this document; one, however, naturally suspects that K'ang Yu-wei had exercised his influence on it as the above passage indicates.

A comparison of these two edicts reveals a vital difference in points of view. The earlier document represents the view that while "Western methods" should be adopted, they should not affect the moral tradition of China, which was not only different from the non-material aspect of Western civilization but in reality superior to it. The later document represents the view that there was no essential difference in the basic principles of government between China and the West and that, therefore, reform was not so much a task of supplementing Chinese tradition with Western science as that of putting into practice methods and principles which were intrinsically and universally valid, the soundness of which had been first demonstrated in Western countries. The distance that separated these two views corresponded roughly to the difference between the positions taken by Weng T'ung-ho and K'ang Yu-wei.
(b) **Weng's Attitude toward K'ang**

We shall now take up the second of the two questions posed at the beginning of the present section: Did Weng T'ung-ho strongly recommend K'ang Yu-wei to the emperor and was thus chiefly instrumental in starting K'ang on his career as leader of the reform movement?

This question has aroused a good deal of controversy among writers. Some placed the main responsibility on Weng, while others denied that Weng recommended K'ang at all. It is perhaps impossible to find a categorically certain answer to this question. A survey of the available sources, however, compels one to draw the conclusion that although Weng did not make any formal recommendation, he was chiefly responsible for giving K'ang the opportunity to gain the emperor's unreserved confidence.

It will be necessary to examine some of the claims and accounts furnished by writers of the time. In agreement with many of his contemporaries, K'ang Yu-wei himself credited Weng with recommending him to the emperor in the later months of 1897 when Russia was demanding Port Arthur and Dairen. These are K'ang's words:

> When the Empress Dowager decided to give them to Russia and Weng T'ung-ho realized that all my prophesies came true, he strongly recommended me to the Emperor. Kao Hsüeh Tseng, the Supervising Censor, Chen Pao Chen, the Governor of Hunan, Su Chih Ching, of the Hanlin College, and Li Twan Fen, President of the Board of Rites, also recommended me from time to time. When the Emperor asked the members of the Cabinet [concerning my qualifications], Weng T'ung-ho recommended me, saying, "His abilities are a hundred times superior to my own", and prayed the Emperor to listen to me in all matters of reform. \(^{327}\)

K'ang's statement, made in 1899, about a year after the *coup d'état*, is not entirely clear. It does show, however, that some time before the One Hundred Days Weng "strongly recommended" K'ang to the emperor, presumably orally, \(^{328}\) when about the same time a few other officials also recommended K'ang, and that Weng strongly supported the recommendations of these officials, in reply to the emperor's inquiry about K'ang.

It is also clear that Weng was not alone in bringing K'ang Yu-wei to the emperor's attention. K'ang himself named four officials besides Weng who recommended him, but his list is not complete. So far as it has been definitely established, the following men had, at different times, requested the em-
peror to avail himself of K‘ang’s service: (1) Kao Hsieh-tseng (whom K‘ang referred to as Kao Hsüeh Tseng), (2) Sun Chia-nai, (3) Chang Po-hsi (both of whom K‘ang failed to mention), (4) Li Tuan-fen (whom K‘ang referred to as Li Twan Fen), (5) Ch‘en Pao-chen, and (6) Hsü Chih-ch‘ing (whom K‘ang referred to as Su Chih Ching).

In a statement which K‘ang made shortly after the coup d’etat, he indicated that Kao Hsieh-tseng was the first person to recommend him, meaning apparently that Kao was the first to do so in writing. According to Liang Ch‘i-ch‘ao, Kao recommended K‘ang after reading his “fifth memorial” and requested the emperor to grant K‘ang an audience. Prince Kung advised against the audience, but suggested that K‘ang be consulted by high officials. This brought about the well-known interview in Tsungli yamen on January 24, 1898. According to Lu Nai-hsiang, one of K‘ang’s biographers, Kao made the recommendation on the day (December 12, 1897) when Weng T‘ung-ho visited K‘ang in his hostel and told him that he had personally recommended K‘ang to the emperor. These accounts are not as clear and precise as one should like, but they all point to the fact that Kao made the recommendation quite early, probably at about the same time when Weng made his.

Other written recommendations followed in rapid succession. Early in 1898 Sun Chia-nai recommended K‘ang for his qualifications for diplomatic service. At about the same time, Chang Po-hsi, then director of studies in Kwangtung, recommended K‘ang for his knowledge of practical and foreign affairs. Li Tuan-fen, a vice-president of the Board of Punishment, recommended, both orally and in writing, K‘ang Yu-wei and T‘an Ssu-t‘ung. Ch‘en Pao-chen, governor of Hunan, joined the chorus and drew imperial attention to K‘ang’s abilities in a memorial. And finally Hsü Chih-ch‘ing recommended K‘ang (together with Huang Tsun-hsien, T‘an Ssu-t‘ung, Chang Yuan-chi, and Liang Ch‘i-ch‘ao) in a memorial submitted on June 13, 1898, and helped to bring about the imperial audience three days later.

One cannot deny that these written recommendations contributed materially to bringing K‘ang into contact with the emperor. One should not, however, underestimate the force of Weng’s oral recommendation, regardless of the precise time it was made. It may well have been the decisive factor which rendered the emperor so favorably predisposed toward K‘ang that he readily placed his confidence in the latter upon meeting him for the first time. For, as one of the first two officials to introduce the emperor to the concept of reform and as the emperor’s trusted friend for many years, Weng’s high opin-
ion of K’ang must have exercised a crucial influence on the emperor’s attitude and lent considerable force to the recommendations made by other officials. Thus, even though Weng cannot be identified as one of the “reformers of 1893”, one can hardly resist the conclusion that he was largely instrumental in bringing about K’ang’s sudden rise to prominence as the leader of the reform movement. Sun Chia-nai, of course, was also in a position to exert a similar influence on the emperor; but the recommendation which he made of K’ang was a limited one and the confidence which he enjoyed was not quite comparable to what Weng was then enjoying. As a result, Sun’s recommendation was of secondary importance. This perhaps partly explains the fact that K’ang did not include Sun among those who recommended him.

Weng T’ung-ho, as it is well known, repeatedly denied that he had ever recommended K’ang to the emperor. The first denial was made on October 18, 1898:

Newspapers have always been absurd. The conversation of K’ang, the traitor, published in today’s paper, alleging that I had recommended [him to the emperor] is particularly strange. Does he intend to implicate and ruin me because I had rejected him?

A year later, on December 23, 1899, when Weng saw the edict which ordered the apprehension of K’ang and charged him with having “strongly recommended” K’ang to the emperor, he wrote the following in his diary:

Reverentially read [the edict] with trembling fear. Humbly I recall that when K’ang Yu-wei, the traitor, presented himself [to the emperor on June 16, 1898], I had already been dismissed [on the previous day.] Moreover, I had repeatedly said [to the emperor] that this man’s intentions are unpredictable and that I dared not associate with him. On several occasions the emperor ordered me to send in K’ang’s writings. [I demurred at first but] eventually I had to transmit his order, instructing Chang Yin-huan to ask K’ang for the desired writings. When these were delivered to the Grand Council, my colleagues placed them in an envelop and sent them [to the emperor]. I did not know what was said in these writings. Later, if I had remained with my colleagues [to serve the emperor], I would have never allowed this traitor to become madly perverse to such an extent [as to plot against the empress dowager]. But I was punished for this [attempt to expose K’ang]. I have now only myself to blame.

Weng’s denials, despite their firm tone, do not square with the established
facts. The statement which he made in 1899 is particularly misleading. It points to the fact that K'ang's audience with the emperor took place one day after Weng's dismissal but suppresses the fact that Weng's comment on K'ang's superlative abilities contributed to the emperor's determination to meet K'ang, i.e., to bringing about that very audience. It calls attention to the fact that Weng voiced his suspicion of K'ang shortly before his dismissal but fails to mention that prior to his attempt to discredit K'ang he was on cordial terms with K'ang for a while. The truth is, as we shall presently show, that Weng changed his attitude toward K'ang more than once between 1893 and 1898, a fact which the statement just quoted does not suggest at all. For the relationship between the two men began with a period of coldness or aversion on the part of Weng, followed by an interval of cordiality, and ended in Weng's attempt openly to discredit and to dissociate himself from K'ang. It is not difficult to understand Weng's denial that he was responsible for bringing K'ang into the emperor's confidence, for after all K'ang was officially branded a "traitor" after the coup d'état, and considerations of personal safety alone would have been sufficient to induce Weng to make the denial. His shifting attitude toward K'ang, however, involved complex motivations and requires explanation.

It may be useful to trace briefly the development of this unstable relationship. K'ang began his efforts to win Weng's patronage in 1893, when for the first time he made his views known to Weng. He, however, found Weng far from receptive or courteous. In the autumn of that year, his request for an interview with Weng was refused. At about the same time, Weng turned down Sheng-yü's request that he transmit K'ang's memorial to the throne; according to Weng's own explanation, K'ang's language was "too blunt and overly frank", making it imprudent to bring the memorial to imperial attention. In the summer of 1894 Weng expressed his astonishment at K'ang's "wild-fox" interpretations of the Confucian classics. In the spring of the following year Weng refused to grant an interview to Liang Ch'i-ch'ao whom he pointedly identified as "K'ang's student". Shortly afterwards, however, Weng changed his attitude toward K'ang, ushering in a brief period of seeming cordiality between the two men which lasted until the early months of 1898. By 1895, we recall, Weng had become known as an active promoter of reform, a role which he continued to play down to the spring of 1898. Thus, significantly, the period of Weng's cordiality toward K'ang coincided with the period of his active promotion of reform. But beginning with K'ang's appearance in Tsungli yamen on January 24, 1898, Weng again became critical
of K'ang. His terse comment on K'ang's proposals concerning legal and administrative reform, "unrestrained to the extreme," can hardly be construed as a favorable reaction to them. Presently, Weng began to withdraw his support of K'ang and his reform program (as Weng himself indicated in the statement quoted above). It was this final period of hostility which gave seeming plausibility to Weng's denial that he was instrumental in introducing K'ang to the emperor.

The question is then, why did Weng change his attitude toward K'ang in 1895 and again in 1898?

An obvious explanation of the first change is that the crisis of 1894-5 prompted Weng to redouble his efforts to bring about administrative reform and to look for competent men to help him in that task. As far back as in 1889, Weng had already undertaken to plant the idea of reform in the young emperor's mind. Despite Weng's increased attention to current affairs and to yang-ku during the years that followed, however, he had very little knowledge of those matters that would have enabled him to formulate a practical program of reform. He himself confessed, during the progress of the Sino-Japanese war, that his knowledge fell short of the emperor's enthusiasm:

His majesty... invariably consulted me on reading each memorial which I handed him; for he places extreme confidence in me. I regret that my abilities are too meager to render him assistance.

Naturally, therefore, Weng sought to make up for his personal deficiencies by enlisting the help of men who had the necessary knowledge or abilities. He took interest in men who were versed in practical affairs; he extended his patronage to promising young scholars and officials. For instance, in addition to the persons already mentioned in an earlier connection, Weng became particularly friendly to Chang Chien who was destined to be one of China's pioneering industrialists; he recommended to the emperor Tuan-fang, a young Manchu official who later was sent abroad on an investigation trip and upon whose return wrote a book on European and American governments.

Under such circumstances, it should not have been difficult for Weng to waive his objections to K'ang's philosophical views and to regard K'ang as a prospective assistant in reform, since K'ang was widely known for his zeal for reform. In more ways than one K'ang was an outstanding man among the advocates of reform, a man who could be expected to furnish useful ideas toward formulating a reform program and to support it courageously in face of strong opposition from many quarters. Moreover, being a man younger in years than
Weng and far inferior to Weng in official position, K'ang could hardly challenge Weng's leadership. From Weng's point of view, therefore, K'ang promised to be a major asset and could be safely patronized. Weng may have even entertained the hope, as it has been suggested, that "he would become, by virtue of his influence over the emperor, the leader, and K'ang the chief lieutenant, of the reform movement." Thus he could very well dispense with the help or cooperation from men like Li Hung-chang and Chang Chih-tung. Despite Weng's disagreement with K'ang on many matters, therefore, he spoke to the emperor in glowing terms of K'ang's superlative abilities.

There were other reasons for Weng's change of attitude toward K'ang, from dislike to cordiality. The Korean crisis divided the imperial court into two opposing factions, one of which strongly advised a cautious, conciliatory foreign policy, whereas the other urged war against Japan. Weng was one of the leaders of "the war party", in opposition to Li Hung-chang, Sun Yü-wen, and others. When the peace negotiations with Japan reached preliminary agreement, Sun Yü-wen was among those who favored prompt approval, whereas Weng tried to delay it. K'ang Yu-wei submitted a memorial (May 2, 1895), signed by K'ang and a large number of chü-jen then gathered in Peking for the metropolitan examinations, petitioned the throne not to conclude peace with Japan. Strong objections were raised in this memorial against the terms of peace (including the ceding of Taiwan, a move which Weng bitterly opposed). It was asserted that

Those who speak in favor of war unite the wills of the people and thus make energetic preparations for the empire's future. This insures survival. Those who speak in favor of peace impair the empire's solidarity and encourage the barbarians' ambitions. This will bring about ruin in an even shorter time (than risking defeat in war).

This memorial did not reach the emperor; the treaty of Shimonoseki was signed. But in all probability Weng was informed of K'ang's action and must have appreciated the latter's moral support of his "war policy". The extent of his appreciation may be seen from the fact that "resentful of the ceding of Taiwan and with the intention to effect reform", Weng paid a personal visit to K'ang and discussed matters with him. After apologizing for his failure to transmit K'ang's memorial of 1888, he conferred with K'ang for several hours and asked to read K'ang's "writings on government".

Another little noticed action taken by K'ang at that time may also have helped to melt away Weng's initial aversion to K'ang. A few months after
the signing of the treaty with Japan, Hsü Yung-i, a vice-president of the Board of Civil Appointments, who aligned himself with Sun Yü-wen and Li Hung-chang in opposing Weng’s “war policy”, was ousted from both the Grand Council and Tsungli yamen (August 6, 1895). Weng wrote in his diary that Hsü was impeached for his factional association with Sun and Li, and that the emperor, after securing the approval of the empress dowager, relieved Hsü of his duties in these two high offices. Weng did not identify the person who impeached Hsü. This omission was made good by K’ang in the following passage taken from his nien-p’u:

Although Sun Yü-wen was removed, Hsü Yung-i was still in the government to obstruct things. Both Prince Kung and (Weng) T’ung-ho wished to get rid of him. Censors had repeatedly impeached him but he still remained, unwilling to give up his posts. On the ninth day of the sixth moon [1] drafted a memorial and asked Tai Hung-tz’u to impeach [Hsü]. Tai hesitated; he dared not submit [the memorial I wrote]. Thereupon, [1] spoke to Censor Wang P’eng-yün. Wang entered the Censorate only recently and was not afraid to speak out. [He] submitted the memorial on the fourteenth day [i.e., August 4, 1895]. The next day, Hsü Yung-i was finally ousted from the Grand Council and Tsungli yamen.

One may of course discount K’ang’s claim that it was he who precipitated Hsü’s dismissal. One can hardly deny, however, that even if K’ang’s claim does not strictly correspond to facts, it shows clearly the extent to which K’ang was willing to go to lend support to Weng in the political arena of Peking.

By the summer of 1895, so it appears, general circumstances and personal actions had rendered K’ang Yu-wei acceptable to Weng both as a welcome political friend and a prospective assistant in reform. For reasons which remain to be ascertained, however, Weng was not as yet ready at that time to bring K’ang into direct contact with the emperor, a step which Weng took only after the Kaiochow incident of 1897 and thereby started the chain of events leading to the One Hundred Days. Perhaps in 1895 Weng himself was not prepared to push reform openly and actively.

Weng’s cordiality toward K’ang did not last long. Between January and May 1898 the situation in Peking changed and so did Weng’s attitude toward K’ang. One reason for this change may be surmised by examination the circumstances of the time. The daring views and unguarded behavior of K’ang
aroused the worst suspicion and fears of the traditionalists; a large number of dichards among the officials intensified their opposition to reform. Weng who had by now become known as K'ang's patron and the prime mover of reform, rapidly became a major target of the "conservatives"; his political oponents naturally were glad to seize the opportunity thus offered to embarrass or undermine him. By the last days of May the situation had become quite critical for Weng, as witnessed by the impeachements that were brought up against him in rapid succession. It was precisely in these days that Weng began to voice his dislike of K'ang to the emperor. An entry in his diary, dated May 26, 1898, reads:

The emperor ordered me to have another copy made of the writings which K'ang previously presented to his majesty and to send it in [as soon as it was ready]. I replied, "I do not associate with K'ang." The emperor asked, "Why not?" I replied, "This man's intentions are unpredictable." The emperor said, "Why haven't you mentioned this before?" I replied, "Your servant discovered this recently upon reading his K'ung-tzu kai-chih k'ao ["Confucius as Reformer"] .

Weng appended a significant remark at the end of the day's entry: Tossed and turned—sleepless." The emperor reiterated his order the following day. Weng made the same reply which drew from the emperor an "angry reprimand." Weng tried to pass the buck to Tsungli yamen, but the emperor insisted that Weng should go to Chang Yin-huan (another of Weng's estranged friends) and personally instruct Chang to transmit this order to K'ang.

Weng, apparently, sought to dissociate himself from K'ang, hoping thus to mitigate the opposition of his enemies. It was a measure of self-preservation not too gracefully taken. It perhaps surprised as much as irritated the emperor, and certainly placed Weng in a most uncomfortable plight—between the opposition of his inveterate political opponents and the displeasure of his hitherto trusting pupil.

Weng's statement that K'ang's intentions were "unpredictable" is highly significant and requires examination. He came to this conclusion, he said, after reading K'ang's K'ung-tzu kai-chih k'ao which was published in Shanghai in the winter of 1897-8. It immediately received wide hostile attention, so much so that two high officials actively interested in reform condemned it openly in no uncertain terms. One of these was Ch'en Pao-chen who submitted a memorial late in June or early in July, in which he acknowledged K'ang's knowledge and abilities but admitted that the Kai-chih k'ao was the cause of
the calumnies which were heaped upon the author. Ch'en went on to say:
K'ang Yu-wei... seeing that European countries honored the popes (chiao-huang, literary, "religious emperors") who held the reins of government, thinks that this [action] constituted the real basis of the prosperity and strength of foreign nations.... [He] therefore elevates Confucius to the Position of the head of a church (chiao-chu, literally, "religious lord"), wishing to put him on the same level with [the heads of] the Catholic and Protestant [churches], in order to enlighten the people and to make Confucius' moral doctrines and political principles prevail. He does not realize that... although [a sage like Confucius] possessed his own proper virtues, he dared not exercise the prerogatives of a ruler because he did not occupy the position of a sovereign; nor does K'ang see that the followers of the popes in Europe eventually provoked wars that lasted for decades, as a result of the popes' overbearing conduct in the various countries.363

In other words, Ch'en Pao-chen was of the opinion that K'ang's treatment of Confucius as "reformer" went beyond academic interpretations of Confucian philosophical and moral teachings and had political implications that were decidedly dangerous.

Shortly after Ch'en Pao-chen submitted the above-mentioned memorial, Sun Chia-nai presented his views concerning K'ung-tzu kai-chih k'ao to the throne (July 17) as follows:

In reading K'ang Yu-wei's writings your servant (has discovered) ... that in the eighth ch'ian of his K'ung-tzu kai-chih k'ao there is a section entitled "K'ung-tzu chih fa ch'eng wang" ("Confucius formed institutions and assumed the title of king"). K'ang tries to establish, on questionable grounds, that Confucius assumed the kingly title when he projected his reforms.... It is feared that if this view is taught [to scholars], every one [of them] would entertain the idea of altering the institutions, every one would believe that he could be a "su-wang" ("uncrowned king"). As a consequence, schools which are established to educate talented men, would instead confuse and poison the minds of the people. That would lead the empire into disorder.364

Sun Chia-nai, it appears, came to virtually identical conclusions concerning the dangerous implications of K'ang's K'ai-chih k'ao.

The intention of Ch'en Pao-chen and Sun Chia-nai in pointing out the objectionable features of this book and in bringing about its suppression may have been to save K'ang from more serious troubles and thus to make his
talents serve the cause of reform. Nevertheless, the very necessity of condemning the book in order to protect its author shows how much resentment it must have aroused among the scholars and officials of the time. As a matter of fact, even before Ch’ien and Sun expressed their disapprobation, Hung Chia-yü, a secretary in the Board of Civil Appointments, had already accused K’ang of desiring to become min-chu chiow-huang, “the people’s lord, religious emperor,” the second part of this phrase was employed by K’ang in this very book. Hung, in effect, was accusing K’ang of ideological sedition. It is no surprise that Hung’s accusation touched off a flurry of impeachment aiming at K’ang personally and at his Pao-kuo hui, “National Protection Society”, which held its first meeting April 12, 1898 and went out of existence in about a month later, as a result of loud protests.

Weng T’ung-ho had read K’ang’s book and must have seen all these memorials, including those of Ch’ien Pao-chen and Sun Chia-nai. Weng was probably as much shocked, if not more so, by this book as by K’ang’s earlier publication, Hsin-hsüeh wei-ching k’ao, which Weng read in 1894. Even if Weng could again waive his doctrinal objection to K’ang’s views, he could hardly afford to ignore the dangerous implications of the Kai-chih k’ao and the ideological furor it caused. To make his own stand clear, the only course open to Weng was to disown K’ang Yu-wei.

There was still another reason for Weng to reconsider his relationship with K’ang and decide to part company with him. The initial agreement between the two men concerning the need of administrative reform soon gave way to disagreement concerning the direction and extent of such reform after K’ang gained the emperor’s ear. Consequently, Weng made some attempts to stem the tide of K’ang’s radicalism. For instance, he reminded (June 11) the emperor in unequivocal language that while it was necessary to adopt “Western methods”, it was even more importance not to forsake “the moral and philosophical teachings of the sages and wise men” of imperial China. He even managed to inject into the edict of the same date his own view concerning reform.

Weng was perhaps alarmed for the first time at K’ang’s radical views, when he took part in the interview in Tsungli yamen on January 24, 1898. K’ang’s own narrative of the episode is noteworthy:

Jung-lu said: “The institutions of the ancestors cannot be changed.” To which I replied: “The institutions of the ancestors are used to govern the realm that had been theirs. Now we cannot preserve the realm of the
ancestors; what is the use for their institutions?...."

Liao [Shou-heng, a president of the Board of Punishment] asked: "How should the institutions be reformed?" I replied: "We shall change the laws and regulations; the governmental system (kuan-chih) should be the first [to be reformed]."

Li [Hung-chang] said: "Shall we, then, abolish all the Six Boards and throw away all the existing institutions and rules?" I replied him with: "The present is a time in which countries exist side by side; the world is no longer a unified one. The laws and governmental system [as they now exist in China] are institutions of a unified empire. It is these that have made China weak and will ruin her [if they remain unchanged]. Undoubtedly, they should be done away with. Even if we could not abolish them all at once, we should modify them as circumstances require. Only so can we carry out reform."

Weng asked: "How to finance [the reform]?" I answered with: "The banking system and paper money of Japan, the stamp tax of France, the land tax of India [are ways to raise revenue]...." I also said: "Japan adopted Western ways and institutions to effect reform. Her laws and institutions are now very complete. Being close to China she is the model which is the easiest [for China] to follow...."

The meeting adjourned in the evening.868

Weng T'ung-ho's comment on this interview also deserves quoting in this connection:

Summoned K'ang to the yamen. High-flown talk (kao t'an) on current affairs, with reform as the chief theme. Several main points: to establish chih-tu chü, to renovate the administrative system, to drill a conscript army, to build railways, and to make extensive foreign loans. Unrestrained to the extreme. Returned in the evening; very indignant, very tired.869

It hardly needs pointing out that K'ang's recommendations made in Tsung-li yamen were frighteningly drastic by the standards of the time and that his daring stand proved too much for Weng T'ung-ho whose idea of administrative reform was of a far more limited scope than what K'ang indicated in his answer to Li Hung-chang's question. Moreover, even if Weng was able to tolerate K'ang's radical views, he could hardly overlook the likelihood that K'ang's demand for sweeping institutional changes would incite the powerful opposition of the majority of the scholar-officials, thus jeopardizing not only the cause of reform but also Weng's own political position. The remarks,
“unrestrained to the extreme” and “very indignant” can be construed only as indications of Weng’s keen disappointment in K’ang.370

The interview of January 24, therefore, may well have marked a turning point in the relationship between Weng and K’ang. From then on Weng must have found it difficult to lend further support to K’ang. For to do so would have amounted to identifying himself with a program supported by a man who openly committed himself to liquidating the existing imperial system — “to burn the ancestral tablets”, as the empress dowager once put it. That would have been incompatible both with Weng’s political safety and his personal convictions. The only prudent course left to Weng was to retract, by either making K’ang less “unrestrained” or by shying away from him. Weng, obviously, chose the latter alternative. Chang Chien, his favorite protégé and trusted friend, “did his utmost to urge moderation upon K’ang.” When Chang realized that he was preaching to deaf ears, he began to move away from the uncompromising reformer,371 precisely as Weng did under somewhat different circumstances.

Another important factor that contributed to Weng’s change of attitude toward K’ang should not be overlooked. K’ang’s opposition to the empress dowager became increasingly noticeable as opposition to the reform movement grew. Up to the time of Weng’s dismissal K’ang probably had not gone as far as “to plot against her sacred person”.372 But K’ang’s general attitude toward Tz’u-hsi must have been known to Weng who for decades had been trying to conciliate the two imperial rulers. The danger of playing the emperor against the empress dowager, a course of action which K’ang was inclined to take, was extremely great; even if the risk was worth taking, the ideological objections involved were exceedingly grave. This factor alone should have been sufficient to drive Weng away from K’ang.

Personal jealousy seems to have also influenced Weng’s action in disowning K’ang Yu-wei. Weng’s interest in reform stemmed from his loyalty to the emperor and the dynasty, but it was not unmixed with selfish motivation. By endeavoring to put the empire on an even keel through reform he hoped to achieve supremacy in Peking officialdom, outranking both Li Hung-chang and Chang Chih-tung as leaders of reform. Unexpectedly, however, K’ang Yu-wei gained almost the exclusive confidence of the emperor. If it was K’ang’s “vigorous personality”373 --- his militant and aggressive attitude --- which deeply impressed Weng who therefore saw in him an energetic assistant in reform, it was the same personal quality of K’ang that ultimately alienated him from Weng. Weng, naturally, was no more willing to relinquish leader-
ship to K'ang than to Li Hung-chang or Chang Chih-tung.

The situation may have been aggravated by the deteriorating relationship between Weng and Chang Yin-huan. After Sun Yü-wen was ousted in 1895, Weng took Chang Yin-huan into his political circle, intending to make Chang one of his lieutenants. Chang, however, soon enjoyed too much of the emperor's confidence to please Weng. Meanwhile, shortly before the One Hundred Days, Chang Yin-huan and K'ang Yu-wei came into a brief period of rapprochement, both having gained the emperor's favor. Weng was alarmed and took steps to curtail their further advance. His sudden change of attitude toward these men irritated the emperor who put Weng in a very uncomfortable situation (June 12, 1898) by compelling Weng to give Chang Yin-huan "strong moral support," and on another occasion (May 26, 1898) showed his displeasure for Weng's unfriendly attitude toward K'ang.

Perhaps Weng was not solely responsible for the deterioration of his relation with K'ang. The latter's aggressiveness must have also contributed to it. We have indirect evidence to support this conjecture. According to K'ang's own statement, his eagerness to place himself in a prominent position in reform turned Sun Chia-nai from an admiring friend into a resentful enemy. Sometime before K'ang came into contact with the emperor Sun was said to have remarked to a colleague that:

Among the court officials K'ang alone is patriotic from his heart and thoroughly understands the affairs of the day. If the emperor charges me with the responsibility of reform, my only recourse would be to recommend K'ang (for the task). For, how could I shoulder this responsibility?

This early enthusiasm soon cooled. When Sun became minister in charge of the newly authorized Imperial University of Peking and discovered that in the drafted regulations for the university Liang Ch'i-ch'ao ("ghost-writing" for K'ang) "placed all powers in the hands of the dean, leaving the chancellor a figure head," he "thereupon became very angry and criticised" K'ang. Sun's resentment, obviously, stemmed from the fact that he was to be the chancellor while K'ang was recommended for the dean's post. It is interesting to observe that Sun's early opinion of K'ang was almost a repetition of Weng's words when he strongly recommended K'ang to the emperor. It is conceivable that Weng and Sun who had together introduced the emperor to the idea of reform a number of years before, shared their transient friendship with K'ang and became equally disillusioned when K'ang's "vigorous persona-
lity" later asserted itself.

The above discussion points to one conclusion: a number of circumstances and a variety of motives led Weng T'ung-ho to discredit K'ang Yu-wei, with the purpose of blocking the latter's further advance. Thus, ironically, Weng who started the emperor on the road to reform early 1899, ended with playing "the role of an opponent instead of the official leader of the reform movement".378

This dramatic shift did not involve any basic change in Weng's personal outlook. As a man of complex motivations, he was at once anxious for personal advancement and concerned about the empire's uncertain future. His ruling passion was political success but his crowning ambition was to become the statesmen who saved the tottering dynasty by administrative reform. When the prospect of realizing this ambition looked good, he patronized men who were qualified for or dedicated to the task of reform. But when that prospect receded, he beat a hasty retreat. Roughly the same considerations which at first led Weng to acclaim K'ang as a man of superlative abilities, later compelled him to denounce him as a man of questionable intentions. As a result, to borrow the words of Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, Weng's attitude toward K'ang was "trust at first but suspicion in the end".379 The word "trust" is perhaps a little too strong to be accurate. For, in so far as Weng was concerned, his attitude toward K'ang could have never been more than intellectually and emotionally ambivalent. It was an unstable tie that joined together two men of different temperaments and persuasions. Such a tie was readily broken as soon as its usefulness to one of the parties began to disappear. Weng's open repudiation of K'ang in May 1898, so it appears, was in reality not the result of disenchantment; for Weng could not have been charmed by K'ang, on the strength of either the latter's philosophical ideas or personal qualities.

V

Weng's Dismissal And Its Significance

(a) Factors Leading to the Dismissal

Weng T'ung-ho had weathered many a political storm during his forty years in Peking officialdom, but his deftness failed him in 1898. Apparently without warning, a "vermillion edict" was issued June 15, just one day before K'ang Yu-wei was summoned to imperial audience. It reads in part:

Recently, Weng T'ung-ho, associate grand secretary and president of the Board of Revenue, has been managing affairs mostly in an unsatisfactory manner. As a consequence, he has drawn protests from many
quarters and has been repeatedly impeached by a number of persons. Moreover, when he was called to audience and consulted [by Us] on various matters, he expressed his approval or disapproval as his whim directed, allowing personal likes or dislikes to show on his face. He has shown signs of a perverse tendency to arrogate power to himself, thus absolutely disqualifying himself for shouldering the responsibilities of [an official] in a pivotal position. He should indeed be thoroughly investigated and severely punished but, considering his many years of service in Yü-ch'ing Palace [as imperial tutor], we cannot bear to inflict severe punishment upon him. To show [Our wish] to preserve him, Weng T'ung-ho is hereby ordered to relinquish his posts and to return to his native place.\textsuperscript{390}

Writers differed as to who actually made the decision to dismiss Weng. K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao placed the entire responsibility on the empress dowager.\textsuperscript{381} A number of observers and historians shared this view. Some traced the move to opponents of reform.\textsuperscript{392} while others attributed it to Kang-i, Yung-Ju, or Prince Kung.\textsuperscript{393} All these views imply that the emperor who issued the edict from his own hand, did so only at the command of the empress dowager.

Other writers held a different view. It was believed that the emperor himself made the momentous decision because Weng's cautious approach to reform clashed with the emperor's unbounded enthusiasm. The emperor was ready to get rid of Weng who had by then also fallen out of the empress dowager's grace.\textsuperscript{394}

This view, we think, comes closer to the actual facts. A survey of Weng's diary reveals that while Weng did not raise objection to the reform movement led by K'ang, he quickly ceased to support reform with the ardor which he displayed on January 16.\textsuperscript{395} The last important task which he performed in behalf of reform was the drafting of the edict of June 11.\textsuperscript{396} On more than one occasion, between January 16 and June 15, he incurred the emperor's displeasure; a climax was reached on May 27 when he repeated his derogatory remarks concerning K'ang Yu-wei.\textsuperscript{397} Knowingly or unknowingly Weng impaired the trusting, affectionate relationship between himself and the emperor, which took him many years to cultivate. From the emperor's viewpoint, it was bad enough for Weng to be rude to him; but to encourage him to undertake reform at first, to speak highly of K'ang Yu-wei, and, all of a sudden, to renge and retract, was really insufferable. (The charge against Weng made in the vermilion edict that he was whimsical in his opinions
and unrestrained in his speech was therefore not trumped up.) Recalling the fact that the emperor was not a person of mild temperament, it is not difficult to imagine that he was eventually incited into decisive action by the cumulative effects of repeated frustration and provocation inflicted on him by his former tutor. He shattered Weng’s official career at one stroke even as he had many years ago (1883, aged 12) smashed a tea cup when he was angered by Sun Chia-nai, another of his tutors. If that was the case, the decision to dismiss Weng may have been made even without reference to the empress dowager’s wishes.

The edict mentions the repeated impeachments brought up against Weng. These may also have helped the emperor to make the decision or afforded him a convenient pretext for making it. These impeachments, accusing Weng of diverse offences, are of considerable significance. One of the most damaging was made (May 20, 1898) by Wang P’eng-yûn, a censor, charging Weng with taking bribes in collusion with Chang Yin-huan. Another impeachment (June 9) made by Kao Hsieh-tseng, also a censor, accusing the Board of Revenue of unconscionable conduct of business. Kao did not mention Weng by name but it was clear that the impeachment was directed primarily against Weng. Although these “harsh worded” memorials did not bring to Weng any punishment, they must have adversely affected Weng’s prestige and may perhaps impaired the emperor’s confidence in him. It is noteworthy that the day after Kao submitted his memorial, Jung-lu was appointed a grand secretary to take control of the Board of Revenue.

A few days later (June 14), Li Sheng-t’o, another censor, submitted a secret memorial urging the emperor “to reward and punish openly” officials who actively supported reform or obstructed it. Li named Ch’en Pao-chen (governor of Hunan), Chang Chih-tung (governor-general of Hu-kuang), and Lu Ch’uan-lin (governor of Kwangtung) as among the former and T’an Chung-lin (governor-general of Liang-Kuang) as among the latter. At the same time, Sung Po-lu, a colleague of Li Sheng-t’o, made a substantially identical request in a memorial. According to Weng, the emperor “temporarily pigeonholed these two memorials”, obviously the emperor wished to postpone his decision for a while. That these documents had serious implications may be gathered from the fact that Weng was very much disturbed after seeing them. This item in his diary is revealing: “Sunny; slightly cloudy afternoon. Gazing at the Vast Heaven, my heart was like [being tortured] by pounding.”

The personal backgrounds of these memorialists afford some clues to the
reason for Weng's mental anguish. Sung Po-lu was one of the most ardent supporters of K'ang Yu-wei's reform movement. Naturally, Sung was cashiered at the end of the One Hundred Days; had he not fled to Shanghai, disguised himself and sought asylum in the British consulate, he might have suffered the same fate as his colleague, Yang Shen-hsiu. Li Sheng-t'o also lent strong, though unsteady, support to K'ang's reform activities. The memorial which Li submitted to the emperor was, in fact, drafted by K'ang Yu-wei himself. In K'ang's own words:

I also drafted for Censor Li Sheng-t'o a memorial concerning the translation of books, travels abroad, open rewards and punishments, and distinguishing between new (i.e., reformers) and old (conservatives). Li submitted it.

Kao Hsieh-tseng, the third memorialist mentioned above, was the man who strongly recommended K'ang at a crucial moment, and Wang Peng-yün, the last of the memorialists, was the censor who impeached Hsu Yung-i at K'ang's bidding. These four men, in short, were in diverse ways connected with K'ang and for some time cooperated with him. We have no evidence to support the conjecture that K'ang instigated their impeachments (overt or implied) of Weng. It is safe to assume, however, that words from these men must have had a more disheartening effect on Weng than those from out-and-out conservatives or from his inveterate political enemies. For, in the latter case, while Weng could not count upon the empress dowager's continued favor (one of the two props of his official position), he still could rely on the emperor's trust. But in the former case, namely, when persons associated with K'ang Yu-wei and supported reform attacked him, he faced a two-pronged assault and could depend on the protection of neither of the imperial rulers. Weng had reasons to be particularly disturbed by the impeachments brought up by Li Sheng-t'o and Sung Po-lu. At that moment, "reform" was largely synonymous with the program supported by K'ang and his associates. To oppose K'ang and his program, therefore, was for practical purposes tantamount to opposing reform as such. Thus, in urging the emperor to distinguish between "the new and the old", and to punish officials who hindered reform, Li and Sung hinted the possibility of calling into account all officials who showed too little zeal toward K'ang's proposals to suit the emperor --- although they specifically named in their memorials only a few "delinquent" provincial officials. Weng who had chosen to become hostile to K'ang, could therefore be readily accused of "obstructing reform" and excluded from the company of "the new", despite his early efforts in initiating the reform movement. It is
significant that Weng was ousted the day after Li and Sung submitted their memorials. It is interesting to note also that one day after Weng's dismissal, Sung Po-lu and Yang Shen-hsiu (one of K'ang's close associates and the "martyrs" of 1898) impeached Hsü Ying-k'uei, an arch conservative, for "obstructing reform measures" and brought about Hsü's dismissal. Earnest efforts, so it appears, were made by K'ang's followers to clear the way for his ambitious program, by sweeping away whoever tried to block it. Ironically, therefore, Weng T'ung-ho, the men who introduced the emperor to the cause of reform and who more than anyone else helped K'ang to become the emperor's mentor in reform, was made the first major casualty, sharing the same treatment with an arch conservative.

The death of Prince Kung (May 30, 1898) probably had a crucial bearing on the situation. The prince held moderate views on reform and had sufficient prestige to exert a restraining influence both on the emperor who developed an almost fanatical devotion to the cause of reform, and on the empress dowager who became resolutely opposed to radical changes. Prince Kung's part in the reforms inaugurated in the 1860's is well known. His restraining influence on the emperor was demonstrated in January 1898 when he dissuaded the latter against summoning K'ang to an audience. The prince's demise, therefore, may have encouraged the emperor to take bolder steps toward reform. Somewhat curiously, Weng did not show any sign of alarm or anxiety upon hearing the news of the death. Perhaps Weng felt relief at the disappearance of his perennial, powerful political enemy who had been annoyingly lukewarm toward the reform movement which Weng undertook to foster. Perhaps Weng was blinded by his personal animosity against the prince and was unable to discern the dangerous implications of his death. Whatever may have been the reason for Weng's lack of concern, he was soon forced by the circumstances to do the very same thing which the prince did before with temporary success, namely, to check the advance of K'ang Yu-wei and his reform program. Thus, according to K'ang's own narrative, when he sought to take the advantage of the prince's death to urge Weng to launch extensive reform measures in a hurry, Weng (already sufficiently disillusioned by his would-be "chief lieutenant") simply ignored the suggestion and expressed his wish to see K'ang depart from Peking. Without Prince Kung's prestige, however, Weng did not achieve a temporary success in trying to check K'ang's advance; he was summarily cashiered, for making the attempt. Now with Prince Kung dead and Weng in exile, the last effective restraining influences on the emperor vanished. From that point on the battle line
was sharply drawn between "reformers" and "conservatives", between those who demanded changes in the existing ideological and institutional system, and those who opposed not only such changes but also the adoption of Western science and technology. A fierce struggle between the two camps promptly began. The reformers won a transient victory but were soon to be overwhelmed by their opponents who rallied around the powerful empress dowager.

(b) An Evaluation of Weng's Position

Weng T'ung-ho's failure to realize his ambition of saving the dynasty through reform may be more readily explained by his strategical mistakes than by any ideological error that he may have committed. In the context of the practical situation Weng's ideological position was in fact not unreasonable. His view that the traditional values should not be forsaken although "Western methods" should be adopted, was acceptable to a considerable number of influential men in Peking and the provinces, and, what is even more important, to the empress dowager herself. We need not go as far as to say with a recent writer that at the inception of the reform movement of 1898, somethings like "a unity of mind" existed between the emperor and the empress dowager with regard to reform.407 But we cannot deny the fact that the movement was not inaugurated without her knowledge and consent408 and that the emperor took no important step without first securing her understanding or approval,409 especially before K'ang Yu-wei became his chief adviser in reform. In fact, the basic difference in view between the imperial rulers (namely, that the emperor wished to effect a certain degree of Westernization, whereas the empress dowager could not tolerate any tampering with the accustomed ways and institutions)410 did not develop until K'ang gained the former's confidence. Psychologically speaking, it was easier at that time to continue the line of reform where the "self-strengthening" movement of the 1860's left off, i.e., refurbishing the administration without involving institutional changes, than to effectuate the more ambitious program of K'ang Yu-wei. Weng's conception of reform, substantially identical with that of Chang Chih-tung and others of the same school of thought, thus appears to possess the theoretical advantage of being compatible with the given political situation in the 1890's.

Weng was astute enough to see the strategical necessity of maintaining a degree of harmony between the emperor and the empress dowager. Even though he was personally more intimate to the former than the latter and even though his political future depended increasingly more on the former as time went on, he could not ignore the fact that the empress dowager occupied an unshakable position in the existing régime and would occupy it as long
as she lived and desired. The tremendous power which she acquired during the many years of "listening reports on affairs of state behind screens" and the indisputable prestige she enjoyed as the emperor's "mother"—a prestige accorded her by the accepted Confucian ideology—rendered it unwise to challenge her authority by the emperor or by anyone else. The best policy then was to accept her paramount position in the administration and to do nothing to antagonize her. Meanwhile, the emperor could gradually build up his own power and prestige, by doing worthwhile things. He could afford to take his time; after all, he was Tz'u-hsi's junior by over forty-five years. Weng's attempt to reconcile the imperial rulers, to make them partners in reform, was therefore justified by the practical situation, although he failed to achieve results because his efforts were partly neutralized by some of the unexpected developments brought about by K'ang Yu-wei's activities.

Weng, however, was not consistently shrewd. He committed a number of tactical mistakes which made his apparently reasonable position untenable. One of the most costly mistakes he committed was his unwillingness to seek the cooperation of persons who held views of reform that were substantially similar to his own. His antagonism to Li Hung-chang and Chang Chih-tung not only deprived him of much potentially valuable support but invited actual opposition from quarters where cooperation should have been expected. His political ambition got the better of him; instead of availing himself of the help of like-minded, well-established, and experienced colleagues, he chose to recruit subordinates of his own, to draw around himself men younger than himself in years or inferior to him in official position, so that his leadership in reform could be assured. In so doing he weakened the cause of reform not only by reducing the numerical strength of his own camp but by introducing strife among persons supporting the same cause.

Weng's readiness to compromise personal convictions whenever expediency required led him into another grave mistake. Despite his pride in the moral tradition of imperial China, he did not always take the Confucian precepts as a practical guide of conduct. This explains partly the fact that he was willing to recommend K'ang Yu-wei to the emperor, although he was aware of K'ang's unorthodox interpretations of the Confucian classics, which tended to weaken the very basis of imperial China's moral tradition. His statement that he discovered K'ang's "unpredictable intentions" only after seeing the book on "Confucius as Reformer" in 1898, was poor excuse. Had Weng taken that tradition more seriously than he did, he should have been sufficiently warned by K'ang's "wild fox" propensities when he read the book on "false
classics" in 1894, to rely on K'ang as a likely assistant in implementing a program of reform with the purpose of borrowing "Western methods" to preserve Chinese tradition—the same ideological and institutional system which K'ang virtually renounced.

Weng's association with K'ang proved to be the most costly mistake which he ever made in his long career. He counted on K'ang's help to develop a reform movement all his own but only to find out later that K'ang rapidly replaced him as the prophet of reform. Evidently, K'ang who did not respect his theory of limited reform or defer to his leadership in reform, turned out to be an even greater threat to his position than Li Hung-chang or Chang Chih-tung. Moreover, in trying to undo K'ang he quickly brought about his own undoing. With his removal from Peking the last effective link between the imperial rulers disappeared. K'ang Yu-wei was left free to lead the emperor down the path of ruin. By recommending K'ang to the emperor he was to some extent indirectly responsible for this disaster.

It is worth noting that the edict of December 4, 1898, which inflicted heavier punishment on Weng than the lenient treatment accorded him by the vermillion edict of June 15, stressed Weng's responsibility in recommending K'ang. After reiterating the charges that Weng acted "perversely" toward the emperor, that as an imperial tutor he amused his pupil with art objects instead of instructing him in moral principles, and that he held arbitrary views concerning war and peace (referring obviously to 1894), the emperor is represented as further accusing Weng of the following:

Last spring he strongly advocated reform and secretly recommended K'ang Yu-wei, saying that this man's abilities were a hundred times superior to his, with the intention of making K'ang an arbiter of all affairs of state. Considering the difficulties of the time and the urgent need of reform, We did not hesitate to condescend and follow [Weng's advice]. Howoever, K'ang Yu-wei took the opportunity offered him during the days of reform to perpetuate seditious and perverse schemes. Thus in indiscriminately recommending a bad man, the offence committed by Weng T'ung-ho is verily beyond pardon.... Previously, [We] ordered him to relinquish his posts and return to his native place. [This treatment] hardly covers his crimes. It is hereby ordered that Weng T'ung-ho be deprived of his ranks and offices, permanently barred from official appointments, and handed over to local officials who shall put him under strict discipline.
This edict is significant, for instead of blaming Weng for promoting reform it accused him of recommending a “bad man”. Whatever may have been the fact—whether or not K’ang Yu-wei had actually plotted against the empress dowager—the charge that he did so was repeatedly made against him and constituted a major justification used by the imperial government to put an end to the reform movement of 1898 and to punish (with one single exception) all officials who had recommended K’ang Yu-wei. This fact lends further support to the view that, so far as his personal interests were concerned, Weng made the gravest mistake not in advocating reform but in bringing K’ang into the emperor’s confidence.

(c) **Weng’s Reaction to His Dismissal**

Although Weng denied categorically his responsibility in recommending K’ang, he accepted the verdict that K’ang indeed was a “traitor”. In all probability, he was not merely parroting the official line but was expressing his own personal sentiments. For Weng had good reasons to regard K’ang as a “traitor”. From Weng’s point of view, in addition to betraying the empire—by openly attacking the traditional ideological and institutional system, and by perpetrating the “seditious schemes” against the empress dowager—K’ang had virtually betrayed Weng himself, the man to whom he owed much of his rise to unprecedented prominence, by pushing reform in a direction toward which Weng could not go and by taking away from Weng the coveted leadership in reform.

Weng appears to have felt some remorse for the part he played in the reform movement. One year after the coup d’état (on September 12, 1899) he wrote this in his diary:

> Returned; read *Hua-i-nan-tzu*. . . . The essay entitled “Ching-shen hsun” in this book is unadorned, close (to common sense), and easy to put into practice. Having previously read this book, I nevertheless departed from ([the teachings which it affords]; this is as good as not having read it. The comment on reforming ways and institutions without knowing how to reform them is particularly germane to the affairs of the present time.

A careful scanning of the essay Weng referred to fails to locate any passage that deals directly with reform. There are, however, a few passages which may have struck Weng as especially meaningful in the light of his experience as a promoter of reform. For instance:

> The sage obeys the laws of heaven and complies with the nature of man; he is not bound by custom, nor is he seduced by men.
To stop the bubbling of boiling water by stirring it will not stop the bubbling; but if one knows the real cause, he simply removes the fire.\textsuperscript{418}

It is conceivable that after a post-mortem examination of his political life Weng became convinced that he had made too many and too grave mistakes in the 1890's to survive in the stormy officialdom of Peking. Perhaps the passages from \textit{Huai-nan-tzu} quoted here made him regret that in trying to break away from "custom" (i.e., to promote reform) he allowed himself to be "seduced by men", such as K'ang Yu-wei, Chang Yin-huan, and Yuán Shih-k'ai, and that in attacking K'ang Yu-wei in front of the emperor he was committing the folly of trying to stop the bubbling of boiling water by stirring it.

At any rate, it seems clear that Weng bore little grudge toward the emperor or the empress dowager.\textsuperscript{419} A considerable number of entries in his diary covering the post-reform years show his unwavering loyalty, especially to the emperor. In fact, on one occasion in 1899 he broke into tears when he expressed his concern for "the sagely sovereign".\textsuperscript{420} On another occasion, he expressed gratitude for being permitted to live peacefully near the graves of his ancestors, despite the "crimes" which he committed.\textsuperscript{421} Weng, however, did not put all the blame on himself. Although he may have regretted the strategical mistakes he made in promoting reform, he did not feel sorry that he advised the emperor against abandoning the traditional values of imperial China. Referring to a visit to his ancestral graveyard shortly after he returned to his home in 1898, he wrote this in his diary:

What I had presented to my sovereign were the principles of Yao and Shun; there had been no unrighteous words. [My conduct during my career] had not brought disgrace to my forebearers.\textsuperscript{422}

This leads one to think that Weng remained unconvinced of the emperor's wisdom in preferring K'ang Yu-wei to himself as his mentor of reform. On one occasion at least, Weng voiced his disappointment in the emperor. Upon reading the edict (December 30, 1899) which ordered the apprehension of K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and which laid the blame on Weng for his "strong recommendation" of K'ang,\textsuperscript{423} Weng wrote a long comment in his diary. After recalling his repeated efforts to expose K'ang's "unpredictable intentions", he asserted:

Had I remained among my colleagues [at court], I certainly would have prevented this scoundrel from acting in such a mad way. But I was punished on account of this [attempt to expose K'ang].\textsuperscript{424}
Weng may also have voiced his disappointment in the emperor on another occasion, although in a very subtle and indirect manner. Less than two months after he wrote the above comment, he recorded in his diary that he read in a dream a poetic composition which contained these lines:

Every care have I exercised in painting my moth-eyebrows,
but utterly unappreciative he remains;
In Ling-ho he plants another willow tree lissome and blithe.\(^{425}\)

Did Weng take the lissome willow tree to symbolize K'ang Yu-wei who gained the emperor's exclusive attention and put to naught Weng's every effort to serve his former pupil? No conclusive answer of course can be given to this question. But as it was a standard literary device in old China to indicate in allegorical poems and to attribute to dreams sentiments that were too intimate to be frankly or directly expressed, one can hardly resist the temptation to read in these lines the hidden meaning as suggested above.

\(\text{(d) Continuation of Moderate Reform}\)

Contrary to a generally accepted belief, the reaction which set in after the \textit{coup d'état} of 1898, did not stop the movement toward limited modernization. Liang Ch'î-ch'ao, who was understandably inclined to exaggerate the deeds of the anti-reformers, enumerated as many as ten items, among which were the reinstatement of the sinecure posts abolished during the One Hundred Days, the prohibiting of scholars and common people to submit memorials, the halting of the establishment of schools in the provinces, and the restoring of the old examination system.\(^{436}\) He purposely or unintentionally omitted to mention the various measures of modernization which the imperial government announced after September 21,\(^{427}\) thus giving a one-sided presentation of the situation.

An edict dated September 26, 1898 which summarized the general official view, merits attention here. It begins by saying that the “new measures” which were adopted from time to time were all calculated to meet the need of the circumstances—to bring prosperity and strength to the empire and to provide livelihood for the people—and that they were adopted not with a view to altering the existing institutions for the sake of novelty. The document then goes no to indicate the matters which the government considered as particularly important. One of these was the abolition of sinecure offices and supernumerary officials. The six central offices which were abolished about one month ago were now reinstalled, but provincial authorities were ordered to proceed to abolish or combine superfluous bureaus and other government
agencies, and to dismiss officials who had no useful functions to perform.

Another matter regarded as of paramount importance was the establishment of schools. The pertinent portion of the edict reads:

Universities and higher schools are places to develop men of ability. Those which have already been established at different times in Peking and in the provincial capitals (shall be allowed to stand). The primary and lower schools which have been proposed for the prefectures and districts shall be left to the convenience of the local inhabitants. Local officials are ordered to exercise discretion (in the matter), with due consideration for local conditions.

The edict finally outlines policies concerning other matters, such as industry, commerce, agriculture, military defense, and finance, and declares that these policies “shall be earnestly implemented one by one”. It makes clear, however, that the mistakes of the One Hundred Days must be corrected. The reform measures then adopted were not necessarily bad but “the functionaries who carried them out acted in a bad way”, with the result that the people were confused and the cause of reform prejudiced. The remedy, logically, was not to give up reform, but to abandon the radical program formulated by K'ang Yu-wei and pursue the line of reform as Weng T'ung-ho and other moderates conceived it. Weng, then in retirement, watched this new development perhaps not without some satisfaction. His interpretation of the basic policy of the imperial government is highly interesting, which, according to him, was “to strike a balance between extremes and not to be bound by previous commitments.” This interpretation, it appears, is essentially correct.

Another edict issued on November 3, 1898, less than two months after the one cited above, is even more significant. It reads in part as follows:

The first principle of governance has always been to break away from preconceptions and to guard strongly against letting matters drift.... For laws and institutions are not bad when they are first established, but as time goes on defects accumulate, making it necessary to change them in order to meet the requirements of the time. But if no attention is paid to the actual situation, a set of new defects would then be produced as new laws are enacted. Such a procedure would contribute nothing useful to the affairs of state. Only the most grave defects, therefore, should be remedied; a new law should be enacted only if it promises to be of practical advantage....
Although the customs and governmental systems of Western countries differ in more than one way from those of China, their methods and techniques pertaining to military, agricultural, industrial, and commercial matters are as a rule capable of helping a country to attain prosperity and strength; the effectiveness of these methods and technique has been clearly demonstrated. If we can select what are good among these and apply them, putting them into use one by one, we shall be able to achieve the desired results promptly and consistently.

It is feared, however, that persons of shallow thinking interpret Our intentions wrongly, imagining that the Government has decided to follow the beaten path and is no longer concerned with far-sighted plans. This would be entirely contrary to Our intention earnestly and diligently to achieve good administration.480

The "persons of shallowing thinking" referred to in this document were none other than the ultra conservative officials who would naturally have wished that every trace of reform be obliterated with the coup d'état. They tried hard to carry out their wishes, but even in such cases, such as the petition of the Board of Rites to revive the old examination system and to put an end to the "newstyle schools", the empress dowager refused to go along with the anti-reformers all the way. The "eight-legged essay" indeed was reinstated and the old, imperially sanctioned texts were again made to serve as the official guide for aspiring scholars, but the request to close the schools (hsüeh-t'ang) was unequivocally rejected. The portion of the edict (November 3, 1898) which deals with the schools, deserves quoting:

Academies (shu-yüan) are established for the pursuit and the acquiring of practical knowledge. Their function is not to honor exclusively the study of the commentaries on the classics and the cultivation of the art of literary composition. All subjects which are indispensable to promoting the country's welfare, such as astronomy, geography, military strategy, and mathematics, fall well within the scholar's proper province.

The same holds true for schools (hsüeh-t'ang). Academies and schools differ only in their names, but their functions are in reality the same....

It is a mistake to think that all branches of useful knowledge are outside the scope of the academies.481

Despite the obvious difference in emphasis, the conception of the aims of schools as defined in the above passage departs very little in essence from the general principle laid down in the reform edict of June 11, which was drafted by Weng T'ung-ho:
Let us keep in mind the moral and philosophical teachings of our sages and wise men.... We must also widely select such subjects of Western knowledge as are pertinent to the requirements of the time and study them with real diligence.\textsuperscript{432}

The fact is, then, that the idea of moderate reform—that Western techniques should be adopted to supplement Chinese tradition but not to supplant it—did not die out with the dismissal of Weng T'ung-ho. A number of the officials in Peking who had previously cooperated with Weng or who sympathized with him, were retained by the empress dowager to serve in various important capacities in the years immediately after Weng left the imperial court. Particularly noteworthy were Sun Chia-nai and Wang Wen-shao. The former, then a president of the Board of Civil Appointments, was given the distinction of an associate grand secretary and entrusted with the task of establishing the Imperial University of Peking; the latter was called from Tientsin where he was governor-general, to serve concurrently as a president of the Board of Revenue, minister in Tsungli yamen, and member of the Grand Council—filling the posts left vacant by Weng.\textsuperscript{433} One of the most significant moves made by these officials was Sun Chia-nai's request to reprint and distribute copies of Feng Kui-fen's \textit{chiao-pin-lu k'ang-i}, so that this celebrated book might be used as a basic reference work on reform.\textsuperscript{434} Sun's memorial, interestingly, was submitted July 17, 1898, four days after Tsungli yamen refused to make any recommendation on the reform program outlined by K'ang Yu-wei in his “sixth memorial”. Feng's \textit{K'ang-i}, to recall, was presented to the emperor by Sun and Weng T'ung-ho back in 1889. By calling attention to it again in 1898, Sun obviously wished to remind the emperor of a line of thought which Sun and other moderates regarded as essentially sound and useful as an effective antidote to the radicalism with which K'ang was feeding the emperor.

Sun of course was not alone in the attempt to check radicalism and at the same time to fight ultra conservatism. A few other officials followed his steps. For instance, Huang Shao-chi, a Hanlin reader, presented a number of copies of Chang Chih-tung's \textit{Ch'\'i\'an-h\'\'sieh p'ien} to the emperor, on July 25, a few days after Sun submitted his memorial. As a result, this well-known book on reform was reprinted and widely distributed to provincial officials.\textsuperscript{435} Other efforts were made, prior to and during the One Hundred Days, to substitute for K'ang's reform program an alternative program based on the axiom, “Chinese learning for the foundamental principles and Western learning for practical application”\textsuperscript{436}—a philosophy of reform to which Feng Kuei-fen, Chang Chih-tung, Weng T'ung-ho, and other moderates subscribed.
This philosophy, as already said, suffered a temporary and partial eclipse during the One Hundred Days when radicalism asserted its influence, and again in the days of the Boxer uprising when a violent reaction against reform set in. But it revived quickly in each case. A lengthy edict issued January 29, 1901, sounded the keynote of the post-Boxer reform movement:

There are in the world constant principles which remain eternally unalterable; there are no methods of government that are not subject to modification after they have been formulated.... Now that which do not change are the three basic human relationships and the five constant virtues; they illuminate the world as the sun and the stars. There is, however, no more objection to altering particular laws than there is to putting fresh strings on a musical instrument.... Former emperors of the present dynasty established institutions to suit their times.... Generally speaking, institutions become defective with the passing of time; and when they become defective, they are changed. The purpose [of so doing] is none other than to strengthen the empire and to benefit the people.

Since the court left [Peking], the empress dowager has been consumed with anxiety day and night. We Ourselves have not ceased from vehement self-reproach, when we reflected profoundly that the accumulated abuses and complacent adherence to the accustomed ways.... of the last several decades have contributed to bringing about the present grave disaster. Now that peace negotiations have commenced, the entire administrative system must especially be reformed thoroughly in the hope that prosperity and strength may be gradually attained. The empress dowager has enjoined upon Us the necessity of appropriating the things in which foreign countries excel, to supplement the shortcomings of China....

Since 1897 and 1898, specious arguments have been rampant, which erroneously draw a line between the new and the old. The calamity brought about by the traitor K'ang was even more serious than that caused by the Red Boxers.... The traitor K'ang's talk of "new institutions" amounted to playing havoc with the institutions, not to reforming them. The said traitor and his associates took advantage of Our illness secretly to develop seditious schemes. We therefore earnestly entreated the empress dowager to guide the administration.... In annihilating the rebels and the traitors, the empress dowager has no objection to reform. [At the same time, however,] in modifying the laws and regulations We do not intend to sweep away everything old.... That mother and son hold one and the same conviction should be seen by all, officials and common people.
alike....

Recently, those who study Western ways have confined themselves to languages, manufacture, and machinery. These are but the rudiments of Western technique, which do not constitute the fountain source of Western statecraft. To rule liberally and to deal with the people in a simple and direct manner, to speak with sincerity and to act decisively—these are the principles handed down from our sages in the past and form the first foundation of the prosperity and strength of Western countries.... Overlooking the foundation and merely copying the superficial elements can never bring prosperity and strength to the empire. In short, without changing the laws and regulations we cannot break the inveterate customs; in order to attain prosperity we must consider reform....

The edict then goes on to require all ranking officials, provincial as well as central, to draw upon the experiences of both China and foreign countries, and to make proposals of reform with respect to administration, education, finance, and military defense.

This edict which virtually ushered in another reform movement, repeated some of the leading ideas of the One Hundred Days with, of course, significant differences. The “foundation and application” (Pi-yung) theory of reform which was kept in abeyance (if not expressly rejected) when K'ang Yu-wei represented the dominant influence, was now formally recognized as the guiding principle. K'ang Yu-wei was inclined to question the usefulness of some of the basic features of the imperial system, whereas the leading reformers of the post-Boxer years took that system for granted, even though they were ready to modify some of its characteristic institutional forms. One of such changes introduced was the creation of a system of modern schools, which was intended eventually to replace the old “examination and school” system. This and other institutional changes, it was explained, were made not by simply copying Western patterns or following Western principles, but by putting into practice “the principles handed down from our sages in the past and forming the foundation of the prosperity and strength of Western countries”. This, in reality, is a re-statement of the claim that all the useful sciences originated in China and were effectively applied by Westerners,—a claim made by some of the advocates of limited reform not only in order to disarm ultra conservatives who objected to making China follow the ways of “the barbarians” but also to counter the argument of those who favored unrestricted Westernization, that truth is universal and China should not cling to her tradition which was far from perfect. The concession thus made to
Western civilization, namely, that it contained valid elements beyond mere technological skill, was calculated to bolster up the belief in China’s inherent cultural superiority instead of dispelling it.

It is not surprising that Chang Chih-tung, the chief exponent of the Ti-yung theory of reform, became active again and exerted considerable influence on Peking, and that other officials of the same school of thought, such as Sun Chia-nai and Chang Po-hsi, figured also prominently in the post-Boxer reform movement. Chang appeared virtually as the chief spokesmen, coming out with perhaps the strongest arguments for reform and the most concrete or far-reaching proposals. His memorial, “to plan and to adopt Western methods”, covered a wide range of practical reforms. In a letter to Jung-lu, written in the summer of 1901, Chang made his stand clear:

I humbly think that the matter of reform requires great effort at the beginning and involves numerous details in its execution. Unless there is resolute determination to break away from the established routine, I am afraid that reform will be eventually hamstrung, difficult to implement. Now the only move that can hold together the minds of men today lies in reform, in which scholars and common people of the empire still find hope for attaining self-strengthening some day in the future.

The empress dowager herself lent support to reform, showing a somewhat more positive attitude than she did in the 1860’s and 1890’s, although, at the same time, she echoed the Ti-yung theory by reiterating her opposition to changing “any Chinese custom for one which was less civilized”. The central thought expressed in the edict of September 12, 1898, asserting essential identity of the principles of governance between China and the West, was thus definitely though only impliedly repudiated. Significantly, Chang Chih-tung also took an occasion in 1901 to repeat his condemnation of K’ang Yu-wei’s “unorthodox theories”, which were treated by Chang as such because they implied a denial of the validity of the tradition of “imperial Confucianism”.

One thus comes to the conclusion that Weng T’ung-ho who advocated a line of reform which was to borrow Western methods without affecting China’s moral tradition, was ideologically vindicated by the developments of the post-Boxer years. This, however, serves also to underscore the strategic mistake which he made in antagonizing officials holding compatible views on reform and in relying on a man with a decidedly and widely different intellectual outlook. It may be granted, of course, that Weng might not have developed a successful reform program even if he cooperated with men like Chang Chih-tung; but one can hardly deny that he damaged his own cause of limited re-
form by patronizing K'ang Yu-wei and frustrating Chang Chih-tung. Since
the early 1890's the emperor had already exhibited a tendency to appreciate
the non-material aspects of Western civilization—a tendency which was dis-
quieting to Weng T'ung-ho. Weng should have known better than to bring-
ing K'ang, a man with a parallel tendency, into the emperor's confidence.

The imperial authorities did not easily forgive Weng for that mistake.
To the last days of his life Weng and hoped in vain for receiving the "lenient
 treatment" which was accorded (1904) to other officials cashiered in 1898.\textsuperscript{444} He
was not officially exonerated until 1909 when the emperor, the empress dow-
ager, and Weng himself had all died.\textsuperscript{445} It appears that the emperor, frustrated
but not repentent of his actions taken in 1898, remained unconvinced even of
the validity of Weng's philosophy of reform, as the following statement made
in 1903 suggests:

I have plenty of ideas regarding the development of this country but...
I am not able to carry them out as I am not my own master. I don't think
the Empress Dowager herself has sufficient power to alter the state of
things existing in China at present, and even if she has, she is not willing
to. I am afraid it will be a long time before anything can be done to-
ward reform.\textsuperscript{446}

As subsequent events showed, the emperor's pessimistic view concerning
reform was not entirely unfounded. The political circumstances that prevail-
ed in the closing decade of the nineteenth century and the opening years of
the twentieth precluded the possibility of saving the dynasty through re-
form, not only reform of the radical variety which he and K'ang Yu-wei
favored but also the limited variety advocated by moderates like Weng T'ung-
ho and Chang Chih-tung. The imperial system, beset with personal and fac-
tional strifes, cursed with an inept and decaying administration, and perplexed
by recurrent internal and international crises, was in an advanced stage of
disintegration. It could not furnish the conditions for accomplishing
anything of positive benefit to itself; the elixir of reform could not be ad-
ministered to a dying regime. The reformers themselves, remarkable men in
more ways than one, could not rise above the limitations imposed upon them
by the very ways and circumstances which they undertook to change. They
fought among themselves, neutralized their own efforts, and brought discredit
or suspicion upon their actions. A worthy cause was thus doomed to be a
lost cause. Carl Becker was perhaps right when he remarked that "history is
a cynical, tough old nut" that frustrates the best aspirations of men.\textsuperscript{447}

The above considerations afford a useful basis on which to appraise the
respective roles played by Weng T'ung-ho and K'ang Yu-wei as leaders of reform. Both men wished to save the empire from being “partitioned like a melon” by Western powers. They differed in their views as to the proper type of reform that might serve to attain that objective. Weng desired to inject Western science and technology into the traditional found and to refurbish the administration, and, at the same time, to preserve intact the ideological and institutional structure of the empire. K'ang, in contrast, sought to reinterpret Chinese tradition in the light of modern civilization as he understood it and to alter the existing ideological and administrative system in the light of that interpretation. Ideologically speaking, K'ang's position was virtually revolutionary, in the sense that it implied drastic changes in the imperial system. It is to K'ang's credit that he discerned correctly that the established tradition, being largely outmoded, should be radically reconstructed. But he failed to see that that would have spelled the doom of the imperial system itself. It did not occur to him to raise the question whether or not was it possible to salvage the dynasty (which he intended to do) by doing away with some of its essential features. It did not occur to him, in other words, that the same circumstances which rendered the existing ideological and institutional system obsolete, as he courageously pointed out in the interview with members of Tsungli yamen, took away the rationale of the dynastic system which he wished to save.

It may be argued, of course, that the program of limited reform favored by Weng T'ung-ho, Chang Chih-tung, and others should be easier to implement than K'ang’s more advanced program—a program too advanced for the historical circumstances prevailing in 1898. K'ang's frontal assault on the imperial tradition earned for him the fear and hatred of the majority of the scholar-officials who, under the circumstances, were more than capable of stultifying K'ang's efforts. Thus, as the leaders of the T'ai-p'ing rebellion made war on the scholar-officials and on what was dear to them, thereby calling forth formidable social and intellectual forces that contributed to their ultimate ruin, K'ang waged war on the traditional scholar-officialdom and on what gave it shape and continued existence, thus causing the reform movement of 1898 to suffer similar consequences. This argument, however, reasonable as it is, does not take into sufficient account of the fact that the imperial system after all had deteriorated beyond repair and was soon to be given the coup de grâce by a revolutionary movement which was already in the making when the reformers were struggling fruitless toward their tantalizing goal. As a means to preserving the dynasty, therefore, the limited program
of Weng T'ung-ho was no more useful than the more extensive program of K'ang Yu-wei. There was, speaking from the practical point of view, little choice between the two.

In the larger context of the intellectual history of modern China, however, K'ang Yu-wei occupied a decidedly different place from Weng T'ung-ho. By clinging to the traditional imperial tradition of China Weng made himself a typical example of the patriotic, serious-minded, but tradition-bound scholar-official that dominated the political scene during the critical years when the empire was forced by changing circumstances to make adjustments in its institutional and intellectual life. With the passing of the dynastic system the objective conditions which gave reality to the beliefs and aspirations of men like Weng, disappeared irrevocably. On the other hand, K'ang Yu-wei, in questioning the traditional ideological and institutional system of imperial China and in acknowledging the validity of what he regarded as the best elements of modern Western civilization, was pointing to new intellectual vistas which were soon to unfold themselves after the downfall of the dynasty. These were not necessarily all bright or beneficial; K'ang himself came to look askance at them. But he more than anyone else among his contemporaries had contributed to their emergence. In this way he exerted a more far-reaching historical influence than Weng T'ung-ho.

NOTES

1. Namely, 1875-1896. Between 1894 and 1896, however, instruction was given in irregular sessions. Weng T'ung-ho, Weng Wen-kung-kung jih-chi 翁同龢, 翁文恭公日記 (hereafter, Weng, JC), 33/123a and 35/5b.
2. Ch'ing-shih kao 清史稿 (hereafter, CSK), biog. 323/3a.
3. Bland and Backhouse, China under the Empress Dowager, 158-9 and 180-3; and H. B. Morse, The International Relations of the Chinese Empire, 3/133.

The reliability of Bland Backhouse has been widely questioned. This volume is used by the present writer where it appears to be helpful; no general endorsement is implied.

The concept of "southern party" is a vague one. The term is used here merely to stress the fact that Weng was deeply involved in factional rivalries.

The other leader of the so-called southern party was P'an Tsu-yin (潘祖蔭 1830-1890). See Hummel, Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period,
2/608-9.


6. Weng himself hinted that he may have made some changes in his diary. *JC*, 38, keng-tzu, 5b (Feb., 27,1900): “Chien 慎 diary; coming to the Chia-wu year, a host of emotions were stirred up.” *Ibid.*, 6b (Mar. 4, 1900): “Only one volume of diary is reviewed each day; very much bored by the chore; emotions were frequently aroused.” Later entries, e.g., 38, keng-tzu, 51b-52b, indicate that Weng merely “read diary”. Weng probably thought it wise to go over and check parts of his diary covering the eventful years following 1894. The fact that he chien, “check, arrange” an entire volume each day seems to have precluded the possibility of extensive rewriting.


8. *CSK*, bi6g., 223/4a.


13. A good instance in *ibid.*, 22/68b (1883), when Weng became a grand councillor a little over six months before: “took seat in the third chamber on the east side; arrive here from the fifth chamber in twenty years. Long is the dream of the Central Heaven (chüan-l’ien 釣天)! The first chamber, the Princes Tun and Kung; the second, Prince Hui and others; the third, four grand councillors; the fourth, nine presidents of Boards; the fifth, two [tutors serving in] Yü-ch’ing Palace....”


15. E.g., *ibid.*, 20/66a and 67b (1881), and 26/56b (1887).


17. *Ibid.*, 33/103a (1894). The entry reads: “Last night I dreamed that I bowed in obeisance to ǐ (姨, aunt, mother’s sister) on the second storey of a high building. ǐ (aunt) suggest ǐ (夷, barbarians). This is not a good omen.”

18. Wo-jen (後仁, d. 1871) and Hsü T’ung (徐桐, 1819-1900) were both anti-foreign and opposed to reform. Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, 1/407 and 2/861-3.
19. Weng, JC., 1, keng-shen, 10b (1860) and 4, chia-tzu, 1a (1865).
20. Ibid., 7, ting-mao, 26a (1867), 27a, 52a, 73a, and 75a.
21. Ibid., 8/18b (1868).
22. This was revealed perhaps for the first time in the spring of 1870, when the imperial tutors discussed the curriculum for the young emperor, Mu-tsung. Weng objected to the ideas of Hsü T'ung (a rigid follower of the Chu Hsi tradition) and argued that the tutors should “quicken the pace on current affairs but slow down on li-hsing (i.e., “reason and nature”, or neo-Confucian philosophy).” Ibid., 10/28a-b.
23. Ibid., 1/11a-52b, passim.
24. Ibid., 3/89b.
25. Ibid., 10/28b.
27. Ibid., 15, ping-tzu, 19b (1876).
28. Ibid., 27/27a-b (1890).
29. Ibid., 2/1b (1861).
30. Ibid., 10/84a (Oct. 29, 1870). See also 10/43b-57a, passim, for Weng’s observations and recommendations concerning this incident.
31. Ibid., 30/27a (June 12, 1891).
32. Ibid., 38/27b-41b, passim (June 8 to Aug. 19, 1900).
Weng found vicarious satisfaction in hearing Russia’s defeat by Japan in 1904. Ibid., 40, kuei-mao, 92a, and 40, chia-ch’en, 21b.
33. Ibid., 25/2b (Feb. 11, 1886).
Weng’s reluctance to serve in Tsungli yamen (ibid., 34/62b and 34/64b, July 31 and Aug. 6, 1895), however, was not due solely to his xenophobia. He probably felt that the appointment was calculated by Prince Kung to put him in a position where he would be involved in the highly exasperating task of dealing with foreign powers. See Wu, HSCK., 2/8-9.
34. Weng, JC., 35/105b (Dec. 29, 1896) and 35/114a (Jan. 18, 1897).
35. Ibid., 33/58a (July 16, 1894), 90a-b (Sept. 27, 1894), and 117a-b (Nov.24, 1894).
36. Ibid., 34/25a, 26a, and 30a (April 4, 6, and 24, 1895).
37. Ibid., 19/55a (Aug. 23, 1890).
38. Ibid., 22/39b (May 17, 1883).
39. Ibid., 36/104a-b (Nov. 16-17, 1897).
40. Ibid., 36/111b (Dec. 4, 1897).
41. Ibid., 36/113b-119a (Dec. 8 to 20, 1897).
42. The enmity between the two men were known even to some foreigners. See e.g., Mrs. A. Little, *Li Hung-chang*, 281.

43. Ch'en Ch'iu, "Wu-hsia ch'eng-pien shih fan pien-fa jen-wu chih cheng-chih ssu-hsia", *Yen-ching Journal of Social Studies* 陳勤，戊戌政變時及變法人物之政治思想，燕京學報，XXV (1940), 64; and Teng and Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, 176.

44. Weng, *JC*, 14 i-hai, 23b (1875), and 29a-33a, passim. In one of the entries Weng summarized and commented on the memorials submitted by Ting Jih-ch'ang, Tso Tsung-t'ang, Li Hung-chang, and others.


46. *Ibid.*, 27/88a (1888), 27/7a-b and 83b (1889).

Li Hung-chang's proposals and replies to Weng are partly given in Li Hung-chang, *Li Wen-chung-kung ch'uan-chi*, *Hai-chiu han-kao* 李鴻章, 李文忠公全集, 海軍閏譜, *chüan* 3, 9b-9b, 10b-31b, and *I-shu han-kao* 譯署閏譜, *chüan* 19, 23b-24a.

Chang Chih-tung raised objections against the Tientsin-T'ung-chou line and proposed a line between Lu-kou-ch'iao and Hankow. Chang Chih-tung, *Chang Wen-hsiang-kung ssu-kao*, *Tsou-kao* 張之洞, 張文襄公四譜, 溏譜, *chüan* 17, 3b-9b.


These documents reveal one of episodes of the rivalry between high officials of the time.


Wu, *HSCK*, 4/4, traces Weng's conversion to the cause of reform to around 1894-5, when Weng came into close contact with Timothy Richard. This would ignore the earlier influence of Feng Kuei-fen.


Sun Chia-nai 孫家鼐 shared with Weng his interest in reform. Sun held high opinion of K'ang Yu-wei for a while. Parallel with Weng's efforts, Sun did a number of things to further the cause of reform; e.g., Sun read each day to the emperor Timothy Richard's translation of Mackenzie's *Nineteenth Century* and undertook, unsuccessfully, to arrange for Richard an audience with the emperor. T. Richard, *Forty-five Years in China*, 265, and Bland and Backhouse, *China*, 454-5. Sun, however, did not support Weng's "war policy" against Japan in 1894 and was on friendly terms with Li Hung-chang. *North China Herald*, 
52. Feng Kuei-fen 馮桂芬 (1809-1874) associated with Li Hung-chang for many years. Impressed by his knowledge and erudition, Li recommended him to the emperor in a memorial. Li, Ch'üan-chi, Tsou-kao, 9/24a-b, gives the memorial dated T'ung-chih 4 (1865).

Feng wrote his K'ang-i 拳額論略, a collection of forty essays on reform, in the early 1850's but prudently published at first only fourteen of them. The complete work was published by Ch'en Pao-chien in Kiangsi in 1894.


53. E.g., Li T'ang-ch'ieh 李棠階 (1793-1865), Li Wen-ch'ing-kung jih-chi 李文清功日記, 16, T'ung-chih 4 (1865), 5th moon, 20th day: "Read Mr. Feng's K'ang-i, over thirty pieces; mostly acceptable." Ibid., 25th day: "Read Mr. Feng's K'ang-i; although cannot be put into practice completely, (the work shows that its author) has studied current affairs and have practical recommendations [concerning ways to deal with them]."

54. Hsiang-hsüeh pao 湘學報, (an organ of the reform movement in Hunan province), No. 1 (April 22, 1897), "Historical Events," 1.

55. Long before 1889 Weng had been enjoying the conveniences offered by Western technology. E.g., when he escorted the remains of his father (a former grand secretary) to his family burial grounds in 1877, he made use of a steamship and commented on its gratifying speed. He took another steamship on his return trip to Peking. JC., 16/53b and 84a. He was a first-class passenger on another steamship in 1889. JC., 28/56a. His first experience with railway travel occurred in 1898; "the most marvellous trip in my life", he commented. JC., 37/64b. He had his photograph taken, perhaps for the first time, in 1887. JC., 26/39b.

56. Ibid., 34/110a-b.

57. Ibid., 34/70a and 71b.

58. Chang Chih-tung, Han-kao, 4/2a, "Letter to Weng Shu-p'ing, President of Board" 致翁叔平信書 dated KH 21/9/3.
Chang was governor-general of Liang-Kuang, 1884-9; of Hu-Kuang, 1889-94; and acting governor-general of Liang-Chiang, 1894. During these years he recommended and promoted a number of enterprises in line with the "self-strengthening" movement. See Tsou-kao, esp. chüan 17-39, passim, for pertinent documents.


60. T. Richard, Forty-five Years, 255.

Weng revealed his sympathy toward Ch'iang-hsüeh hui 張學會 in a comment on the action taken by the imperial government. JC., 34/122b and 124b.

61. Pao-pin-t'ang ti-tzu chi 拖水堂弟子記 (in Chang Chih-tung, Ch'üan-ch'i), 12a-b.

62. Chang Chih-tung, Tsou-kao, chüan 17 and 18, passim.

Weng's reactions were recorded in his JC., 37/38a-46a, passim.


64. Ibid., 26/35a-37b and 27/18a-19a.

65. Ibid., chüan 29, passim.

66. Ibid., 30/1a-b, a memorial dated KH 24/4/16.

See, however, Te-tsung Ching-huang-ti shih-lu 德宗景皇帝實錄 (hereafter, SL.), 420/17a, an edict dated KH 24/5/27.


68. Sun Yü-wen 孫毓汶 (d.1899), once president of the Board of War, was friendly to Li Hung-chang and supported the ratification of the treaty of Shimonoseki in 1894. CSK, biog. 223a-b, and Hummel, Eminent Chinese, 2/685.

69. Su Chi-tsu, Wu-hsü ch'ao-pien chi-wen 蘇檻祖, 戊戌朝變紀聞, reprinted partially in Chien, TL., 1/334, however, surmised that Chang might have suffered for his reform activities had he joined the Peking officialdom.

70. Weng, JC., 37/38a.

71. CSK., biog. 252/1a-2a, and Hummel, Eminent Chinese, 1/407.

72. Weng, JC., 37/41a.

73. Ibid., 37/42b, 45a, 45b, and 46a.

74. See Note 71, above.


76. Hsü Shih-ch'ang, Ch'ing-ju hsüeh-an 徐世昌, 清儒學案, chüan 187, passim.
outlines Chang’s views.

77. Weng, J.C., 37/40a (KH 24/interc. 3/8), gives the substance of this memorial. As it was liu-chung, “kept in the palace”, it did not go to the archives.

Yü Yin-lin 于霖霖, a chin-shih of 1859, studied with Wo-jen, leader of the Ch’eng-chu school and an arch conservative. Yü was later promoted to be governor of Hupeh and often argued against Chang Chih-tung’s modernizing measures, on the ground that China’s urgent need was “the rectification of human hearts” and that to make China follow the barbarian ways would render the situation worse. CSK, biog. 235/6a-7a.

Yü’s ignorance of current affairs is illustrated by an entry made in 1901 in his Sung-chai jih-chi 桑齋日記, 6/12a, to the effect that people tended to exaggerate matters concerning foreign countries and that Italy and Germany, which allegedly had achieved prosperity and strength, were probably one country, not two.


79. Ho, FEQ., 10/129-130.

80. Hsüeh Fu-ch’eng, Yung-an wen hsü-pien 薛福成, 澳門文續編, chüan hsia, 5a-b and 6a (written in 1887). The grand secretaries were not named by Hsüeh, but they can be identified as Ch’i Chün-tsaо 禪溥藻 (1793-1866) and P’eng Yün-chang 彭蕴章 (1792-1862). See Hummel, Eminent Chinese, 1/125 and 2/620.

81. Lü Tzu-ming, Hsin hsüeh-chai jih-chi 李慈銘, 華學齋日記, ssu-chi shang, 47b, 48a-b, and 49a-b, entries dated KH 10/5/21-23.

82. Lü Chien-nung, Chung-kuo chin-pai-rien cheng-chih-shih 李劍聰, 中國近百年政治史, 152.


84. Hu Ssu-ching, Wù-hsü li-shuang lu 胡思敬, 復始撫霜錄, partially reprinted in Chien, TL., 4/83-94. This incident is also given briefly in Hummel, op.cit., 2/855.

85. Chin-liang, Ssu-ch’ao i-wen 金梁, 四朝佚聞, 21b.

86. See Note 20, above.

87. Wo-jen was appointed imperial tutor to Mu-tsung in 1862; Weng, 1865. Hummel, op.cit., 2/258 and 2/862.


89. Ibid., 9/64b (TC 8/9/20). Hummel, op.cit., 2/853-5, gives a biographical sketch of Wen-hsiang 文祥.

Earlier, in 1876, Weng read Lin’s proposal concerning land reclamation and irrigation improvement in the metropolitan area and was favorably impressed by it. *Ibid.*, 15/19b (KH 2/2/29).

91. *Ibid.*, 20/14b-58a, *passim* (KH 7/2-4 to 5/10); and *ibid.*, 24/5a (KH 11/7/28).


94. For Weng T'ung-shu 翁同龢, see Hummel, *op.cit.*, 2/859.


96. Weng, *JC.*, 6/52a-67b, *passim; ibid.*, 10/29b-36a, *passim; and ibid.*, 18/3b, etc.


Li Hung-tsaо 李鴻藻 (1820-1897) was a native of Kao-yang, Chihli.


The tutors were Wo-jen, Pao-chün, Hsü T'ung, Li Hung-tsaо, and Weng T'ung-ho. Weng was then a sub-chancellor of the Grand Council, outranked by all his colleagues.


102. Weng, *JC.*, 15/109a, 26/42a, and 36/73b. In the last cited entry Weng indicated that Prince Kung and Jung-lu each presented him with a ju-i 如意, to convey their best wishes on Weng's promotion to associate grand secretary in 1897.

103. *Ibid.*, 37/61b (KH 24/5/2), and 37/62a (KH 24/5/3).


The coffin incident is given in *Li-chi*, “T'ang-kung hsia 禮記, 檀弓下 (嘉慶二十年南昌刻本), *chüan* 10/27a-b.


108. *Ibid.*, 14/35b (KH 1/2/29); 23/7b and 11a-b (KH 10/1/19 and 2/5); and 29/79a (KH 16/10/3).
109. Ibid., 10/40a-b (TC 9/5/12).

Tseng Chi-ts’e 曾紀澤 (1839-1890): CSK, biog.233/3b-5a, and Hummel, 

110. Weng, JC., 27/60a (KH 14/7/29).

111. Ibid., 27/59b.


113. Weng, JC., 14/14a-59b, passim (KH 14/3/26-5/25).

114. Ibid., 16/64a-b and 90b; ibid., 21/21a-b.

115. Ibid., 36/48b (KH 23/6/2).


117. Ibid., 33/9a (KH 20/1/20). Weng indicated that Sung presented him an “essay on current affairs” 時務論.


118. Ibid., 34/16a (KH 21/2/12).

T’ang Chen (T’ang Shou-ch’ien) 湯震 (湯澍), Wei-yen 危言, 2 chüan (1890).

119. Ibid., 35/37b-38a (KH 22/4/23).

Tan Su-t’ung 譚嗣同 (1865-1898), author of Jen-hsüeh 仁學. Hummel, 
op. cit., 2/702-5.

120. Weng, JC., 35/37b and 96a (KH 22/9/20 and 10/15).

Little is known of P’eng Kuang-yü 彭光緒; he was author of a book, Shuo-chiao 說教.

121. Ibid., 35/88a. Weng’s appraisal of Lo Feng-lu 羅豐祿 was: “a very intelligent man.”

122. Ibid., 35/88a, 89b, 97a; and 36/11a, 44b, 47b, 48a, and 52b. Weng indicated that Huang Tsun-hsien 黃遵憲 presented him a copy of his Jih-pen-kuo chih 日本國志.

123. Ibid., 34/82a (KH 21/8/23): “Went to Tsungli yamen.... Hart requested interview.... Took opportunity to discuss [things] with him thoroughly.... This man is useful.”

Ibid., 36/13b (KH 23/12/24): “Went to Tsungli yamen; saw Hart.... He said, ‘I have been advising China to strengthen herself for the past forty years, but she lets matters drift to the present plight [created by the Kiaochow incident].’ His words are extremely trenchant .......” Weng then summarized Hart’s concluding remarks as follows:
“I present for your perusal P'ang-kuan mo-lun 旁觀末論 which I recently wrote. I know well that China would never adopt [my suggestions] but I wish to do my best. If these are adopted, there should be no great calamity for thirty years.”

_Ibid.,_ 34/90b (KH 21/9/9): “Went to Tsungli yamen at noon; met English missionary Timothy Richard at one o’clock…. An outstanding man; a persuasive man.”

_Ibid.,_ 34/91a, Weng recorded Richard’s conversation which will be quoted below; see Note 279. T. Richard, _Forty-five Years_, 166-7, 172, 191-2, 234-240, and 254-6, mentioned several interviews with Weng and recorded more fully the suggestions which he made, among which were that two foreign advisers to the emperor and four foreigners in a cabinet of eight ministers be appointed, and that a board of education be set up to develop modern schools throughout the empire.

Richard, _op.cit._, 259, said that in an interview on February 24, 1896, Weng asked him if he would “aid in the Reform Club which the Government talked of resuscitating.” Richard “refused to have any connection with it.”

Weng interviewed a few other foreigners. _JC_, 34/34b and 92b-93a.

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124. Weng, _JC_, 33/71b (KH 20/7/16).


125. Weng, _JC_, 34/59a (KH 21/interc.5/29).

126. _Ibid.,_ 34/82a (KH 21/8/11) and _ibid.,_ 36/68b (KH 23/8/4).

127. _Ibid.,_ 37/22a (KH 24/2/25).

128. _Ibid.,_ 37/65a (KH 24/5/14).

129. _Ibid.,_ 29/16b (KH 16/interc.2/10).

Chang Yin-huan 張鮑桓 (1837-1900). _CSK_, biog. 229/6b-7b, and Hummel, _op.cit._, 1/60-63.

130. Weng, _JC_, 29/85b, and _ibid.,_ 31/39b and 59a.

The following entries deal with the Ts’ao Chou negotiations: _ibid.,_ 36/114a, 114b, and 115a (KH 23/11/16-18).

131. _Ibid.,_ 36/115a (KH 23/11/19).

Chang Yin-huan was then senior vice-president of the Board of Revenue and member of Tsungli yamen.

132. _Ibid.,_ 37/58b (KH 24/4/24).

133. _Ibid.,_ 37/53b-54a (KH 24/4/10). “The filth of a scoundrel contaminates a good man” is a translation of 元規汙人. Yüan-kuei (i.e., Yü Liang 育亮) was Wang Tao’s 王濤 political bugbear. _Chin-shu_ 聲著, _chüan_ 65, “Wang Tao chüan”.
134. CSK, biog. 229/6b; Hu Su-ching, in Chien, TL, 4/82; and Chih-hsin pao
如新報, 98/1a-2b.
135. Weng, JC, 19/57a (KH 6/8/22; ibid., 23/33b (KH 10/4/24; and ibid., 23/34a
(KH 10/4/26).
137. Chang Chih-tung, Ch'üan-chi, chüan 225, 1a, a note to his poem “Sung
Weng Chung-yüan tien-hsiian ch'ung tsun-fu Yo-fang hsien-sheng ch'u sai”
送翁仲漢致魏尊府長官先生出塞.
138. T. Richard, Forty-five Years, 146.
Ibid., 244, quoted a remark made (Sept. 17, 1895) by Li to Pethick,
an American and one of Li’s foreign secretaries, to the effect “that
Weng T'ung-ho... was practically the emperor of China”.
139. Weng, JC, 33/71a and 86b (KH 20/7/14 and 8/18).
140. Wang Chao, Fang-chia-yüan tsu-yüan 王照, 方家園雜誌 No. 11, chi-shih
紹介; reprinted in Chien, TL, 4/361, and quoted in Wang Shu-nan, Te-
tsung i-shih 王御稿, 德宗遺事, 45-46.
For accounts of Wang Chao's part in the reform movement, see
Yeh Ch'ang-chih, Yüan-t'u-lu jih-chi, 葉昌熾, 續督廬日記, 7/65b-66a, and
T. Richard, op.cit., 268.
141. Chang Chien, Se-weng tzu-ting nien-pu 張謇, 懷翁自訂年譜, 34b. Chang’s
own memorial is given in Chang Hsiao-jo, Nan-t'ung Chang Chi-chih
hsien-sheng chuan-chi 張孝若, 南通張季直先生傳記, 60-61.
Chang Hsiao-jo, Chuan-chi, loc.cit., said that as early as in 1882,
Chang Chien suggested to Li Hung-chang that in view of Japan’s ob-
vious designs, a firmer policy should be pursued in Korea in order to
discourage the potential aggressor. Weng T'ung-ho and P'an Tsu-yin
heard of the suggestion and regarded is as sound, but Li dismissed it
as a purely alarmist view.
142. Weng, JC, 18/23a-b (KH 5/3/27-28), and Li Hung-chang, Li Wen-chung-
kung ch'i-tu 李文忠公尺牘, ts'e 1, 48a-b, 92a-b, et passim.
143. Weng, JC, 25/56b and 69b (KH 12/8/18 and 10/5).
144. Ibid., 28/3a (KH 15/1/6).
145. CSK, biog. 223/4b.
146. Weng, JC, 33/71a, 86b, and 91b (KH 20/7/14, 8/18, and 9/2); 35/87a and
98a (KH 22/9/18 and 24); and 36/108a-b, 118b, and 119a (KH 23/10/3 and
11/27).
147. Tseng Shih-o, “Shu Weng Li hsiang ch'ing shih”, Kuo-wen chao-pao 會士
表, 送翁李相領事，國聞週報, XII (July 15, 1935), 27/1-2.
The writer indicated that he got his information from a man who
was acquainted with a distant descendant of Li Hung-chang. Some of the information given in this article appears to be of dubiously authenticity.


151. E.g., Chang Hsiao-jo, *Chuan-chi*, 56-57.

152. Li Tz'u-ning, *T'ao-hua-sheng-chiai-an jih-chi* 桃花聖解蔭日記, chia-chi 2, 45b (KH 1/2/20); *ibid.*, ting-chi, 2, 34b-35a; and Li Chien-nung, *Cheng-chih shih*, 122-125.


154. Reginald F. Johnston, *Twilight in the Forbidden City*, 67, mentioned two opposite views, one favorable and the other condemnatory, the former held by a number of Western writers, while the latter often by Chinese writers.


Instances of the unfavorable view: Reginald F. Johnston, *Twilight* 65-66; A.E. Grantham, *Pencil Speaking from Peking*; and a number of Chinese writers of the time. K'ang Yu-wei and his associates were of course particularly bitter toward the “Old Buddha”. K'ang's feelings may be illustrated by referring to his remarks to Miyasaki Torazo that he would like to hire some Japanese sōshi to eliminate her. Marius B. Jansen, *The Japanese and Sun Yat-sen*, 77.

Der Ling, *Two Years in the Forbidden City*, 62, illustrated Tz'u-hsi's suspicious nature thus: she had a pillow with a hole in the middle so that she could hear any and every sound and "no one could come on her unawares."


The scandals concerning her, which circulated widely in the empire at that time were, in all probability, without foundation. Wen Ching (Lin Boon Keng), *The Chinese Crisis*, 89-90, repeated some of the scandals. Backhouse and Bland, *Annals and Memoirs of the Court of Peking*, 469-492, questioned the truth of these scandals.

Reginald F. Johnston, *op.cit.*, Ch. v, Note 21, also lent no credence to these scandalous stories and offered the following reason for his disbelief: "Perhaps the 'Venerable Buddha' might have been a better woman than she was, and also a wiser ruler, if they [the stories] had been based on fact. It seems possible that the warping of her character, so far from having anything to do with overindulgence in sensual pleasures, was due in part to an inner conflict arising from sex-repression."

It may be safely supposed that Tz'u-hsi was, in many ways, a disappointed woman. She confided to Der Ling in the winter of 1903: "You know I have had a very hard life ever since I was a young girl. I was not a bit happy with my parents, as I was not the favorite. My sisters had everything they wanted, while I was, to a great extent, ignored altogether. When I first came to the Court, a lot of the people were jealous of me.... Fortunately, I was lucky in giving birth to a son...; after that I had very bad luck. I am disappointed with everything, as nothing turned out as I had expected." *Two Years*, 251-3.


Der Ling, *op.cit.*, 87, described whipping of eunuchs and took down these words of Tz'u-hsi: "They have not been punished for several days and they are looking forward to it." See also *ibid.*, 64.


159. E.g., Reginald F. Johnston, *op.cit.*, 73, and Der Ling, *op.cit.*, 68.

160. Richard Wilhelm, *The Soul of China*, 191-2: P’u-wei, Prince Kung’s grandson, “related how he trembled when he had to deliver a report. Everything had to be related in such a form that it satisfied her, for otherwise she easily became angry and was terrible in wrath.”
Many writers noted the strained relationship between the two rulers. One outstanding exception was afforded by Ch'ü Hung-chi 翟鴻禎 (1850-1918). In his *Sheng-te chi-lieh* 奉德紀略 (c.1908), 2a-b, Ch'ü asserted that while the empress dowager was extremely loving, the emperor was perfectly dutiful. "The rumored misunderstanding in 1897-8... had been in fact completely dissipated." Ch'ü then quoted the empress dowager as saying that the emperor "being my nephew and, on his mother's side, the son of my sister, how could I not be affectionate to him?"

Ch'ü, it should be noted, was a protégé of Jung-lu. See Ch'ü, *En-yü chi-lieh* 儒遇紀略, 38b and 39b.

161. Bland and Backhouse, China, 162-3.

Wang Shu-nan, *Te-tsung i-shih*, 7-9 and 27-30, indicated that some of the relatives of the imperial family quarreled among themselves over the unsatisfactory relationship between the emperor and his wife, and that Chen-fei was cashiered for imitating the corrupt practices of Tz'u-hsi.

162. Weng, *JC*, 27/72a-b (KH 14/10/5, 33/118a-b (KH 20/10/29), and 33/119b (KH 20/11/2); Yeh Ch'ang-chih, *Jih-chi*, 7/9a (KH 20/10/29); and Wang Shu-nan, *Te-tsung i-shih*, 27-30. See also Hummel, *op.cit.*, 2/732.


164. T'ao Mu 陶模, governor-general of Liang-Kuang, raised one of the clearest voices against the doings of the eunuchs in the closing decades of the century. See a memorial submitted in 1901, given in Yü Pao-hsüan, *Hsii-ai wen-pien* 子寶軒 蕃艾文編, 9/5a-6a.

T'ao Mu was highly regarded by Tso Tsung-t'ang. He took part in the campaign against the Moslem rebels; he pleaded for reform in a memorial submitted in 1895, then acting governor-general of Shen-Kan. CSK., biog. 234/7b-10b.

165. Ch'in-liang, *Ch'ing-ti wai-chi* 清帝外紀, 115-116. The eunuch in question was O-lo-li 鄭羅哩, and the high official who was ruined was Kuang-hsing 廣興, the first official to impeach Ho-shen 霍申 in 1899.

166. Hsiüeh Fu-ch'eng, *Yung-an wen hsii-pien, chiüan hsia*, 1a-2a, narrated the incident in some detail. Bland and Backhouse, China, 85-95, gave the same story.

167. Ch'in-liang, *Kuang-Hsüan hsiao-chi* 光宣小記, 53, described the daily
routine of the empress dowager during the hsüen-cheng years (1887-1889).

168. One of such cases came to light in 1891 when a censor impeached Chin Chiu 金九, a eunuch, charging him with demanding favors of high officials. The charge proved true upon investigation. Hsü Chih-hsiang, Chia-t'ing hsien-sheng tsou-i 徐致祥, 濟定先生奏議, chüan shang, 38a.

169. This is best illustrated by the conduct of Li Lien-ying to whom we shall presently refer.

Other eunuchs were reported to have engaged in illegal enterprises; e.g., it was discovered in 1875 that eunuchs operated opium dens within the Forbidden City. Wu Hsiang-hsiang, Wan-Ch'ing kung-t'ing shih-chi 吳相権, 萬清宮庭實紀, 218.

170. Even Prince Ch'un (the emperor's father) deemed it prudent to ask Li Lien-ying, the chief eunuch, to accompany him on his inspection trip in 1886, apparently to prevent suspicion. Li Tz'u-ming, Hsüen-hsüeh-chai jih-chi, hsin-chi shang, 91b (KH 12/3/20); and Weng, JC., 25/60a (KH 12/8/28).

Weng complained that when was in charge of the repair work on Yung-ho Kung in 1897, seven or eight of the eunuchs “recommended” contractors to him. He “angrily reprimanded them”. JC., 26/36b (KH 13/4/4).


173. E.g., Chin-liang, Kuang-Hsüan hsiao-chi, 93; Fei Hsing-chien, Tz'u-hsi ch'üan-hsin lu, in Chien, TL., 1/464; and Wang Ch'ing-pao and Ts'ao Ching-ch'eng, I-she t'an-yu lu 王慶保曹景鷹, 載舍探幽錄, reprinted in Chien, TL., 1/498.

According to Fei Hsing-chien, Sheng Hsüan-huai 盛宜懷 was impeached by a number of censors for embezzling huge sums as director of the steamship company. An investigation was ordered but the case was hushed up after Sheng sent a large sum of money to Li Lien-ying. For Sheng Hsüan-huai, see Hummel, op.cit., 1/29.

Wang and Ts'ao reported a statement made by Chang Yín-huan on his way to exile, in the autumn of 1898, that upon Chang's return from a diplomatic mission in 1897, he presented the empress dowager with some jewelry which pleased her. But he forgot to give Li Lien-yin any gift. Chang believed that the punishment which he received was probably due to this oversight.

Weng, *JC.*, 3/94b (TC 1/11/3) noted that some eunuchs attending the young emperor wore fur coats of better quality than what their master had on him. See also *ibid.*, 3/97b.


177. K'ang Yu-wei's letter to Timothy Richard, reproduced in Chien, *TL.*, 1/416; and Liang, *CPC.*, 58. The incident was supposed to have occurred in 1890.

We have no way to establish the reliability of the above story. The emperor appears to have been quite cautious in dealing with eunuchs in the years immediately preceding 1898. In 1897, e.g., he suppressed a memorial impeaching a eunuch named Niu and remarked to Weng T'ung-ho that "if this memorial was seen by the empress dowager, the official submitting it would incur unfathomable calamity". Yü Yü-ting, *Ts'ung-ling chi'uan-hsin lu* 崇陵傳信錄, reprinted in *Tso*, *Tzu-liao*, *hsia*, 460. It is conceivable that the emperor was taught by his earlier experiences to become increasingly more cautious.

178. Backhouse and Bland, *Court of Peking*, 430-3, illustrated this by citing the cases of Lu Po-yang and Yü-ming, who bribed Li Lien-ying to secure lucrative posts.

Reginald F. Johnston, *Twilight*, 39-40, emphatically supported this view: "the whole of the enormous palace staff—numbering about three thousand—not only stood in awe of the powerful empress (dowager) but also had personal and selfish reasons for hating the emperor's reform schemes.... They well knew that the triumph of the cause of reform would lead, sooner or later, to a catastrophic upheaval;... and it was to the empress dowager that they looked for the maintenance of the corrupt system by which they lived and thrived."

179. Yü Yü-ting, in Chien, *TL.*, 1/475, mentioned the case of Yü-k'ung (apparently the same individual whom Backhouse and Bland named as Yü-ming).

(Chang Chih-tung), *Pao-ping-lang ti-tzu chi*, 1b-2a, cited another revealing case.

180. Der Ling, *Two Years*, 176-7: "Li Lien-ying told me that these missionaries give the Chinese a certain medicine, and that after that they wished to become Christians.... Missionaries also take the poor Chinese children and gouge their eyes out, and used them as a kind of medicine." This statement was made in 1903, long after the Boxer uprising.
181. Chang Yüan-chi, a note to No. 8 of his "Tsui-shu wu-hsi cheng-pien tsu-yin" (written in 1952) 張元濟, 追述戊戌政變雜詠, in Chien, TL, 4/351, recalling his audience with the emperor, KH 24/4/28: "Te-tsung's voice was rather low, but his tone was friendly. He repeatedly ordered me to say freely what I wish, without fear or reservation. I saw shadows of men outside the window behind the throne.... I dared not say much."

Cf. K'ang Yu-wei's statement, in Chien, TL, 3/506, to the effect that the emperor himself was aware of the espionage.

182. Herbert A. Giles, China and the Manchus, 121, commenting on the death of the emperor (Nov. 14, 1908) and of Tz'u-hsi on the day following: "a singular coincidence which has been attributed to the determination of the eunuchs and others that the Emperor should not outlive his aunt... lest his reforming spirit should again jeopardize their nefarious interests."

Chin-liang, Kuang-Hsüan hsiao-chi, 109, repeated the "information" passed on to him by some eunuchs that despite the emperor's illness he still had to greet the empress dowager personally morning and night each day. This was an exhausting task. Moreover, his sickness was practically unattended. The emperor could not have outlived his aunt even without foul play.

183. Backhouse and Bland, Court of Peking, 434.

Cf. Chang Yüan-chi, in Chien, TL, 4/352 (a note to Tsu-yin No. 10): "At that time, there were eunuchs who were loyal to Te-tsung. Men like K'ou Lien-ts'ai 匡連材 told others that Te-tsung often sighed and covering his face wept when he was alone. K'ou also said that the Western Empress was ill-tempered. She promptly punished Te-tsung upon hearing a single offending word from him—by ordering him to kneel for long hours at a time. Consequently, Te-tsung was very frightened each time he went in to extend routine greetings to her."

184. Lao-li (pseud.), Nu-ts'ai hsiao-shih 老吏,奴才小史 (滿清稗史), 19a-20a, indicated that K'ou's memorial touched administrative matters, including Tz'u-hsi's encroachment on the emperor's authority and the construction of Yüan-ming yün.

Fei Hsing-chien, in Chien, TL, 1/463, said that Wen T'ing-shih (with whom Fei was personally acquainted) knowing K'ou's loyalty to the emperor, made a point to befriend K'ou. Wen prepared a memorial begging the empress dowager to adopt reform measures, and persuaded K'ou to submit it. Tz'u-hsi was enraged and, upon the ad-
vice of Li Lien-ying, inflicted on K’ou the capital punishment.

SL., 386/2 (KH 22/2/27), gives an edict issued March 30, 1896, which quotes Yang Ts’ung-i, a censor, as accusing Wen of frequently gathering people to discuss government affairs and of having become “sworn brothers” with a eunuch named Wen.

These accounts must be taken with a grain of salt. But it would be rash to deny that some of the eunuchs were involved in imperial politics.

185. Weng, JC., 26/6b (KH 13/1/15), described the ceremonies marking “the assumption of the rulership” by Te-tsung. Ibid., 26/35b (KH 13/4/4) described the daily routine under the hsien-cheng regime in these words: “Five audiences; I was in the fourth. The three previous ones were with the emperor; I was received by the empress dowager.”

186. Bland and Backhouse, China, 162
188. See, e.g., Weng, JC., 37/29a-b and 32a (KH 24/3/13 and 17).

Tz’u-hsi, however, did not accept responsibility for the humiliating war of 1894. As Bland and Backhouse, China, 176, put it: “she had to blame someone for the disaster... and it is not surprising, therefore, if she heaped reproaches on the Emperor....” The authors, however, failed to make clear that the relationship between the imperial rulers had already become strained long before 1894.

189. Weng, JC., 34/3b (KH 21/1/18); cf. ibid., 34/13a and passim.
190. CSK., biog. 229/3b-4a; and Weng, JC., 34/107a (KH 21/10/17),—concerning Wang Ming-luan and Ch’ang-lin.

For An Wei-ch’un, see CSK., biog. 232/4a-b; and Weng, JC., 35/17b (KH 22/2/17). According to Weng, An acted upon the advice of Wen T’ing-shih.

See also Chih-hsin pao, 84/3a-4b (KH 25/3/11), K’ang Yu-wei’s letter to a Japanese friend; statement to China Mail, in Chien, TL., 3/532; and Liang, CPC., 59-60.

191. SL., 378/2b-3a. In this edict the tardiness in meting out punishment to Wang Ming-luan and Ch’ang-lin was excused on the ground that the emperor was too busily engaged in military matters (i.e., Sino-Japanese war).

193. Su Chi-tsu, in Chien, TL., 1/331.

K’ang Yu-wei repeated this story in Chih-hsin pao, 84/3a-4b (KH 25/3/11), and in North China Herald, LXI (Oct. 17, 1898), 740. So did
Liang Ch’i-ch’ao in *CPC.*, 147.

Harold E. Gorst, *China*, 250, gave a substantially identical account.


195. K’ang Yu-wei and some of his associates were the most well known. Bland and Backhouse, *op. cit.*, 197-8.

Wang Chao, *“Kuan-yü wu-hsü cheng-pien chih hsìn shih-liao”,* 關於戊戌政變之新史料, in Chien, *TL.*, 4/331, said that in the winter of KH 23 (1897-8) when K’ang Yu-wei again was in Peking, he urged that reform should begin from below, namely, by establishing *hsu*, “associations”, rather than to begin at the top, through action of the imperial government. But after he was summoned to imperial audience he held that it was necessary to enhance the emperor’s authority and, in order to do that, the empress dowager must be eliminated. Wang Chao further asserted that K’ang was converted to this latter view by Chang Yin-huan who bore a grudge against the empress dowager for having threatened him with punishment, thus forcing him to bribe the eunuchs with 200,000 taels to clear himself of the charges made against him.

We have no way to disprove Wang’s story concerning Chang Yin-huan, which probably is true. It should be noted, however, it is not entirely accurate to say that K’ang began with the conviction “that reform should begin from below”; for as far back as in 1888 K’ang had been trying to gain the attention of the imperial government.


198. Der Ling, *Two Years*, 356.

199. *Ibid.*, 374. Cf. *ibid.*, 114: “He was a born musician and could play any instrument without studying. He loved the piano, and was always after me to teach him.”

200. Weng, *JC*, esp. 15/32b (KH 2/4/11); 15/76a (KH 2/8/5); 16/2b (KH 3/1/6); 18/52b (KH 5/6/29); 19/98a (KH 6/12/29); and 23/101a (KH 10/11/5).

201. *Ibid.*, 15/96a (KH 2/10/26) and 16/50a-b (KH 3/7/8).

202. *Ibid.*, 20/24b (KH 7/3/5)—irritated by eunuchs; 21/7b (KH 8/2/1)—angry because tea was too hot; 22/32b (KH 9/3/19)—angered by a eunuch who was beaten and injured by him; 22/47a (KH 9/5/2)—angered by Sun Chia-nai, a tutor, smashed a teacup; 22/64a (KH 9/9/2)—wrathfully kicked and broke a windowpane; and 27/37a (KH 14/5/7)—angry, broke windowpane. In the last incident the emperor was about
seventeen.


204. *Ibid.*, 34/7a (KH 21/1/16).


Der Ling, *op. cit.*, 115, testified to the emperor’s sincere concern for the future of the empire.

Yên Yü-ting, as Hanlin expositor, had many opportunities to observe the emperor at close range. He wrote the following: “His countenance was sorrowful, perpetually as though he was unhappy.” Quoted in Tso, *Tzu-liao, hsia*, 454.

Cf., however, Der Ling, *op. cit.*, 113: “He was quite a different person when he was alone with me. He would laugh and tease, but as soon as he was in the presence of Her Majesty he would look serious, and as if he were worried to death.”


Chang also chose to speak of the emperor as a hsiao-ch’ou 小丑, “a little clown”. Quoted in Ko Kung-cheng, *Chung-kuo pao-hsiēh shih* 我公號, 中國報學史, 154.

209. Der Ling, *op. cit.*, 83.


212. Liang Ch’i-ch’ao, *CPC*, 155, stated that the emperor was fond of reading books. But “After the incidents of Kiaochow and Port Arthur, he became very angry, saying that books were useless things and ordered his attendants to burn all he had.... [he] purchased many books on government written by Westerners and read them; as a result, he decided to implement reform.”

Chang Yüan-chi, in Chien, *TL*, 4/350 (note to *Tsa-yüen* No.3) said that he was commissioned by the Tsungli yamen authorities to buy books of recent publication for the emperor who used the vermilion brush to write the book lists.

213. Isaac T. Headland, *China’s New Day*, 3-8, related that in 1894 Tz’u-hsi 設喜 celebrated her sixtieth birthday and that the Christian women of the empire presented her a copy of the New Testament. The next day, the emperor purchased a copy of the complete Bible from the Amer-
ican Bible Society, Some eunuchs said that “the emperor had a portion of the Gospel of Luke copied in large characters each day” and studied the text. A few days later, the emperor purchased a number of books that had been translated into Chinese. “Every day for six weeks that eunuch [whom the emperor sent to buy books for him] came to buy more books..., until he had bought every book that had been translated out of European languages into Chinese.”

H.B. Morse, *International Relations*, 3/134, quoting from A.H. Smith, *China in Convulsion*, 1/138, also gave the Bible episode and said: “from that time he [the emperor] was sedulous in getting all the light he could on Western religion and customs.”

214. Isaac T. Headland, *op.cit.*, 8-11. The “toys” included a “huo lun che”: “He thereupon had a railroad built along the west shore of the Lotus Lake in the Palace grounds, and two little cars and an engine made in Europe large enough to take the court for a ride in this newly constructed merry-go-round.” The emperor had, in addition to the above, telegraph apparatus, a telephone, phonographs, and cinematograph equipment.

215. Weng, *JC*, 30/63a, 64b, 65b, and 66a (KH 17/10/25, 11/1, 5, and 7). Weng was disturbed at the emperor’s zeal in learning yang-wen, foreign language, i.e., English.

216. *Ibid.*, 35/85a (KH 22/9/13), and 36/131a (KH 23/12/24).


218. James Legge’s phrase, used to describe the ideological system adopted and maintained by the Ch’ing rulers, a system based mainly on the Chu Hsi school of neo-Confucianism.

Ku Hung-ming stated this ideological system thus: “by the first fundamental law of state in China, resting upon the principle of absolute obedience of children to parents, the supreme authority in the Chinese body politic of Her Imperial Majesty the Empress Dowager as the mother of the nation or country, admits of absolutely no question or doubt.” *Papers from a Viceroy’s Yamen*, 3.


221. *Chih-hsin pao*, 94/1a-3a (KH 25/6/21).

222. *CSK*, biog. (楊鏡), 251/4b.


224. Su Chi-tsu, in Chien, *TL*, 1/342. Su sympathized with the emperor

225. E.g., T’u Jen-shou 居仁守, a Hanlin compiler, memorialized in 1889 that in view of the possibility of estrangement between the two imperial rulers, it would be well to send all secret memorials to the empress dowager for approval. T’u was cashiered for his action. *CSK.*, biog.232/3a-b.


Cf. Wang Shu-nan, *Te-tsung i-shih*, 10-13. Wang Chao made another attempt. When he heard that Yüan Shih-k’ai was called to the capital by the emperor, he went to see Hsü Chih-ch’ing and pointed out that Yüan’s appearance in Peking would “frighten” the empress dowager; he promptly prepared a memorial suggesting that Yüan be sent to garrison Kuei-te (Honan) and to suppress the bandits that were rampant there, and submitted it to the emperor a few days before the cou d’état.


235. The emperor’s phrases; Der Ling, *Two Years*, 290.

236. See, e.g., Weng, *JC*, 28/17a-b (KH 15/2/26), and 30/63a and 66a (KH 17/10 25 and 11/7).

This will be taken up more fully later when the relationship between Weng and K’ang is dealt with.

237. *Ibid.*, 33/33b, 20a, 20b, and 33a (KH 20/1/7, 2/21, 2/22 and 3/18).


240. T. Richard, *Forty-five Years*, 144, quoting Li Hung-chang’s remark to Pethick, his American secretary.

Hu Ssu-ching, in Chien, *TL*, 1/358, asserted that Prince Kung alone kept the conflict between the two imperial rulers from developing into serious proportions, When the Prince died in the spring of
1898, "Weng alone held the reins of government". The death marked the beginning of the complete alienation between the rulers.

Hu betrayed pronounced prejudice against the reformers; the above remark concerning Weng can hardly accepted as accurate. Nor can one lend credence to his allegation that when the emperor went to see the prince on his death bed, he was warned by the latter against having confidence in "a chü-jen from Kwangtung, who advocates reform". Hu failed to note that at the time of the prince's death K'ang Yu-wei was already a secretary in the Board of Works (having previously earned his chin-shih) and no longer a chü-jen.


242. For Weng's own account of his part in the war of 1894, see *ibid*, 33/50b et seq.

243. *Ibid.*, 33/122a, 122b, and 123a (KH 20/11/8, 9, and 10); and *ibid.*, 35/5b (KH 22/1/13).

Wu, *HSCK*, 4/5, pointed out correctly that Liang Ch'i-ch'ao was inaccurate in dating this event KH 22/6/ instead of KH 22/1/13. Mr. Wu, however, perhaps went too far in concluding that Weng had previously begged to be relieved of his tutorial service (upon K'ang Yu-wei’s advice) and that “therefore one cannot lay the blame on the empress dowager” for terminating his service. Mr. Wu based his conclusion on the strength of a single entry in K'ang’s Nien-p'u (reproduced in Chien, *TL*, 4/135-6). K'ang’s account is widely at variance with Weng’s; we see no reason for completely ignoring Weng’s version without any explanation.

244. Chin-liang, *Ch'ing-ti wai-chi*, 163.


248. For instance, Weng pleaded strongly (1894) with the emperor asking for lenient treatment of An Wei-ch'un who, among other things, criticized the empress dowager for interfering with the emperor's conduct of state affairs, although Weng privately condemned An's criticism as: "most perverse and erroneous". *JC*, 33/132a-b (KH 20/12/2).

249. E.g., *ibid.*, 34/60b (KH 21/6/5): “Sun Yü-wen petitioned to be relieved of
his post; and edict approving [his petition] will be issued the same day; approval of the empress dowager not sought.” The emperor, however, secured her approval of the appointments of some presidents of Boards. *Ibid.*, 34/6/1a.

For Sun Yü-wen, see *CSK*, biog. 223/4a-b; and Hummel, *op.cit.*, 2/6/1.

A more serious attempt was made by the emperor in 1897. Weng, *JC*, 36/13a (KH 23/2/9): “Eunuch said, ‘By an order issued today, hereafter all memorials need not be sent to I-kuan-tien 嚴鸞殿 (where the empress dowager conducted state affairs).’ I did not understand the matter for sure—the meaning of it.” One day later, Weng wrote (*ibid.*, *loc.cit.*) that memorials were still to be sent to “the eastern court”, namely, to Tz’u-hsi.

250. Weng, *JC*, 35/85a-b (KH 22/9/12), indicated that in discussing military reform, “the emperor spoke with rousing enthusiasm…. This is truly the empire’s good fortune…..” *Ibid.*, 36/131a (KH 23/12/24): “In audience: the emperor inquired as to the things that should be done first, and indicated that reform was urgent. Prince Kung was silent. I answered in some detail. Other officials present were also silent.”

Bland and Backhouse, *China*, 185, also held that Weng did not foresee the disastrous developments in 1898: “he certainly never anticipated that K’ang would go so far as to advise the Emperor to defy the Old Buddha herself and to plot against her sacred person.”


To a certain extent, the two men held similar views concerning the empire’s foreign relations. When German troops occupied Kiaochow, K’ang “went to tell Ch’ang-shu [i.e., Weng] that England could be trusted” and that China should ally with England to resist Germany. K’ang then persuaded Yang Shen-hsiu to submit a memorial (which K’ang drafted), making the proposal to the throne. Prince Kung and Li Hung-chang were opposed to the suggested alliance with England and Japan; K’ang’s proposal was not accepted. K’ang then “told Ch’ang-shu that Russia eyes [the empire] greedily and that other countries will follow [Russia’s example], but we have no way to resist them. Please open all the ports along the coasts and trade with these countries. We should thus be able not only to rely on the strength of these countries to protect the empire but also to extend the knowledge of scholars and the people.” Weng heartily approved of K’ang’s suggestion and brought it up in Tsungli yamen. Opposition

Weng, *JC*, 37/25b (KH 24/3/4) corroborated K'ang's statement. It seems rash, however, to conclude from such specific instances of agreement that Weng "accepted every word and followed every advice" of K'ang, as Wu Hsiang-hsiang does. *HSCK*, 4/6.


253. Sun Chia-nai also showed interest in Feng's *K'ang-i* and T'ang's *Wei-yen*. In addition to these, Sun thought highly of Cheng Kuan-yin's *Sheng-shih wei-yen* 春觀殷，盛世危言，which he presented to the emperor (time to be ascertained).

Cheng, a native of Hsiang-shan, Kwangtung and an expectant circuit intendant, wrote this book around 1862, as a result of his reaction to the disaster of 1860. He revised it at least four times (1871, 1893, 1896, and 1899). Chien, *TL*, reprints part of it from an 1898 edition published in Shanghai.

Chang's general position came close to that of Feng and T'ang. Cheng argued that "Chinese learning" should constitute the "root" and "Western learning", the "branch"; the latter should supplement but not replace the former. Westerners were ignorant of "the great principles"; their knowledge was limited to partial truths. The intention of Christian missionaries was to do good but they taught things that were "vulgar, unworthy of mentioning". Cheng distinguished between *t'i* and *yang* in "Western learning" itself: educating talented men in the schools and deliberating national affairs in parliaments constituted the former, while technology and science, the latter. Chien, *TL*, 1/40-49, *passim*.


Sun Chia-nai's memorial presenting the works of Feng, T'ang, and Cheng (KH 24/5/29, July 17, 1898) is given in Chien, *TL*, 2/430.

254. Feng, *K'ang-i*, *ch'ian hsia*, "Ts'ai hsi-hsi" 探西學, partially translated in Teng and Fairbank, *op.cit.*, 51-52. The passage quoted here is taken from the above translation with slight changes. The phrase "moral principles and ethical teachings" is a translation of 倫常名教.

In the same essay Feng answered the objection to learning from “the barbarians” by saying: “No, my suggestion is not in violation to the principles of the sages. For to say ‘resist [the barbarians]’ implies that there is something with which to resist them.... Can we still use the old calendar to determine the seasons, the time glass to measure the hours, or the bow and arrow to fight foreigners?... Moreover, to adopt their tools and weapons is not to adopt the institutions and practices (禮) of foreigners.” This portion of the essay is not translated in Teng and Fairbank, op.cit., but is summarized in So Kwan-wai, Reform Movement, 136-7.

256. Weng, JC, 28/91a (KH 15/12/4, Dec.25,1899).
257. Ibid., 36/131a (KH 23/12/24, Jan.16,1898).
258. Ch’en Chih 陳ịch served in the imperial government for many years; he traveled widely in the sea ports of China, including Hongkong and Macao, and read extensively books on “Western learning.”

Yung-shu庸書, a work of eight chüan with a total of 101 essays, was included in Liang Ch’i-ch’ao’s compilation, Hsi-cheng ts’ung-shu (1897) 西政叢書, which is the edition used here. Chien, TL., 1/231-248, gives 12 of the 101 essays.

Chao Ping-lin, Pai-yen wen-ts’un 趙炳麟, 標異文存 chüan 3, contains a biographical sketch of ch’en Chih.

259. Yung-shu, chüan 1, “Tzu-ch’iang” 自強, 4b.
260. Ibid., chüan 8, “Shen-chi”, 審機, 5a-b: “Western countries excel in practical administration; China excels in moral teaching. Tao is different from ch’i, and t’i from yung. Each should simulated the other, each supplement the other.”

Ch’en went on to disparage all foreign religions and to sing praise to Confucianism.

Not satisfied with merely asserting the moral superiority of China, Ch’en further claimed that all Western culture, scientific as well as religious, had its roots in ancient China. Ibid., chüan 5, “Hsi-shu” 西書, chüan 7, “T’ien-wen” 天文, “Ke-chih” 考異, and “Hsi-i” 西雅; chüan 8, “Chiao-min” 敕民; and chüan 10, “Sheng-tao” 順道.

261. So Kwan-wai, Reform Movement, 186, said that the proposals made by Ch’en Chih and K’ang Yu-wei concerning agriculture, commerce, industry, and mining “were mostly alike”. Ch’en’s views on these matters were outlined especially in his Hsi fu-kuo ts’e 續富國策, in Liang, Hsi-cheng ts’ung-shu.

262. Little is known of T’ang Chen’s life. His Wei-yen 玉音, a work of four chüan with a total of forty essays, was published in Shanghai, summer
263. *Wei-yen, “Chung-hsüeh”*. 中學, 1/10a-12b.

Like Ch‘en Chih, T‘ang believed that Confucianism was the only all-embracing, perfect “teaching”. He, however, did not deem it wise to persecute other “teachings” (i.e., religions). To tolerate Catholicism and Protestantism, he argued, amounted to no more than permitting additional “teachings” to exist in the empire, side by side with Taoism, Buddhism, and Islam. But converts to foreign religions should be registered, and no new temples, Taoist or Buddhist, should be built. These measures, he thought, would eventually stamp out “teachings” other than the Confucian. *Ibid.*, 3/32a-37b.

264. T‘ang was somewhat more radical than Ch‘en in advocating reorganization of the examination system, by introducing into it practical subjects and at the same time retaining the traditional ones. *Ibid.*, 1/13a-17a.

Generally in agreement with Ch‘en, T‘ang proposed these administrative reforms: (1) employment of expert and experienced personnel; (2) abolition of useless officials and offices; and (3) closer contact between ruler and people by instituting “parliament”. *Ibid.*, *chi’an* 1, *passim*, and *chüan* 4, essay on “*Pien-fa* 变法.”

T‘ang anticipated one important moves made by the reformers of 1898 in advocating that ceremonics and protocols be drastically simplified, e.g., by abolishing *kou-tou*. *Ibid.*, 4/37a.

265. Chang Chih-tung, *Ch‘üan-hsüeh p‘ien* 儒學校 published in the spring of 1898 in Wuchang, was partially translated into English by Samuel 1. Woodbridge, under the title, *China’s Only Hope* (New York 1900). The translation is marred by many inaccuracies.


266. Griffith John, Introduction to Samuel I. Woodbridge’s translation of Chang’s *China’s Only Hope*, 11.


268. Hsi Shih-ch‘ang, *Ch‘ing-ju hsüeh-an*, 187/1a-b, pointed out that Chang followed both the traditions of Han and Sung scholars (Chang Chih-tung), *Ti-tzu chi*, 14a, also called attention to the eclectic approach of the *Ch‘üan-hsüeh p‘ien*. 

Cf. Hellmut Wilhelm, “The Problem of Within and Without”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XII (Jan.1951), 59, where Chang’s position is compared with that of Tseng Kuo-fan.


Chang enumerated over two dozen “perversities and errors”, in point of thought or language, which he discovered in the *Kung-yang chuan* 公羊傳.

271. Weng, *JC*, 33/43a (KH 20/5/2): “Read *Hsin-hsüeh wei-ching k’ao* 聊學儒經考 of K’ang Yu-wei (Tsu-i 言誼, *ch’iu-jen* from Kuang-tung, noted scholar); contending that the Old Texts of Liu Hsin are all spurious. . . . Verily a ‘wild fox meditator’ among commentators of the Confucian classics.”


Wu Hsiang-hsiang, *HSCK*, 4/3, interpreted the matter differently, quoting the above passage to support his contention that “although Weng had the feeling that K’ang’s theory of the Confucian classics was not orthodox, he did not harbor any dislike or desire to repudiate him.” Moreover, Weng’s courteous call on K’ang “precisely prove that Weng had already shown appreciation of K’ang’s spirit of nonconformity and independence”. The present writer finds it difficult to concur. For to accept Mr. Wu’s interpretation would make it difficult to explain the fact that between 1898 and January 1898 Weng made scant mention of K’ang in his diary.

Chang Ping-lin, T’ai-yen wen-lu, chüan 2, “Yü Wang Ho-ming shu” 太炎文錄，卷二，與王鴻銘書, alleged that Weng T’ung-ho and P’an Tsu-yin 奎文， and based their views on Kung-yang doctrines. This view is also highly questionable.

272. Weng, *JC*, 33/9a (KH 20/1/20).


Sung was a native of Fu-shun, Szechuan and served as counselor to the Chinese legation in England and France.

274. Sung, *op.cit.* 5b.


Timothy Richard had an interview with Sun Chia-nai on Oct. 12,1895, a dozen days before his meeting with Weng. The interview lasted over an hour. Among other things, Sun told Richard that he had been reading with the emperor the Chinese version of Mackenzie's *Nineteenth Century* every day for over two months. *Forty-five Years*, 256-7.

279. Weng, *JC*, 34/90b-91a (KH 21/9/9).

Richard's account of this interview differs in some details from Weng's. Richard, *op.cit.*, 256: "After prefacing that God showed no partiality towards any nation, East or West,... I pointed out four vital requirements for China: educational reform, economic reform, internal and international peace, and spiritual regeneration. To carry out these great measures I proposed: 1. Two foreign advisers to the Throne; 2. A Cabinet of eight ministers, one half of Manchus and Chinese, and the other half of foreign officials...; 3. The immediate reform of currency and the establishment of finance on a sound basis; 4. The immediate building of railways and the opening of mines and factories; 5. The establishment of a Board of Education to introduce modern schools and colleges throughout the Empire; 6. The establishment of an intelligent Press with experienced foreign journalists to assist Chinese editors...; 7. The building up of an adequate army and navy... This scheme of reform was shown by Weng T'ung-ho to the Emperor and approved by him."

It is difficult to decide as to which of the two accounts is the more accurate. One thing is certain: Weng could not have accepted all of Richard's proposals.

280. See Weng, *JC*, e.g., 37/50b, 56b, and 57a-b.


At the same time, Weng showed interest in other persons versed in practical or technological matters; e.g., he personally examined a spinning machine invented by a Lu Tzu-shou, a native of Fukien, a
few days before his dismissal. *JC*, 37/57a (KH 24/4/19).


282. *Ibid.*, e.g., 15/11b and 59b (KH 2/2/7 and 6/4); 17/64a (KH 4/10/14); 19/87b (KH 6/11/25); 22/9a, 112b, and 117a (KH 9/1/18, 1116, and 11/19); 27/70b (KH 14/9/23); and 29/65a-72a (KH 16/8/14 et seq.), recorded some of Weng's observations during this phase of his career.

283. *Ibid.*, 37/58a-b (KH 24/4/23). Weng concluded this entry with these words: "Withdrew [from the audience] ; drafted an edict." Chang Chien, *Nien-p'u, chüan hsia*, 6a, said: "22nd day: saw the reform edict drafted by President of Board Weng." There is a slight discrepancy in the date. (Did Weng anticipate the emperor's decision and drafted the edict one day earlier?)

284. *SL*, 418/15b. This edict was translated in *North China Herald* reprints of Translations of the *Peking Gazette*, 1898, 32; and in Jerome Tobar, *Décêrêts imperieux 1898*, 1-3. Neither of these translations is very accurate.

285. Similarities between some of the reform ideas of Ch'en and K'ang have been pointed out by So Kwan-wai, *Reform Movement*, 186. That K'ang had seen Ch'en's book and was probably influenced by Ch'en's views may be inferred from the fact that the *Yung-shu* was included in Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's collection, *Hsi-chêng ts'ung-shu*, published in 1897.

Similarities between some of the views of T'ang and K'ang are equally obvious.

286. See Note 271, above.


Cheng K'ang-ch'êng (Cheng Hsüan, 127-200) 鄭康成 (鄭玄) engaged himself in a polemic against Ho Hsiu 何休, one of the most eminent proponents of the Kung-yang doctrines. *Hou-Han shu* 後漢書, 中華書局 聚珍本, 65/9b-14a.

287. *SL*, 344/5a-b (KH 20/7/4). K'ang, *Nien-p'u*, in Chien, *TL*, 4/128, said: "Chia-wei (i.e., KH 20), 7th moon:... Yü chín-san imprecated me, accusing me of 'confusing the world, deceiving the people, doing wrong to the sages, and setting laws at naught,... and urged that Hsin-hiêh wei-ch'ing t'ao be burned." Yü Chin-san 余晉珊 was a 給事中.

288. This memorial, submitted Nov. 27, 1888, is found in a number of compilations: *Nan-hai hsien-sheng shang-shu chi* 南海先生上書記, chüan 1; *Huang-ch'ao ching-shih-wen hsin-pien* 皇朝經世文新編, chüan 1; and Chien,
289. Weng, J.C., 27/76b (KH 14/10/26, Nov. 29, 1888).

290. This document was sometimes called “the fifth memorial”. Some of the pertinent passages are given in Chien, *TL*, 2/195-6.

The phrase, “law of the mind”, is a translation of *hsin-fa* 心法, a term used by Ch’eng I 程頤 in his introductory remarks to *Chung-yung* 中庸. K’ang’s using the term in the present connection may have appeared repugnant to officials who revered the neo-Confucian tradition.

291. The memorials accompanying K’ang’s works on Russia were sometimes referred to as “the sixth” and “the seventh memorial”. Both may be found in *Wu-hsü tsou-kao pu-lu* 戰役奏稿補錄, 1-8 and 9-14. Some of the pertinent passages are given in Chien, *TL*, 2/197 and 2/203.

292. The work on Russian reform was entitled *O Pi-le pien-cheng chi* 俄彼得變政記, and the one on Japan, *jih-pen Ming-chih pien-cheng chi* 日本明治變政記. K’ang’s preface to *jih-pen kai-chih k’ao* 日本改制考 appears in *Wu-hsü tsou kuo pu-lu*, 3a-6a.

It is not clear whether the two titles concerning Japan refer to one book or to two separate works.


294. See Nitobe, *op.cit.*, chapters by various authors on government, law, education, and philosophy in modern Japan.

It is interesting to note that railway, which aroused bitter opposition when first tried in China, was introduced into Japan with little objection from scholars or common people. *Ibid.* 360-379.

295. Huang Tsun-hsien (1848-1905) 黃遵憲, one time counselor to the Chinese legation in Tokyo and author of the well-known *jih-pen kuo-chih* 日本國志, said that during past centuries Japan has been sending students to foreign countries and copying the political institutions, educational system, and ethical precepts of China. She is now “doing the same with respect to Western culture.” *jih-pen tsuo-shih shih* 日本雜事詩, a comment to one of the poems, in Liang, *Hsi-cheng ts’ung-shu*, 25/9b.


WENG TUNG-HO AND THE REFORM MOVEMENT OF 1898

299. Kuo-wei pao 國聞報, KH 24/4/14, in Chien, TL., 4/333, indicated that
Huang took an active part in Nan-hsüeh hui 南學會, a key organiza-
tion promoting reform in Hunan province. Huang was one of the
principal speakers in its first meeting, March 3, 1898.
300. Weng soon relented. He sent in two copies of Jih-pen-kuo chih the next
day. JC., 37/11a (KH 24/1/24, Feb. 14, 1898).
301. Chang Chien, Nien-p'u, hsia, 7a. Chang left Peking KH 24/6/7 (July
25, 1893). He said that he repeatedly warned K'ang against rash
changes, but K'ang became increasingly outspoken and active. "The
task [of restraining K'ang]," Chang commented, "certainly cannot
be done; the disaster ensuing will be awful beyond comprehension."

K'ang repeated the same idea to the emperor in an audience
(June 16, 1898): "The requisites of reform are that all the laws and
political and social systems must be changed, and that new decisions
(concerning them) must be made, before reform worthy of the name
can be effected. Nien-p'u, KH 24/4/23, in Chien, TL., 4/145. Teng and
Fairbank, China's Response, 177, translated this conversation from
Chang Po-chen, Nan-hai hsien-sheng chuan 张伯錫, 南海先生傳.
304. Wu-hsiü tsou-kao pu-lu, 6a-7a; Chien, TL., 2/200-1. The substance of this
memorial was summarized by K'ang in Contemporary Review, 79/191-5,
in which chih-tu chü was rendered as "Cabinet in the Palace" and its
function was defined as "to decide important matters". The twelve
chü were referred to as "departments", including "Law Department",
"Revenue Department," "Education Department", etc.

K'ang renewed his proposal concerning chih-tu chü in another
memorial (KH 24/5/1, June 19, 1898). The text of this document appears

A third memorial on the subject was submitted shortly before the
coup d'état. Wu-hsiü tsou-kao, 46-48, and Chien, TL., 2/251-2. All this
shows that K'ang took the chih-tu chü proposal seriously.

K'ang alleged that Weng T'ung-ho "wished to establish the chih-
tu chü" as he proposed and to put K'ang in charge of the matter.
Nien-p'u, in Chien, TL., 4/141. It is difficult to find direct evidence
either to substantiate or refute this allegation. In view of Weng's general outlook and views on administrative reform, it appears that he could hardly have supported K'ang's proposal.

K'ang also claimed support from Li Hung-chang, after Weng was dismissed. *Ibid.*, 4/146. This is also doubtful.

308. Comment on K'ang's proposals, in a memorial submitted by Tsungli yamen, quoted in an edict (KH 24/5/24, July 12, 1898), in *SL.*, 420/14a.
309. These proposals were made by K'ang in various memorials of the period. The last proposal was made in a memorial, KH 24/7/20 (Sept. 5, 1898).
312. See Notes 301 and 303, above.
313. Some of K'ang's ideas were not known even to his closest associates. Liang Ch'i-ch'ao enumerated some of K'ang's proposals which he had in mind but did not have an opportunity to promote, in "K'ang Yu-wei chuan", *Yin-pin-shih wen-chi*, 康有為傳, 饒本宗文集, chuan 9; reprinted in Chien, *TL.*, 4/34-35. An English translation of this biography appeared in *The Chinese World* 世界日報 (San Francisco), on April 19, 1950 and subsequent Wednesdays.
314. Laurence G. Thompson, Ta T'ung Shu, 7-8, traced the history of this book.
315. Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, *Ch'ing-tai hsien-shu k'ai-lun* 清代學術概論 (8th printing), 129.
316. Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, English trans., 1936, 192-293. One is tempted to compare K'ang's ideals presented in the *Ta-t'ung-shu* to what Mannheim called "chiliastic utopia" and his reform ideas to "liberal utopia". Weng T'ung-ho's approach to reform may perhaps be compared to "the conservative idea", although his acceptance of administrative and technological reform brought him also somewhat close to "the liberal idea".
317. *Ta-t'ung shu* 太同書, 453; Thompson translation, 462.
This "study" was perhaps the same work which K'ang called "Chu-t'ien" 諸天, "The Heavens". Editor's note, Ta-t'ung shu, 6.

Teng and Fairbank, op.cit., Research Guide, 17-18, listed some of the useful accounts of K'ang's general philosophy and reform ideas.

319. Chien, TL., 2/130.
320. Ibid., 2/188. The original is: 惟在皇上內宴安危斷自聖衷而已

Cf. K'ang's statement, China Mail, Oct. 17, 1898, in Chien, TL., 3/507-9, in which he said that he had advised the emperor to employ capable and keen-minded officials, even if he could not dismiss the high officials appointed by Tz'u-hsi.

322. Weng, JC, 37/95b (KH 24/8/23).
323. Ibid., 38, chi-ssu, 66b (KH 25/11/21).
324. SL., 416/15b; see above, Notes 283-4.
325. Ibid., 425/13a-b (KH 24/7/27, Sept. 12, 1898). This document was translated into English in North China Herald, translations from the Peking Gazette, 1898, 72; and into French in Tobar, Décroits impéreux, 53. Neither is completely accurate.

326. K'ang and his associates did not monopolize the task of reform even during the One Hundred Days, as we shall presently show. The ti-yung school of thought kept on reasserting itself. The edict abolishing the "eight-legged essay" in the examinations (KH 24/5/5, June 23, 1898), e.g., reflected clearly the ti-yung philosophy; "Scholars naturally ought to make the Four Books and the Six Classics the foundation of their studies. Problem questions and discussions 筷論, although representing a different approach, have the same base as the old essay 制義. [The objective is] ... to combine the substance 體 of learning with practical application 用 so that every man strives to become a truly learned scholar...." SL., 419/5b-6a. Translated into French in J. Tobar, op. cit., 83.


In a note to a poem which K'ang wrote sometime after Weng's dismissal (June 15, 1898), K'ang reminisced: "I submitted a memorial on the occasion of the Kiaochow incident, but it did not reach [the emperor] .... I was packing for my journey home, on the 19th day of the 11th month (Dec. 12, 1897). Before that, [Weng] Ch'ang-shu had already strongly recommended me to the emperor. Now upon hearing that I decided to go away, he came to Nan-hai kuan [where I
lodged); I was still in bed when he came unushered into Han-man-fang [my room], and invited me to remain [in Peking].” Chien, *TL*, 4, 342.

Both accounts place the recommendation in the winter of 1897.

Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, *CPC*, 10, contains no reference to the above episode but described the interview in Tsungli yamen (Jan. 24, 1898) and the emperor's reaction to K'ang's "fifth memorial". According to Liang, it was at this time that "Weng T'ung-ho again personally recommended" K'ang to the emperor, saying, "K'ang Yu-wei's abilities are a hundred times superior to my own."... Form then on the emperor "whole-heartedly relied on" K'ang who then submitted the memorial which outlined his over-all reform program on the 8th day of the 1st moon (Jan. 29). Liang, in other words, placed Weng's "a hundred times superior" statement sometime between January 24 and 29.

Bland and Backhouse, *China*, 184, placed (probably wrongly) Weng's recommendation months later, i.e., "shortly after the Prince (Kung) 's death" (May 29, 1898).

Hu Ssu-ch'ing, *Li-shuang lu*, in Chien, *TL*, 1, 374, placed it even later: "4th moon: Kuang-tung director of studies, Chang Po-hsi, recommended Yu-wei.... Reader of Hanlin, Hsü Chih-ch'ing, made an even stronger recommendation. The emperor asked [the opinion of] Weng T'ung-ho...; T'ung-ho supported the emperor's wish to summon Yu-wei to an audience." The date of Hsü's memorial was KH 24/4/25 (June 13, 1898; Hummel, *op. cit.*, 2, 704, has June 11). As we shall see, Hu's view conflicts with many known facts.

The situation was probably somewhat as follows: Around January 1898 Weng spoke well of K'ang to the emperor without, however, making any specific recommendation that K'ang be called or employed, perhaps knowing fully well that the established precedents precluded any dramatic promotion of K'ang who was then only a secretary in the Board of Works (工部主事). When Weng was asked later, in the spring of 1898, by the emperor concerning K'ang's qualifications, he again spoke highly of him, and probably also recommended that K'ang be considered for special assignments. In the absence of other evidence, one may perhaps accept Liang's account that Weng's remark referring to the superlative abilities of K'ang was made in January.

328. Weng was officially held responsible for recommending K'ang, as the "vermillion edict" of KH 24/10/21 (Dec. 4, 1898) clearly indicated. *SL*, 432/8a.
Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan, 清史列傳, 63/57b, and Hsü Ch'ing, Preface to Nan-hai wu-hsieh tsou-kao 徐勤, 南海戊戌奏稿序, la, are among other sources that credited Weng with the recommendation.

A number of modern historians held the same view, e.g., Ch'en Kung-lu, "Pien-fa yün-tung chih yen-chiu", Wen-che chi-k'ao 陳恭讓, 甲午戰後庚子亂前中國變法運動之研究, 文哲季刊 III (1933) 1/90; Sung Yün-pin, K'ang Yu-wei 宋雲彬, 康有為, 48-49; and Wu Hsiang-hsiang, HSCK., 4/5-7.


330. Liang Ch'i-ch'iao, CPC., 2.

331. Lu Nai-hsiang and Lu Tun-k'uei, K'ang Nan-hai hsien-sheng chuan, shang pien 魯乃翔, 魯敦恆, 康南海先生傳, 10a.


Li Tuan-fen's memorial requesting punishment for his "indiscriminate recommendation of a bad man" is given in Chu Shou-p'eng, Tung-hua hsii-ju 朱壽朋, 東華續錄, 148/15, and Yeh Te-hui, Chüeh-mi yao-lu 葉德輝, 規westium, 1/12.

Li was cashiered and exciled to Hsien-chiang. SL., 437/12b-13a, edict of KH 24/8/19 (Oct. 4 1898).

335. Ch'en was punished for "indiscriminately recommending bad men"; he was dismissed from office and barred permanently from official appointment. SL., 428/1b.

336. Hsü's memorial is given in Chih-hsin pao, KH 24/7/11, and in Yeh Te-hui, op. cit., 1/7a-10a; reprinted in Chien, TL., 2/355-8.

Hsü was punished for making the recommendation, by "perpetual imprisonment." SL., 427/8a, edict of KH 24/8/14 (Sept. 29, 1898).

337. A number of writers discovered Weng's importance in this connection. E.g., Wen Ching, Chinese Crisis, 109-110, stressed "the influence of Weng T'ung-ho" on the emperor; Wu Hsiang-hsiang, HSCK., 4/6, pointed out that without Weng's previous personal recommendation, Hsü Chih-ch'ing's written recommendation could not produce much result; Sung Yün-pin, K'ang Yu-wei, 44-49, affirmed Weng's crucial role though offered no evidence for his view.
338. Wang Shu-nan, Te-tsung i-shih, 46, an oral statement made by Wang Chao.


341. Ibid., 27/76b (KH 14/10/26).

K'ang, Nien-p'u, in Chien, TL, 4/120, suggested that Weng intended thereby to “protect” him. See also Chao Feng-t'ien, Nien-p'u kao, in Shih-hsüeh nien-pao, 2/186.

342. Weng, JC, 33/43a (KH 20/5/2).

343. Ibid., 34/54a (KH 21/interc. 15/5/10).

344. Ho Ping-ti FEQ., X (1951), 127.

345. Weng, JC, 37/2b (KH 24/1/3, Jan. 24, 1898).

346. See Chang Hsiao-jo, Chuan-chi, 64; Lu, K'ang Nan-hai chuan, 14a; and Li Chien-nung, Cheng-chih shih, 180.

347. Weng, JC, 33/109a (KH 20/10/3, Nov. 5, 1894).

348. 37/56b and 57a-b (KH 24/4/18 and 20); Chang Chien, Nien-p'u, hsia, 5b-8a; and Chang Hsiao-jo, op. cit., passim.

349. Weng, JC, 37/3a (KH 24/1/5, Jan. 26, 1893).

Tuan-fang 端方 (1861-1911), a half-blood Manchu; see CSK, biog. 256/2b-3a, and Hummel, op. cit., 2/780-2.

350. Ho Ping-ti, FEQ., X (1951), 129-130.

351. It may be said that Weng’s recommendation, though “strong”, was not necessarily unqualified. For Weng merely spoke of K'ang’s ts'ai 翰, “abilities”, without referring to his hsüeh 學, “learning” or te 德, “virtue”.

Some writers stressed that Weng’s recommendation was, in fact, qualified. See, e.g., Liu K'un-i, “Fu Ou-yang Jun-sheng shu”, Liu Chung-ch'eng-kung i-chi, Shu-tu 12 劉坤→, 防歐陽濤生書，劉忠誠公遺集，書軸十二; reprinted in Chien, TL, 2/633 (The letter was dated KH 26/7/28, Aug. 22, 1900); and Chang Hsiao-jo, op. cit., 64.

352. CSK, biog. 223/3b. Also, K'ang, Nien-p'u, in Chien, TL, 4/130.

353. Chang Po-chen, Chuan, 18a; and Lu, Chuan, 26a

The memorial in question was sometimes known as “the sixth”.


356. SL, 37/1a-b; and CSK, biog. 235/1b.

357. Weng, JC, 34/62b-63a and 64a (KH 21/6/11, Aug. 1, 1895; and KH 21/6/16, Aug. 6, 1895).

There is slight discrepancy in dating the impeachment and dismissal. Weng had August 1 and 6 respectively, whereas K’ang gave August 4 and 5. Wang’s dates tally with those given in SL.

359. See K’ang’s statement quoted in Note 327, above, and Chao Feng-t’ien, Nien-p’u kao, 194.

Bland and Backhouse, China, 184, as already noted, placed Weng’s recommendation after Prince Kung’s death (May 29). This does not square with the facts; for by May 26, the relationship between Weng and K’ang had utterly deteriorated and K’ang himself hinted Weng’s disappointment in him: “At that time, Prince Kung died…. Ch’ang-shu also wished to see me depart [from Peking], because the columns on me were bubbling.” Nien-p’u, in Chien, TL., 4/143.

360. The major impeachments were made by Yu Yin-lin, April 28, 1898; by Wang Pe’ng-yun, May 29; and by Kao Hsieh-tseng (impliedly), June 9. Weng, JC., 37/40a, 53b, and 57b (KH 24/interc. 3/8, 4/10, and 21.)

The situation took a turn for the worse for K’ang during the months immediately preceding May. K’ang, Nien-p’u, in Chien, TL., 4/143. Wu Hsiang-hsiang, HSCK., 4/7, believed that the change occurred between the third and fourth moon.


Ho Ping-ti, FEQ., X (1951), 128, called attention to Chang Chien’s statement recorded in Chang Hsiao-jo, op.cit., 61-62, which corroborates Weng’s statement: “When the Kuang-hsü emperor heard the answer, ‘This man’s intentions are unpredictable’, he immediately retorted by asking, ‘What do you mean by unpredictable?’ Weng replied, ‘Unpredictable means not predictable.’

The words ‘intentions are unpredictable’ is a translation of po ts’er 去測. In general usage this phrase carried a derogatory connotation, meaning approximately ‘treacherous’. See Tzu yian 節源. The emperor was apparently irritated by Weng’s strong language who then tried to ease the tension by giving the literal meaning of the phrase in answer to the emperor’s question.


363. This document is given in Yeh Te-hui, Chieh-mi yao-lu, 1/16, and Chien, TL., 2/257-8.

For K’ang’s arguments that “Confucius was a king who reformed the institutions”, see his Kung-tzu kai-chih k’ao 孔子改制考, chuan 8. This book was twice suppressed, in 1898 and again in 1900. It was
reprinted in 1922, in Peking.


366. K'ang, *Nien-pu*, in Chien, *TL*, 4/143, said that previously, visitors who desired to see K'ang "numbered several tens each day" and guested crowded K'ang's room, making it difficult to meet them all. After repeated impeachments, however, "guests, visitors, and the most intimate friends, all avoided [K'ang] and dared not come [again]. Compared with the time of the 3rd moon [when Pao-kuo hui was first organized], this seems to be a totally different world."

367. Ho Ping-ti, *FEQ*, x (1951), 131-2: "The reaction of the literati ... could not have failed to be reflected in Weng's mind."

Su Yü, *op.cit.*, and Yeh Te-hui, *op.cit.*, collected some of the most violent denunciations of K'ang and his supporters.


369. Weng, *JC*, 37/2b (KH 24/1/3).

370. The phrase, "unrestrained to the extreme," is a translation of 無中. In itself, the term 聚 does not necessarily carry a derogatory sense. It was used by Confucius: "Since I cannot get men pursuing the due medium, to whom I might communicate [my instructions], I must find the ardent (kuang) and the cautiously-decided (chüan)," etc. *Analects*, xiii, 21, Legge translation. Even taken in this sense, Weng's remark was not an unreserved approval of K'ang's behavior in Tsungli yamen. The present writer therefore cannot accept Wu Hsiang-hsiang's interpretation, *HSCK*, 4/6.

The precise meaning of "very indignant" 儀 is not readily seen. What was the object of Weng's indignation? Weng may have been resentful toward those officials present at the interview, who took a hostile attitude toward reform; or he may have been angry at Li Hung-chang, his inveterate enemy, who baited K'ang with a skillful question and drew out K'ang's startling reply—a sweeping condemnation of the imperial system; or he may be indignant because K'ang showed his iconoclastic views, thus putting Weng in an uncomfortable position.


that K'ang would go as far as to advise the Emperor to defy the Old Buddha herself, and to plot against her sacred person.”

373. Teng and Fairbank, *op.cit.*, 151-2: “Amid the great variety of ideas put forward in the 1890's..., it required a particularly vigorous personality to take a definite stand and assert leadership.” K'ang Yu-wei, so the authors indicated, supplied this leadership.


375. Weng, *JC.*, 37/58b (KH 24/4/23, June 12, 1898). This passage appears in translation in Ho, *op.cit.*, 133.

The emperor took another occasion to embarrass Weng. See Note 362, above.


378. Ho Ping-ti's phrase; *PEQ.*, X (1951), 129.


Weng, *JC.*, 37/60a, indicated that this was a *chu-yü*, “vermilion edict.” Wu Hsiang-hsiang, *HSCK.*, 4/10, said that the archives copy (故宮博物院文獻館，上諭檔第83號) bears the characters 硨奕.

Tobar, *Décêts*, 4, gave this edict in a French translation.


382. E. g., Ch'en Kung-ku, *Wen-che chi-k'an*, 3/86, held that Weng's dismissal “was not the emperor's wish, nor was it anticipated by Weng,” but “was the result of the undercover struggle between the reform and conservative factions.” Reginald F. Johnston, *Twilight*, 33: “The most ominous sign that see (Tz'u-hsi) might interfere in weightier matters of state consisted in her demand...that the imperial tutor Weng T'ung-ho should be dismissed from office on account of his reform sympathies.”

Hu Ssu-ching, *Li-shuang lu*, in Chien, *TL.*, 4/77, offered a different explanation. He traced Weng's dismissal to the empress dowager's resentment for Weng's part in ousting Sun Yü-wen and Hsü Yung-i and for his recommendation of K'ang Yu-wei. For the ousting of Hsü Yung-i, see Notes 356-8.

383. E. g., Yeh Ch'ang-chih, *Yu'an-tu-lu fih-chi*, KH 24/4/29, in an entry made

Chin-liang, *Ssu-ch’ao i-wen*, 21a-b, alleged that because Weng first attached himself to Prince Kung but later aligned himself with Prince Ch’un (Prince Kung’s rival), he earned the former’s deep hatred, who, on his death bed, tearfully complained of Weng’s “unpredictable intentions”; this, the author believed, resulted in Weng’s dismissal.


384. Yeh Ch’ang-chih, *fih-chi*, KH 24/10/22, traced the dismissal to the misunderstanding between Weng and the emperor. Chang Hsiao-jo, *Chuan-chi*, 62-62, pointed to Weng’s cautious approach to reform as the immediate factor that led the emperor to dismiss him. Ch’ien Ch’iu, *Yen-ching Journal of Social Studies*, 25/66, stressed Weng’s unwillingness to support the reform movement and his hostile attitude toward K’ang Yu-wei and Chang Yin-huan. Ho Ping-ti, *PEQ.*, X (1951) 133-4, argued “that if Weng’s assistance in the nation-wide reform were still needed by the emperor, he could not have been so summarily dismissed” and that Weng’s “antagonism to Chang and K’ang brought him into constant friction with the emperor.” Wu Hsiang-hsiang, *HSCK.*, 4/11, also attached importance to Weng’s cautious attitude toward reform.

385. See Weng, *JC*, c. g., 36/131a; 37/3a, 10a, 22a, 55b, 56b, 57a, and 59a.

386. Chang Chien, *Nien-p’u, chüan hsia*, 6a. Chang also indicated that he helped Weng to draft regulations for the Imperial University.

387. Weng, *JC*, 37/6a, 10b, 52a, 53a-b, and 58b (Feb. 2, 13; May 23, 26, 27; June 12).

388. See Notes 201-5, above.

389. Weng, *JC*, 22/47a (KH 9/5/2).


392. Weng, *JC*, 37/59a-b (KH 24/4/26). Weng referred to these officials only by their surnames; he referred to Chang Chih-tung as “Nan-p’i” 南皮. The other men are here identified by consulting *CSK*, “Chiang-ch’en piao” 蕭臣表, 4 and 8.

393. “Vast Heaven” is a translation of hao t’ien 昊天. See Matthews, *Chinese-English Dictionary*, 2072, for the meaning of this term.
394. Liang, CPC., 9: "[Sung] repeatedly memorialized concerning fixing the national policy, abolishing the eight-legged essay, and impeaching the unrighteous partisans. He spoke on matters relative to reform more [frequently and extensively] than any other person."

Ibid., 26, Liang said that K'ang persuaded Sung to submit a memorial requesting the abolition of the "eight-legged essay" and, at the same, submitted a memorial of his own on the same subject; these memorials led to the edict of June 23.

Chien, TL., 2/347-351, gave two of Sung’s memorials, dated KH 24/5/12 and 29.

Hu Su-ching, Li-shuang 1u, in Chien, TL., 4/88, narrated Sung’s flight to Shanghai.


Weng, JC., 37/59b, also mentioned this piece and summarized its contents thus: "Care should be exercised in employing men; for those who can discuss matters are not necessarily capable of managing them."

Liang, CPC., 19, said that Li Sheng-t'io was among those who impeached Pao-kuo hui.

396. See above, Notes 329-331.

397. See above, Note 358.

Wang P'eng-yün submitted a memorial (Feb.15,1898) which helped to bring about the establishment of the Imperial University. SL., 414/17b (KH 24/1/25).

398. SL., 419/2b. Hsü escaped punishment after making a reply to the charges. Ibid., 419/5a. He was, however, later dismissed with the entire panel of the ranking officials of the Board of Rites, KH 24/7/19 (Sept. 4, 1898). Ibid., 424/17b-18a. See also Weng, JC., 37/60b (KH 24/4/28).

399. Chang Chien, Nien-p'u, chüan hsia, 6a: "Prince Kung, I-hsin, died. I surmised that the situation at court would change."

400. Wu Hsiang-hsiang, Wan-Ch'ing kung-p'ing shih-chi, 114-121, outlined Prince Kung’s part in reform.

401. Ho Ping-ti, FEQ., X (1951), 132.

402. Liang, CPC., 10.

403. Weng, JC., 37/54a-b (KH 24/4/11), recorded the death of the prince and the events of the time without comment. An entry made four days after the death reads: "Returned to residence; deep slumber."

404. Ibid 33/123a (KH 20/11/10, Dec.6,1898), indicated that the empress dowager explained her decision to suspend the services of the tutors (in-
cluding Weng) by saying that she acted upon Prince Kung’s advice. 405. *Ibid.,* 36/131a (KHH 23/12/24, Jan.16,1898), indicated that he remained silent when the emperor and Weng discussed reform.


408. Weng, *JC,* gave clear indication of this on more than one occasion. See, e.g., 37/34a-b (KHH 24/3/23): “Ordered that K'ang’s memorial and his books [namely, 日本變政記, 各國振興記, 泰西新史摘要], together with his memorials submitted on two previous occasion and *O Pi-te pien-cheng chi,* all be sent [to the empress dowager] for her perusal.”

409. See e.g., Fei Hsing-chien, *T'zu-hsi ch'uan-hsin lu,* in Chien, *TL,* 1/464: “The empress dowager told Te-tsung that she had entertained the wish to effect reform for a long time.” The emperor “then presented Feng Kuei-fen’s *Chiao-pin-lu K'ang-i* for the empress dowager’s perusal, who also praised it for its pertinence but warned him not to rush matters. The emperor informed [Weng] T'ung-ho [of what she said]. When T'ung-ho withdrew [from the audience] he told his protégés that reform from then on would certainly be effected.”

See also Chin-liang, *Ssu-chiao t-wen,* 5b.

410. See above, Note 210.

411. Chang Chien, Weng's trusted friend, probably had this in mind when he quoted Chu Hsi's words in reply to Liao Tzu-hui to serve as a parting advice to Weng, shortly before Weng left Peking. *Nien-p'u,* chüan hsia, 6b.

Chu Hsi's letters, “*Ta Liao Tzu-hui*” 答廖子晦 (i.e., Liao Te-ming 羅德明), a total of six, are found in *Chu-tzu wen-chi,* 朱子文集 chüan 2. The passage, which Chang quoted must have been taken from the last letter (*Ibid.,* 2/32a-35b); it reads: “Han-kung [i.e., Han Yü 範憲] merely applied himself to the administrative matters of a state or the empire; he had never devoted himself to the cultivation of moral principles which govern the individual and his conscience.” *Ibid.,* 2/34a-b.

Another passage (*Ibid.,* 34b-35a) may also have been quoted by Chang; it says in effect that Han Yü must have been deficient in the basic qualities that constitute a truly virtuous man. For otherwise
how could he display such unworthy behavior merely because he was
demoted by the emperor and as soon as he heard the words of a Bud-
dhist bonze—representative of a heretic religion?

412. Wu Hsiang-hsiang, HSCK., 4/11.

413. SL., 432/8a-b.

Substantially the same charge was made in an edict dated KH

414. SL., 427/5b-7a, an edict dated KH 24/8/14 (Sept.29, 1898). in addition to
those already cited.

415. Those were Hsü Chih-ch'ing, punished by “perpetual imprisonment”; Li
Tuan-fen, dismissed and exiled to Hsin-chiang; Ch'en Pao-ch'en, dis-
missed and permanently barred from official appointment; and
Chang Po-hsi, deprived of rank and title but retained in office. SL.,
427/8a, 12b-13a, and 428/1b, 7a, edicts dated KH 24/8/14, 19, 21, and 25.

The fate of Kao Hsieh-tseng has not been ascertained.

The only official who had recommended K'ang but escaped punish-
ment was Sun Chia-nai. Significantly, Sun, like Chang Po-hsi who
received only light punishment, made a limited recommendation of
K'ang.

416. Weng, JC., 37/95b (KH 24/8/23), and 39/43b (KH 28/7/29).

417. Ibid., 38/44b (KH 25/8/8, Sept.12,1899).

418. Huai-non tsu, chüan 7, “Ching-shen hsün” 淮南子，卷七，精神訓：聖人法天順時，
不拘於俗，不誘於人… 扬湯止沸，渾乃不止；誠知其本，去火而已矣.

Evan Morgan translated Huai-non tsu into English, under the title
Tao the Great Luminant, Shanghai, Kelly & Walsh, 1934 (not available
to this writer).

419. See, e.g., JC., 37/77b-78a, 90a-b, 108b-109a, 118a, and 40/35b.

420. Chang Hsiao-jo, Chuan-chi, 454-5, quoting Chang Chien, Jih-chi, KH
25/2/8.

Ibid., KH 30/5/17 (1904): “...Arrived at Ch'ang-shu; saw Sung-shan
松禪 at his sickbed. He recalled with gratitude the past favors [which
the imperial rulers had shown him].”

Weng died four days later.

421. Weng, JC., 37/117b-118a (KH 24/12/3).

422. Ibid., 37/67b (KH 24/5/20).

423. SL., 455/7b-4a.


425. Ibid, 38, keng-tzu, 2b (KH 26/1/10, Feb.9, 1900): the original reads: 掃盡蠻
蛾渾不解, 晚霞和別種繚繚柳.
Ling-ho was the name of a palace made famous by the willow tree planted in front of it. Wu-ti of Ch’i 齊武帝 (r.483-493) took great delight in its gracefulness and compared it to Chang Hsu 張赭, his former minister. Nan-shih 南史, 中華本, 31/4b. In later times “the willow of Ling-ho” became a literary allusion widely employed to symbolize a favorite courtier or concubine.

“Painting moth-eyebrows” is a more or less hackneyed literary expression which signifies cultivating or exerting feminine charms.

426. Liang, CPC, 87-89.
427. SL, 426/9a-19a, passim, and Shen T'ung-sheng, Kuang-hsü cheng-yao 沈桐生, 光緒政要, 34/46b-36-8a, passim, for “reform edicts” issued from autumn 1898 to spring 1900.
428. SL, 427/1a-2b (KH 24/8/11, Sept.26, 1898).

The edict contains this comment on the abolition of supernumerary officials and offices: “Those that are outside [of the imperial court] did not comprehend [the purpose of that move]; thereupon some of these men made the request that the imperial institutions be drastically altered.”

Teng and Fairbank, op.cit., Chapter 20, “The Conservative Reform Movement”, is a useful summary of developments after 1900. The authors, however, did not give sufficient attention to the revival (or rather continuation) of “conservative reform” after the coup d'état of 1898.

429. Weng, JC, 37/92a (KH 24/8/24, Sept.29, 1898).
430. SL, 431/4b-5a (KH 24/10/3, Nov.3, 1898).
431. Ibid., 430/19b-20b (KH 24/9/30, Nov.13, 1898). The translation of this document in North China Herald, LXIII, 1682 (Oct.30, 1899), 874, is not accurate.
433. SL, 419/6a-b.
434. SL, 421/5b. An edict, KH 24/5/29, ordered Jung-lu, then governor-general of Chihli, to print copies of this book with the woodblocks kept in Tientsin and to send them to Peking for distribution to appropriate officials.
435. SL, 421/6a (KH 24/6/7, July 25, 1898). Little is known concerning Huang Shao-chi 黃紹箕.
436. Teng and Fairbank, op.cit., 164.
437. SL, 476/8a-b (KH 26/12/10). This document appears in an English translation in Percy H. Kent, The Passing of the Manchus, 26-29; the
translation is slightly inaccurate.

438. Teng and Fairbank, op.cit., 196, referred to this document very briefly. Perhaps the most striking parallel was the establishment of a Tu-pan cheng-wu ch'u 督辦政務處, “Bureau of Government Affairs”, sometimes also known as “The Reform Bureau”. It was authorized by an edict dated April 21, 1901. The function of this bureau was to evaluate the proposals submitted to the imperial government in response to the above-quoted edict, and to make recommendations to the imperial rulers so that a coordinated plan of reform could be developed and implemented. With the exception of the composition of its personnel, it bore much resemblance to the chih-tu chü proposed by K'ang. SL, 48/4b-5a (KH 27/3/3).

439. The most important modification was to replace the old “examination-school” system with a system of new style schools to train and recruit “men of ability”. SL, 523/19b-20b (KH 29/11/26, Jan.13,1904).

The plan of gradually doing away with the examination system was based largely on the proposals of Chang Chih-tung and Chang Po-hsi. The joint memorial of these two officials is not included in SL, but may be found in Chu Shou-p'eng, Tung-hua hsii-lu, Kuang-hsü, 184/9b–12b (KH 29/11/2).


441. Chang Chih-tung, Ch'üan-chi, shu-ch'a, 218/30a-b, “Fu Jung Chung-hua chung-t'ang”, 復榮中華堂, KH 27/7/7.

See also the joint memorial submitted by Chang Chih-tung and Liu K'un-i, in Teng and Fairbank, op. cit., 197, and 197-200.

442. Der Ling, Two Years, 323.

Meribeth E. Cameron, The Reform Movement, Chapters 3-9, described what she called “the empress dowager's conversion” to reform, between 1900 and 1908.

443. Chang Chih-tung, Ch'üan—ch'i, tsou-i, 54/31; translated in Teng and Fairbank, op. cit., 205.

444. Weng, JC, 40, chia-ch'en, 35b (KH 30/5/11). Weng died ten days after he wrote this.

445. ČSK, biog. 223/4a. Weng's ranks and titles were posthumously restored to him and he was given the posthumous title, “Wenkung”.

446. Der Ling, op. cit., 290-1.

翁同龢與戊戌維新

肅公權

戊戌維新之迅速失敗，固然在守舊者之破壞。然在當時之歷史環境中尚有其他因素致此“敗亡”運動無法成功者。本文以翁同龢之言行為线索，探尋此諸因素，以說明此運動一部分之成因與後果，蓋翁以兩朝“帝師”，而久居中樞，不僅於維新之思想及晚清之朝政有重大之影響，且於維新之推動及康有為之進用，皆有直接之關係。故就翁在戊戌前後之言行，可以推求戊戌成敗之主要原因。

本文（一）略述翁同龢之學術及心術，（二）考證其與時人之淵源及關係，（三）剖析慈禧太后及光緒帝之個人性格及二人間之關係，並說明翁與帝后之關係，（四）分析翁同龢及康有為見解之異同並考證二人間之交涉，（五）推究翁能陳之原因及罷黜後之局勢。

作者依據上述之研究獲得下列之結論：一、戊戌維新運動之得成為事實，不僅由於少數之朝臣志士之愛國之誠心，而革新內政以禦外侮，亦由贊助維新者欲藉此以達成其個人之政治願望。翁同龢之推動維新即抱有此忠君及利己之雙重動機。朝臣中之反對維新者，亦非盡由於其思想之守舊，而或以顧慮內政改革將不利於己身之權益，因而極力阻撓者。故戊戌時代所謂“新”“舊”黨之爭，並非純粹思想之爭，而實因政治權益及個人恩怨之爭。

維新運動本已因上述種種因素之存在，而遭逢障礙，更因帝后間有不能融解之衝突，而卒至於傾覆。慈禧與光緒之間，徒有“母子”之名，絕少慈孝之實。而慈禧久操大權，光緒則於有為，二人之間遂潛伏權益之爭。雖經翁同龢及其他少數朝臣之致力，亦無法消弭。終於戊戌八月之政變。慈禧於同治中興大權在握之時，則允許翁李等諸大臣採行新政，於“歸政”光緒以後之戊戌維新則與以破壞性。及光緒囚禁，大權重操，則又與溫和改革繼續進行；“百日維新”之措施局部保持，主張維新之大臣如孫家鼐、張百熙、張之洞等依然登用。見其破滅戊戌維新，非純出於思
想之守舊矣。

翁康二人之性格及思想有根本上之異異。翁之維新見解與李鴻章張之洞等之溫和主張相近，而與康有為之“急進”主張不合，乃翁排擠李張。而翁引康有為及
其他新進以扶維新運動。惟其用意，蓋以李張資深望重，若翁與之合流則己身
不能取得領袖之地位，故寧屬望於少年新進。不意康於進用之後，極得光緒之信任，
翁之溫和主張漸成扞格，而康“專狐之”之思想又引起朝野之反感，危及舉主之政
治安全。翁於是闊康以自保，因而觸怒光緒，終遭罷黜。此蓋非由“舊愛”排
擠而實亦溫和與急進維新主張衝突之結果。

總之，戊戌維新運動乃若干歷史條件及個人動機交雜匯合之產物，而其失敗亦
即為此諸因素所注定。翁等維新者雖具有忠君愛國之誠心及高遠之目的，然其思想
及行為均不能超脫帝政末運之環境限制而有所成就。易言之，戊戌維新之失敗，
非維新思想本身之失敗，且非康有為“過激”主張之失敗，實由末政衰政已漸絕境，
任何維新企圖，不能挽救，縱使翁同龢不排斥李張，而引康有為，而得主持推動其
溫和改革之計劃，恐亦無濟於事，不能防止辛亥革命之來臨。

上述諸端多經前人道及，並非本文作者之創見。作者取其考證未悉者，推究而
貫通之，冀對“百日維新”之真象得一比較明瞭之認識而已。