



UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA

FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA, LETRAS Y CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

ESCUELA DE LENGUA Y LITERATURA INGLESA

“PEARL S. BUCK, THE WOMAN OF TWO WORLDS: THE OLD AND THE NEW”

Trabajo de titulación previa a la obtención
del Título de Licenciada en Ciencias de la
Educación, en la Especialización de
Lengua y Literatura Inglesa

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CUENCA-ECUADOR

2015



ABSTRACT

“Pearl S. Buck, the Woman of Two Worlds: the Old and the New” is a window through which the public in general can learn about this intelligent and worthy woman whose literary work has helped Westerners understand people living in the East. She is also the voice of the voiceless minority groups of our society.

The thesis is developed in four chapters.

Chapter 1, *The Life of Pearl S. Buck*, focuses on the two worlds in which Pearl lived, China and America.

Chapter 2, *Brief History of China from the Imperial Era, the Political Transition and the Communist Regime*, is a description of the historical circumstances experienced by this giant Asiatic country from its mythological origin until our days.

Chapter 3, *How are the Two Worlds, the Old and the New, Reflected in Her Novels?* begins with the knowledge of two traditional Chinese practices, concubinage and foot binding. Then we analyze one of Pearl's novels, *The Good Earth*.

Chapter 4, *The New Chinese Woman According to Pearl S. Buck*, assures readers understand the secondary position women have had



throughout history. Then we explain how Mao Tse-tung raised women's status in China. Finally, we develop the New Woman defined by Pearl.

KEY WORDS:

Humanitarian and civil rights efforts, Amerasian children, Ancient Era, Imperial Era, Modern China, Republican China, People's Republic of China, *The Good Earth*, concubinage, foot binding, education, equal rights, equal pay and work opportunities, birth control, politics.



RESUMEN

“Pearl S. Buck, la Mujer de Dos Mundos: el Antiguo y el Nuevo” es una ventana a través de la el público en general puede aprender sobre esta mujer inteligente y valiosa cuyo trabajo literario ha ayudado a las personas de Occidente a entender a las personas de Oriente. Ella es también la voz de los grupos minoritarios sin voz de nuestra sociedad.

La tesis está desarrollada en cuatro capítulos.

Capítulo 1, *La vida de Pearl S. Buck*, se enfoca en los dos mundos en los cuales Pearl vivió, China y América.

Capítulo 2, *Historia Breve de China desde la Era Imperial, Transición Política y Régimen Comunista*; es una descripción de las circunstancias históricas experimentadas por este país asiático gigante desde su mítico origen hasta la actualidad.

Capítulo 3, *¿Cómo son los Dos Mundos, el Antiguo y el Nuevo, Reflejados en Sus Novelas?* comienza con el conocimiento de dos prácticas chinas tradicionales, Concubinato y Reducción de pies. Entonces analizamos una de las novelas de Pearl, *La Tierra Buena*.

Capítulo 4, *La Mujer China Según Pearl S. Buck*, asegura que los lectores entiendan la posición secundaria que las mujeres han tenido a



través de la historia. Entonces explicamos cómo Mao Tse-tung eleva el estatus de la mujer en China. Finalmente, desarrollamos la Mujer Nueva definida por Pearl.

PALABRAS CLAVES:

Esfuerzos humanitarios y Derechos Civiles, Niños Amerasiáticos, Era Antigua, Era Imperial, China Moderna, República China, República de la Gente de China, *La Tierra Buena*, concubinato, reducción de pies, educación, igualdad de derechos, igualdad de pago y oportunidades de trabajo, control natal, política.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In 2004, I determined to become an English teacher and began my second career, English Language and Literature. Therefore, first of all, I thank God for giving me life, intelligence, and health to complete my studies and to develop this thesis.

I thank my professors who during my undergraduate studies have shared their knowledge, have answered my questions, and have given me useful advice for my future profession and my life. To all of them, my sincere regards.

I am very grateful to Master Katherine Youman, who was my professor and also the director of this thesis. Her comprehension, patience, and experience have accompanied and encouraged me during the fulfillment of this research work from its beginning, three years ago, as an initial idea up to the present in which it has become a concrete reality. Thank you, Master Katherine Youman for being my counselor and, now, my friend, too.

Studies require time and great attachment. I am thankful for the comprehension and patience of my family for giving me unconditional support during the years of my undergraduate studies.

Finally, my regards and blessings to all those who helped me in any way during the completion of this thesis.

Sincerely,
Maritza Moncayo Avecillas



DEDICATION

I have always thought that the family is the group of people who supports you during your life, in good and, especially, in bad times. In this great moment of my life when I am finishing my undergraduate studies, it is a pleasure for me to dedicate this thesis to those who made this work possible: my family and my friends, my second family.

First of all, I dedicate my thesis to my parents, Secundino and Victoria, who have educated me in the path of honesty and responsibility. This is a way to thank them for everything they have done and continue doing for me. God will reward them.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my brother, Juan Carlos, who, living in San Juan, Puerto Rico, made it possible for me to have the necessary books for my research. In addition, he has been encouraging me to continue and to finish my thesis. To him, his wife Millie, and his daughter, Sofia Victoria, a great hug and thanks for everything.

Another unconditional and constant support was my beloved daughter, Emilia, who, although being an adolescent, has given me her time and her comprehension in listening to the summaries of my investigation. She has also given me useful advice and positive energy to complete my thesis.



I can not forget my brother Xavier and my sister Ximena with her husband Fabian and her children Fabian Andres, Jose Eduardo, and Juan Mateo. They have been cheering me all during the development of my research work.

I also dedicate this thesis to my friends of many years: Ana, Ana Maria, Bilma, Diana, Lina, Maribel, Thalia, Sonia, and Ximena. I thank God for having such unconditional friends.

Finally, from the bottom of my heart, thanks to all the special people that have been with me all during my undergraduate studies.

Maritza Alexandra



INTRODUCTION

Pearl S. Buck was a woman of two worlds: China and America. Although she was born in Hillsboro, West Virginia, she lived in China half of her life. To her, the Asiatic country was her actual world where she lived until 1934. She knew well the Chinese people, landscape, food, customs, history, and political changes. Because she learned to speak Chinese, she could make true friends in China, friendships that lasted until her death in 1973, in the United States. The imaginary world was America. Pearl knew of it by the stories her mother told her. Her mother, Carie, said that America was a democratic country where people could make their dreams come true by working hard. Pearl herself learned about America because the family went there for the furlough that missionaries overseas had every ten years. In addition, Pearl studied in the United States in Randolph-Macon Woman's College where women were educated to be independent and useful members of society. Indeed, Pearl Buck was loyal to these two worlds, so she herself once noted, "It would be hard for me to declare which side of the world is most my own... I am loyal to Asia as I am loyal to my own land" (Malenius, 2007, http://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/bios/Buck__Pearl.html).

In China, her real world, Pearl felt as a member of the Chinese society. However, Pearl realized she was a foreigner. Her Chinese friends called her the yellow-haired foreigner. In America, her imaginary world, the first months of study in Randolph-Macon Woman's College, she felt like an outsider, too. Because of her Chinese clothes and hair-style, her classmates



saw Pearl as an unfashionable person. She was lonely and unhappy. However, she was determined to be part of this new society. She decided to change her physical appearance in order to be socially acceptable. Immediately she changed her hairstyle, bought a second-hand dress, and learned the slang of her classmates. She became popular and was elected treasurer of the sophomore class and president of the junior class. Also, she formed part of Kappa Delta, the leading sorority at the college.

The experiences Pearl underwent in these two worlds helped her to have a cosmopolitan vision of the world. With this knowledge, Pearl could realize that in society there was discrimination against minority groups, such as against African-Americans, Chinese immigrants, handicapped children, Amerasian children, and women.

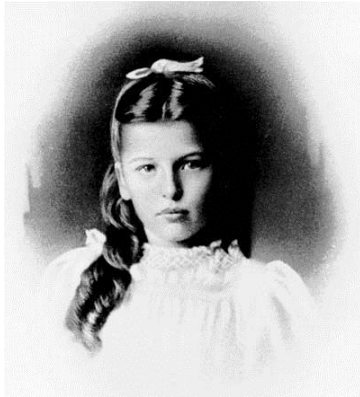
Pearl had a natural talent for writing. She began writing when she was a child, and continued writing at school and college. At that time, she wrote for pleasure and from academic duty. Nonetheless, she became a professional writer because of necessity. She needed money for her retarded daughter Carol. She began writing essays for different newspapers in her thirties. Then she wrote novels, short stories, biographies, autobiographies, translations, and tales for children.

We encourage you to read this thesis to understand the great scope of Pearl S. Buck's knowledge. Through her writing and a diversity of strategies, she could help minority groups to defend their rights.



CHAPTER 1

THE LIFE OF PEARL S. BUCK



Picture 1: Pearl Sydenstricker as a child

Source: <http://www.orlok.com/pearl/pbph3.html>



Picture 2: Pearl S. Buck, probably 1932

Source: <http://www.thereader.ca/2008/09/pearl-of-china-by-anchee-min.html>



Picture 3: Pearl S. Buck Portrait

Source: <http://www.orlok.com/pearl/pbph11.html>

Who is Pearl S. Buck? It is a difficult question to answer because of the multiple facets of this American woman, who lived half of her life in China and the other half in the United States. She was a special mixture of writer,



defendant of the civil rights, founder of the first international agency for adoption, winner of Literature Nobel prize, and so on. For all these reasons, Pearl S. Buck deserves to have a place in History and in Literature.

In this chapter, we try to explain to you, in simple words, the life of this extraordinary human being.

1.1 HER PARENTS

Not only are human beings flesh and blood. We have souls to take care of, too. American devout Christians thought they had the spiritual task to bring the light of Christianity to places where Jesus Christ was not yet known. In the nineteenth century, they paid special attention to China in Asia because it was the largest country known, and as consequence, it represented a great deal to be accomplished. For this reason, Protestant missionaries went to China from the 1830s. Among these missionaries were Pearl's parents – Absalom Sydenstricker and Caroline Stulting. Although they shared foreign evangelism, there were several familiar, economical, and social influences that marked differences in their childhoods and personalities.



1.1.1 Absalom Sydenstricker (1852-1931)

He was born in West Virginia in 1852. His ancestors were from Germany. They had a large homestead. Nevertheless, they did not succeed because the property had steep hills and thin soil; in other words, it was unprofitable.

Absalom's childhood was sad and lonely. He had six brothers. Absalom's mother did not pay enough attention to the children. Also, Absalom's father, a religious man, had a violent temper. Although Absalom did his farm chores carefully, he did not agree with daily labor and his father's discipline. He preferred to admire Virginia's landscape. In addition, when Absalom was six or seven years old, a woman neighbor told his mother that Absalom was an ugly boy. He listened to the comment. Since then, his life was based on the conviction that virtue was more valuable than beauty. So he took refuge in books, an activity favored by his talent for learning.

Another of Absalom's family features was in regard to race. Absalom's family was poor. Nevertheless, they owned two slaves and thought slavery was not an evil thing because they were taught that there was a natural race hierarchy. In fact, when Absalom was an adolescent, the Civil War took place and four of his brothers joined the Confederation.

According to Absalom's father's rules, sons had to stay home doing their home duties until they were twenty-one years old. When Absalom was



an adult, he studied in Washington and Lee College in Virginia. He took several part-time jobs in order to support himself in the college. Although he obtained many honors, he continued being a lonely person. Instead of getting friends, he collected some books on History and Theology. Unfortunately, these books were burned by a fire just when he finished his studies.

Without money, Absalom returned home. After failing to make a living selling bibles, he announced he had decided to be a missionary. His father did not agree. His mother promised to help him under one condition – he had to get married. Consequently, Absalom began looking for a wife. His choice was based on religious convictions. His wife would have to share his beliefs. Finally, he decided to marry Caroline Stulting.

1.1.2 Caroline Stulting (1857-1921)

She was born in West Virginia in 1857. She was the descendant of Dutch immigrants who sold their businesses in order to travel to the New World, looking for religious freedom. At the beginning, Carie's grandparents established themselves in Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, after a while, they moved to Virginia where they learned how to farm and became prosperous.

Carie had good memories of her childhood. She remembered the family house – a white, three-story structure. The building was surrounded



by different trees - maple trees in front of the house and an apple orchard in the backyard. Dutch cheese and homemade berry wines formed part of Stulting's life. The walls of the house were decorated with etchings and drawings made by Carie's father. In the Stulting's house there was also room for poetry, fiction, and biographies. Additionally, in the living room there was a piano that Carie skillfully played. Piano melodies accompanied the family members while they shared the evenings with each other.

Although Carie felt her parents' affection, she realized her father demanded more effort of some members of the family than of others to satisfy his caprices. Her brother Cornelius, for example, carried out his own and his father's duties because his father spent time making artistic objects. Carie's mother washed and ironed her husband's white shirt and collar everyday to satisfy her husband's exaggerated cleanliness.

Stultings' prosperity and Carie's childhood ended when the Civil War broke out. Because the Stultings' farm was located near the place where the Union and Confederate troops were fighting, Carie and her family witnessed the bloodshed and starvation that a war implied. Sometimes, the Stultings' food was only "a soup made of dandelion greens and a handful of dried beans" (Conn, 1996, p. 7).

Carie was also aware of her lack of formal education as a result of the closing of the schools during the Civil War. Carie's brother, Cornelius, tried to compensate for the situation by beginning a school where Carie learned to



read and write correctly. Indeed, she became the best pupil of the improvised school.

In the years of her adolescence, Carie earnestly thought about her soul and God. We must remember that during the nineteenth century, people's lives revolved around the church. People went to church at least every Sunday, and at home, they read the Bible three times everyday. Consequently, Carie implored God to give her a sign, so she could believe in Him.

Carie became a pretty young woman who was admired by her neighbors. When she was eighteen, her mother died after a long illness. Carie believed God had helped her mother to die in peace. This was the hopeful sign she was waiting for. She swore to spend the rest of her life in God's service. She thought of foreign missions.

Under these circumstances, Carie met Absalom when he went to Hillsboro to help his brother to install himself there as the new Presbyterian minister. Immediately, Absalom caught Carie's attention. Although she felt affection for him, Carie continued her plans to get more education. From 1877 to 1879, she studied in the Bellewood Female Seminary, where she received a prize for an essay about religious dogma.



When she returned home, Carie announced her desire to participate in foreign evangelism. Her father did not agree. Nevertheless, Carie and Absalom got engaged and based their relationship on the mission labor.

1.1.3 The Sydenstrickers

Absalom and Carie married in 1880 and immediately traveled to China where they spent ten years before returning to the United States. During this decade, they experienced different emotions and circumstances. Absalom dedicated himself completely to missions and to gaining knowledge of the Chinese language. After six months in China, he addressed his first sermon in Chinese. Absalom thought he had made the right decision. However, he was away from home most of the time, and he was not an affectionate husband and father. On the other hand, Carie took care of the house and children by herself. Carie was sure she had made a bad decision and everyday longed to return to America. As a result, her health declined. Nevertheless, she went on helping poor Chinese women by talking to them and by giving them Western medicine, food, and clothes.

In 1890, the Sydenstrickers left China for their year of home leave. They stayed in Carie's parents' home in Hillsboro, West Virginia. There Carie's health improved. The furlough lasted two years because Carie was pregnant and wanted this baby to be born in America. Pearl Comfort was



born in Hillsboro in 1892. When she was three months old, the family returned to China. Carie had renewed her commitment to the Chinese.

In this part, we make sure you know that Absalom and Carie had seven children. However, because of the tropical diseases, four of them died when they were youngsters. They were buried in Shanghai. The three children who survived were Edgar, Pearl, and Grace.

1.2 HER CHILDHOOD

Most of Pearl's childhood was spent in Chinkiang, an important Chinese city located in the juncture of the Yangtze River and the Grand Canal. The family stayed here for the next twenty-five years with the exception of home leaves to America every ten years.

During her childhood, Pearl underwent the experiences of two worlds: the Presbyterian American world of her parents, and the Chinese world where they lived. These influences made Pearl a bilingual person. She could speak and write both Chinese and English by the age of four. Indeed, her first language was Chinese; colloquial Chinese was learned by her through interchange with Chinese people of Chinkiang: merchants, doctors, farmers, children, and with the servants her parents had employed to take care of their children. English was taught by her mother, who also told Pearl



about the history of the United States. However, for Pearl, China was her real world, while the United States was her dream world.

Pearl's Chinese world included her nurse Amah Wang, her teacher Mr. Kung, and her Chinese servants, friends, and the children of farmers.

From her old Amah Wang, Pearl learned proper behavior, feminine lore, and Chinese history. Amah Wang told Pearl about historical events as she had experienced them all along her life. So, Pearl knew about the last Chinese dynasty, the Qing. To her were not unknown the Taiping Rebellion and the Empress Dowager Ci Xi, important events and people in Chinese History. Also, Amah Wang told Pearl some of the most popular Chinese stories about dragons, swords, evil persons, and fairies.



Picture 4: The Sydenstricker family in about 1901: Pearl, Absalom, Grace, and Carie.

Behind them stands Wang, the children's governess.

Source: <http://faculty.randolphcollege.edu/fwebb/buck/jmrooney/>



Pearl's teacher, Kung, was not a humble person as Amah Wang was. Conversely, he belonged to the intellectual elite. For ten years, Mr. Kung instructed Pearl in reading and writing Chinese, and in Confucian philosophy and manners. Pearl learned how to write Chinese characters in the Confucian style by using a brush. In addition, Mr. Kung polished Pearl's native language and behavior. Mr. Kung's influence made Pearl understand and appreciate the traditional elite of old China.

Pearl knew about the local food because she was accustomed to eat with her family's servants. She realized there were a variety of vegetables and fruit.

Pearl played with farmers' children who lived nearby. From them, she learned games and folk songs. She enjoyed wandering about with her friends.

Pearl was a girl who liked to read. At the age of seven or eight, she was reading both Chinese and English literature. Among the Chinese texts she read there were selections from Confucius, Mencius, and some of the major poets. The works of Mark Twain were the English books she remembered best.

Pearl spent many afternoons watching Chinese theater. There, she admired noisy melodramas about the perpetual battle between good and evil. Of course, good always won. Sometimes, evil took the shape of Westerners.



Pearl realized she was a foreigner. Her Chinese friends called her the yellow-haired foreigner.

Pearl was also a curious girl who liked to know the most possible about the city where she lived thus becoming familiar with life in China. She went with Amah Wang to the crowded streets of Chinkiang. These visits allowed Pearl to know more about ordinary life in China because she observed the daily routine of barbers, food vendors, herbal doctors, carpenters, and slaves. In addition, Pearl could know about the luxury of aristocratic people. Sometimes, it was possible to see the decorated sedan chair of an aristocratic woman carried by four men. Also, Pearl knew about Chinese festivals, weddings, funerals, and colors associated with them. For example, red was the color of good luck while white was the color of death and mourning. Moreover, Pearl knew about feminine infanticide and bound feet. For her, they were symbols of male supremacy. But, she also knew about the Empress Dowager, a powerful woman who ruled China during the last years of the Qing dynasty.

Because China was surrounded by many different countries, Pearl acquired a cosmopolitan vision of the world. She had the chance of sharing experiences with people who spoke different languages and practiced different customs. She met people from India, Japan, Korea, and Thailand as well as from France, Italy, and England.



When Pearl was eight years old, that is, in 1900, the Boxer Rebellion broke out. It was a movement that was against foreigners and Christians. Although the centers of violence were located mainly north and west of Chinkiang, Westerns settled along the coast and inland as well were molested and killed. The Sydenstrickers separated. While Absalom stayed in the mission station in Chinkiang, Edgar was sent to live with relatives in the United States. The rest of the family- Carie, Pearl, and baby Grace - were evacuated to Shanghai, where they spent nearly a year as refugees. Every night, Pearl and Grace prayed to God to keep their father from the Boxers.

Absalom lived through difficult circumstances while he continued with his preaching. Sometimes he was stoned and spat at. Once, he was obligated to see how a converted woman was tortured. After these hard experiences, Absalom rejoined his family and prepared to take their second home leave in 1901.

Carie always felt fine in Hillsboro, West Virginia. However, this time she felt homeless because she felt she belonged neither to the United States nor to China. Carie's feelings marked Pearl for the rest of her life. Pearl also felt like a homeless person.

The Sydenstrickers stayed in America until 1902. Pearl's memories of this time were unclear, but pleasant. She remembered her cousins, trees, cows, and horses. But she was more impressed by the extensive meadow without walls so different from her walled home in Chinkiang surrounded with



the tiny plots Chinese farmers cultivated. In China, missionaries, like most foreigners lived in a settlement that was walled to shield their houses, schools, and clinics. However, Absalom thought missionaries must be closer to the people they wanted to convert. Nevertheless, although he preferred to live outside the foreign settlement, his house was completely walled.

When the family returned to China, Pearl approached Carie more and drifted apart from Absalom because he did not pay attention to his daughters. When Mr. Kung died in 1905, Pearl was enrolled in a nearby mission school. She continued reading whatever books she found. She shared her time with her sister Grace and grew into a pretty adolescent. She was attracted by America, but did not want to abandon China because of her mother. Carie's health had been declining as the years went by.



Picture 5: Carie, Grace, and Pearl, shortly before Pearl's enrollment at Randolph-Macon Woman's College in 1910.

Source: <http://www.orlok.com/pearl/pbph2.html>



1.3 HER STUDIES IN CHINA AND IN THE UNITED STATES

When the family was on its second home leave in 1902, they attended to the enrollment of their first-born, Edgar, at Washington and Lee College. At that time, Pearl was a girl. But by 1909, she had become an attractive young woman - tall, blonde, and blue eyed. Absalom was not interested in Pearl's future. However, Carie wanted both her daughters to attend college. Pearl began the choice of the college. Her first option was Wellesley. She had to think twice because it was an expensive and non-religious college. Then the family realized that Randolph-Macon Woman's College was the right choice because it was a Christian institution newly founded and located in Lynchburg, Virginia, a place where Edgar was living with his wife and two children. Pearl's enrollment had to wait until 1910, the date of the third home leave.

In order to take advantage of the months before the furlough, Pearl was sent to Miss Jewell's School in Shanghai. This was an English institution which had reached renown in Asia, but was now in decline. Although the professors were competent, the classes were dull. Intellectual curiosity was not encouraged among the students. In sum, Miss Jewell's School did not represent a benefit for Pearl's education. However, her stay in Shanghai enabled her to know more about the largest city in Asia in the nineteenth century.



Pearl realized that Shanghai was a center of commerce and cultural interchange. However, she was aware that Shanghai, as a coin, had a dark face, too. It was a center of crime and prostitution. This last activity was legal in China. Consequently, the owner of a woman could sell or pawn her to another. Indeed, for poor peasants, daughters represented a source of money in hard times of floods or droughts –daughters were sold as brides, wives, or prostitutes. The presence of white men accelerated the sexual traffic in Shanghai. In 1900, The Door of Hope was founded. It was a shelter for Chinese slaves and prostitutes. There, the refugees were taught how to sew, knit, and embroider. When Pearl knew of this institution, she offered her services as a volunteer. She spent time teaching the skills her mother had taught her. As she spoke Chinese, Pearl had the chance to know the hardships of the refugees. Pearl realized that in China, as a consequence of law, custom, and profit, many Chinese girls and women were condemned to different ways of exploitation and slavery. Pearl went home for the spring holiday. Then Carrie decided that Miss Jewell's School was not a good place for Pearl. She never returned there. The family prepared for the new home leave to the United States. This time they took the West route which took the family through Russia, Switzerland, France, and England. Finally, in September 1910, they arrived in Lynchburg where Pearl was enrolled in Randolph-Macon Woman's College.

The first women's college was founded in Massachusetts in 1837. However, when Randolph-Macon Woman's College was founded in 1901, there were around two hundred women's colleges in the United States. The



college is named for two Southern statesmen, John Randolph of Virginia and Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina.



Picture 6: Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Front Campus, 1910

Source: <http://faculty.randolphcollege.edu/fwebb/buck/images/11a.htm>

Randolph-Macon Woman's College was a gothic building located in the foothills of the Shenandoah Mountains. Under a single roof took place a variety of activities, such as religion, learning, physical exercise, art, and sleep. A typical day in this college could be summarized in the following lines: Students had to get up at 7:00 A.M. Then they had to get dressed by 7:45 A.M. After having breakfast, they went to the chapel where they stayed until 9:00 A.M. Classes took place from 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., time for lunch. From 1:00 to 6:30 P.M., students could practice athletics or reading. After having dinner, students attended evening worship. Then they did homework or read until 10:30 P.M., time to go to bed. On Saturdays, after tea, students participated in activities prepared by the Current Events Club.



Students had the chance to discuss such themes as women's suffrage. Other Saturdays, the college hosted a Social Evening. Students could receive calls from gentlemen of a classified list. Sundays began with Bible study in the morning. The Ethical Society met in the afternoon to discuss themes related to college duties, or the Sabbath, for example. Sunday ended with religious exercises.

The purpose of the curriculum was "to promote rigorous scholarship and to encourage the development of women who could assume increasing civic responsibility" (Conn, 1996, p. 47). In other words, the aim of women's colleges in general, and Randolph-Macon in particular, was not to prepare women for a specific profession. Women's colleges wanted their students to develop their intellectual capacities by making them women who could do well in any position they acquired.

Randolph-Macon Woman's College gave Pearl the opportunity to realize that women had the same intellectual capacities as men. For this reason, the curriculum included subjects, such as Mathematics, Science, and Latin. Conversely, home economics, dress making, or cookery did not exist at all. She also understood that women had the right to choose the way they wanted to go. She was aware that women had valuable talents that allowed them to be independent people who could cooperate in the development of the society where they lived.



At Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Pearl underwent bad and good experiences. The first months, Pearl was lonely and unhappy. Because of her dress and hairstyle, her classmates saw Pearl as an unfashionable person. Pearl's dress was made of Chinese linen. It had a high neck and long sleeves. Pearl wore a braid while her classmates wore little artificial curls. Pearl decided to change her physical appearance in order to be socially acceptable. Immediately she changed her hairstyle, bought a second-hand dress, and learned the slang of her classmates. She became popular and was elected treasurer of the sophomore class and president of the junior class. Also, she formed part of Kappa Delta, the leading sorority at the college. Her short stories were published in the undergraduate literary magazine. In 1913, she was chosen as the delegate of the college to the Young Women's Christian Association.

Her last year at the college, Pearl planned to share a room with Emma Edmunds who became her best friend. However, her brother Edgar got a job in Washington and asked Pearl to spend her junior year with his wife and two children. Although Pearl was not designated editor of the undergraduate literary magazine, she continued publishing her poems and stories.

Because Randolph-Macon Woman's College did not have great notoriety in the United States, Pearl thought she had not learned enough at the college. However, Randolph-Macon Woman's College fulfilled its commitment to form women as independent and useful members of society. Her teachers prepared Pearl so that she could compete with her American

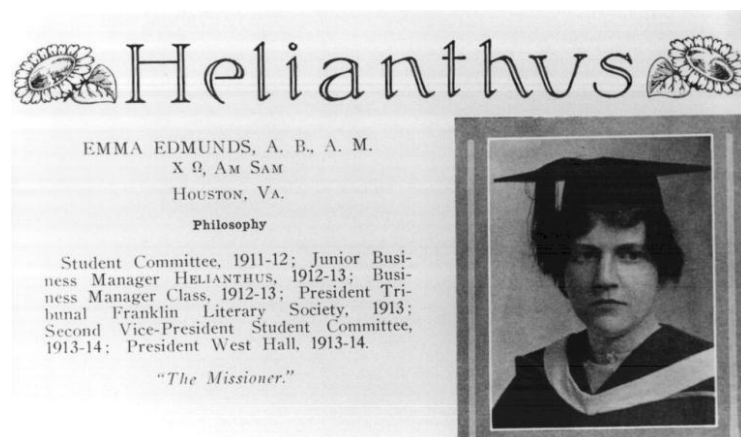


peers. Indeed, years later, Pearl became a great representative of her generation because, through her writing, she tried to promote understanding between East and West. Also, she was a defender of civil rights and tried to make a society where women and men had the same rights. Moreover, she founded the first international agency for adoption.



Picture 7: Pearl S. Buck's Senior Portrait

Source: <http://faculty.randolphcollege.edu/fwebb/buck/abbot.html>



Picture 8: Emma White's senior Portrait

Source: <http://faculty.randolphcollege.edu/fwebb/buck/abbot.html>



In June, 1914, Pearl graduated from Randolph-Macon Woman's College. Now she had to decide on a profession and a country to establish herself in. She knew that in China there were few opportunities for women and fewer for a foreign woman. For Pearl, being a missionary was not an option. As a result, she chose America. Her psychology professor was looking for an assistant, and Pearl accepted the job.

However, in September, 1914, Pearl received news from China that her mother was gravely ill. She immediately changed her plans. There was a teaching job in the missionary school at Chinkiang offered by the Foreign Mission Board. She got the job. Although she wanted to travel to China as soon as possible, Pearl had to wait until November because of the European war.

Carie's state was so bad that Pearl was received in Shanghai only by her father and her sister Grace. When she saw her mother Carie, Pearl was shocked. Now her mother was only a shadow of the woman Pearl had left four years before. Carie was so thin and shrunken that Pearl could lift her easily. "For the next three years, until her own marriage, Pearl spent much of her time and energy caring for her dying mother" (Conn, 1996, p. 53).



1.4 HER FIRST MARRIAGE AND HER RETARDED CHILD

When Pearl returned to China in 1914, confusion and political instability had seized the Asian country. In the following lines, we explain the turbulent years of the transition from Imperialism to Communism in China.

In 1911, China experienced a revolution that overturned the Imperial era. The last Chinese dynasty, the Qing, could not defend China against foreign invasion. Tensions that had accumulated during the first decade of the twentieth century finally exploded in 1911. Central authorities tried to control skirmishes by applying brutal repression and trying to introduce reforms. Rulers' struggles were unsuccessful. In 1912, the Emperor Puyi abdicated in favor of a republic. From 1912 until 1949, China underwent political instability because of the fighting among the Warlords and Nationalist and Communist groups which tried to obtain control. The political chaos ended in 1949 with the victory of Communism and the Communist era in China that has lasted up until now, 2011.

The Revolution of 1911 initially favored the missionary enterprise in China because several of the Revolutionary leaders were Christian converts. Missionaries, in great number, began to arrive in China shortly after the Revolution. Among them was John Lossing Buck. His family and friends called him simply Lossing. He was a graduate of Cornell where he had obtained a degree in Rural Economics. During his college years, he had developed a deep interest in China. After graduating, he tried to get a



chance to work in China by applying as an agricultural missionary. He arrived in Shanghai in 1915. He established himself in Nanjing for language study. Although he worked hard, he could not master the language. During his stay in China, he was helped by interpreters. After language study, Lossing moved to Nanhsuchou in Anhwei province. It was one of the most impoverished Chinese regions. Its inhabitants knew about agriculture because agricultural knowledge had been transmitted orally from father to son. Lossing's work was to experiment with different varieties of cereals while looking for the one which best adapted to the local soil and weather conditions. Additionally, he would teach Chinese peasants agricultural techniques which would allow them to get better harvests, thus improving their lives. He was devoted to his job. In the summer, he went to Kuling for a break. Because of the suffocating summer, Europeans had built a resort in the mountains. Carrie could not endure summer heat and spent some time in Kuling. Pearl met Lossing in this resort. After dating for a year, they got married in 1917. Then Pearl applied for an appointment as a missionary wife. This action increased the Bucks' income.

Pearl explained the reasons for her marriage with a simple phrase: "The time had come for marriage." The relationship worked for a couple of years. Lossing thought Pearl's personal goals would be fulfilled by helping him as a good professor's wife, interpreter, typist, research assistant, and in the future, as a mother. At the beginning, Pearl herself had decided to postpone her aims in favor of her husband's objectives. Nevertheless, she was a passionate woman. Although she tried to create a warm environment



in their house, Lossing did not notice the details. His only thought was his job. It was at this time that Pearl confirmed her talent for writing. Nevertheless, she was not encouraged by her husband. Pearl and Lossing were separated by a huge distance in feelings so that, as the time passed, the gap kept increasing and finally ended in divorce in 1935. Pearl justified her divorce by saying that it was the result of her husband indifference. Lossing could not satisfy “her needs as a wife, mother, lover, or writer” (Conn, 1996, p. 63).

In 1919, Pearl and Lossing moved to Nanjing because Lossing got a position in the College of Agriculture and Forestry of the local university.

Nanjing was a contrast to Nanhsuchou. While Nanhsuchou was one of the most impoverished Chinese regions, Nanjing was a historical and political city. It had been the capital of China during the early days of the Ming Dynasty. It had also been a center of scholarship and the headquarters of the silk industry.

The Bucks lived inside the Nanjing University. They had electricity and running water – luxurious although informal services. The Bucks covered their expenditures with their missionary salary. While Lossing taught courses of scientific agriculture and farm management, Pearl had the opportunity to teach English at both Nanjing University and the Chinese-governed National University. However, the Bucks’ income was not good.



Even so, they had three Chinese servants who helped Pearl with the cooking and house cleaning.

During 1919, another event changed Pearl's life. She realized she was pregnant. She used to tell her sister Grace she would like to have a big family. After months of waiting, in March, 1920, the Bucks became parents of a girl they named Carol Grace. After three weeks in the hospital, Pearl went home. However, she did not recover completely from Carol's birth. The doctor discovered that Pearl had a tumor in her uterus. He suggested going to the United States for surgery. The Bucks went to America and stayed on the Bucks farm. Pearl's operation was successful. However, she could not bear children again. Then she devoted herself to taking care of her daughter Carol. After Pearl's convalescence, the Bucks returned to China. Although Pearl's health improved, she was worried about Carol's well-being. Carol had eczema. Pearl tried to cure it by using vegetable and fruit juices. In addition, she noticed her daughter did not make progress in her talking and walking.

Pearl's parents did not know of her affliction because Carie's death was imminent. After six years of illness, Carie died and was buried in the walled Christian cemetery in Chinkiang. Carie's death was a great blow to Pearl who tried to fill her loss by writing her mother's biography. Initially, the book was intended to be a document to share with Carie's grandchildren. Nevertheless, this was Pearl's first book that would be published under the title of *The Exile* in 1936.



Carie's death also affected Absalom who became a passive person. When he was seventy, the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions informed him that according to a recent regulation, missionaries had to retire for active service at the age of seventy. Although he appealed for an exception, Absalom had to give up doing active missionary service. Immediately Pearl took care of her father by getting for him a position in the Nanjing Theological Seminary –“Absalom was appointed dean of the seminary's new correspondence division” (Conn, 1996, p. 76).

After Carie's biography, Pearl continued writing about what she knew most –her beloved China. Pearl published several essays related to this Asiatic country, such as *In China, Too* and *Beauty in China*.

In the summer of 1924, the Bucks went to America because of Lossing's sabbatical year. They took advantage of their stay in the United States to enroll in Cornell's graduate school to get their master's degrees: Pearl in English and Lossing in Agricultural Economics.

Pearl underwent exciting experiences during her Cornell year. She had the opportunity to know Eleanor Roosevelt. In addition, Pearl won the Laura L. Messenger Memorial Prize for her thesis entitled, *China and the West*.

Because Carol's development had not improved, the Bucks consulted several specialists in the United States. However, all of them coincided in

that Carol was a victim of phenylketonuria, known simply as PKU. This was an inherited metabolic disease that led to mental retardation. At that time, there was no treatment for PKU. Carol had a permanent impairment. As a consequence, the Bucks adopted another girl, Janice.



Picture 9: Pearl and Janice in Nanjing, China, about 1920

Source: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2010/apr/18/burying-bones-pearl-buck>

While the Bucks were in the United States, important events had taken place in China. The leader of the Nationalists, Sun Yat-sen, had died of cancer. Chiang Kai-shek succeeded him. The new leader decided to begin the Northern Expedition to subjugate the warlords located in North China in the summer of 1925. Nationalists and Communists joined to defeat the warlords and to reunify China under a sole force. The Northern Expeditionary army was formed by Nationalist troops and Communist troops. These last were known as the Northern troops.



The Bucks returned to China in September, 1925. After rearranging the house, Pearl prepared for the new school year. She would teach education, English, and religion at several Nanjing institutions. At the same time, she continued writing essays and short stories. She found some peace in Janice. Indeed, her second daughter provided Pearl with energy and consolation to cope with her unhappy marriage and Carol's disease.

In March, 1927, the Nationalist troops entered Nanjing. Chiang Kai-shek guaranteed the security of the foreign community living in the city. However, when the Northern troops arrived, they targeted and looted foreign properties. In addition, they killed six foreigners and hundreds of Chinese. Communist troops wanted to discredit the Nationalist Party. This event is known as the Nanjing Incident and occurred between March 23 and 24, 1927. Those were two days of violence and bloodshed. Nanjing University and the homes of missionaries were some of the targets. Pearl, her father, her husband, her children, her sister Grace and her sister's family survived because they were sheltered in the hut of one of Pearl's servants. The looting ended when American and British warships were stationed on the Yangtze River and began shelling the city. A destroyer took Western refugees to Shanghai.

Because the fate of Shanghai was uncertain, the Bucks sailed to Unzen, Japan. Unzen looked like Kuling with respect to its landscape and weather. Sometimes Pearl took her two children and walked in the countryside. Pearl began writing a long story when she was still living in



Unzen. Its title was *The Revolutionist*. The story tried to explain what was happening in China.

After five months in Unzen, the Bucks returned to China. Initially the whole family stayed in Shanghai. The city was full of refugees, and food was scarce. The Bucks had to share a house with other families. Whereas Pearl and the children remained in Shanghai, Lossing went to Nanjing to continue his agricultural survey.

Pearl rejoined Lossing in Nanjing in 1928. Again, her first activity was the reconstruction of their house that had been destroyed during the Nanjing Incident. At the same time, Nanjing itself was rebuilt. New buildings were constructed as a sign of Nationalist control over China. The biggest project was the construction of Sun Yat-sen's tomb. Chiang Kai-shek also ordered the building of a wide road for the funeral marchers. Unfortunately, the road was designed to go across the city. Its construction required the destruction of hundreds of colorful old houses and shops. *The New Road* was the new story Pearl wrote at this time.

Pearl was constantly worried about Carol's future. Her deepest fear was to die and to leave Carol unprotected. Pearl decided that the best option was to find a specialized institution where Carol would be taken care of. However, Pearl needed to earn enough money to carry out the project. Pearl had published several essays, stories, and translations in different journals, such as *The Chinese Recorder*, *Asia*, and *the Nation*. But now, Pearl decided to become a professional writer. Therefore, she hired a literary agent, David



Lloyd, who would inform her about the American literary marketplace. Pearl was trying to diminish her distance from New York.

Although Pearl wanted to go to America, she could not because of Lossing's job. She longed to be in the United States for some time to get an adequate institution for Carol. She hoped time came in 1929 when the Bucks had to go to America. Rockefeller Foundation had offered Lossing a fund for his agricultural project. He, however, had to sign personally.

The Bucks stayed in America for five months. During this time, Pearl visited different institutions for retarded children. She was discouraged because none of those institutions offered appropriate care for retarded children. In some of them, the patients were taught how to do things in spite of the fact that they did not understand the utility of what they were doing. Other institutions treated retarded children as things to be kept until their death. Only one place offered what Pearl was looking, the Vineland Training School. This institution was located in New Jersey. Although it was a modest facility, the Vineland program trained retarded children according to their own abilities. In Vineland, retarded children were treated as human beings instead of as medical problems. Vineland tuition was \$1,000 a year. Pearl paid for two years in advance by a missionary loan. Pearl's commitment was to write a story about missionaries but addressed to children. She wrote *The Young Revolutionist* and the missionary loan was reduced to \$1,500.



Carol was brought to Vineland in September, 1929. When Pearl had to say good-bye, her heart was torn. She knew Vineland was the best place for Carol. Nonetheless, it was the first time Pearl and Carol would be separated. This sorrow accompanied Pearl for the rest of her life.

The Bucks returned to China in January, 1930. Although she tried to remain in America for one or two years, Pearl had to be with her husband in Nanjing.

The first months of separation from Carol were the worst for Pearl. Her consolation was letters from her American friends, Lulu Hamilton and Emma White (Emma Edmunds now married), who assured Pearl that Carol was well in Vineland. Once again, Pearl enrolled in her teaching activities. One more time, she was involved in Nanjing politics and gossip. Little by little, Pearl resumed her life there.

In December, 1930, Pearl's sorrow grew again because this was "the first Christmas that mother and daughter had been separated since Carol's birth nine years earlier" (Conn, 1996, p. 121). She tried to cope with her pain by writing, teaching, cooking, or gardening. However, Pearl was literally paralyzed by her sorrow. Sometimes she remained looking at Carol's photograph for long hours. In January, 1931, Pearl's consolation was good news about her novel *The Good Earth* that had been selected by the Book-of-the-Month Club. This was an institution that influenced the reading habits of American people. When a book was chosen by this organization, the



sales were guaranteed. Indeed, *The Good Earth* was the best selling book of 1931 and 1932. Pearl earned more than \$100,000 during the first eighteen months of its publication. By the payment of \$40,000, Pearl was assured Carol's residence in Vineland until Carol's death. In addition, Carol's cottage was built. It was a two-story house for Carol and some girls of her same age. Taking into account that Carol loved music, the house was equipped with a phonograph and a collection of records. When Pearl moved definitively to the United States, she visited Carol continually. Pearl maintained her involvement with Vineland in different ways. For instance, she helped in raising funds for research on retardation. In addition, she served as chairman of Vineland's board for many years. Furthermore, she analyzed Vineland's instructional programs to define the best ones for retarded children. Most important of all, she worked as a teacher because, for Pearl, good education was the basis for the development of an excellent human being in the future.

Although she was involved in Vineland's life, Pearl continued hiding Carol's retardation because mental illness was considered a stigma. She wanted to protect both her daughter Carol and herself. In the 1930s, when publishers asked Pearl for some autobiographical information, she explained vaguely that she had two daughters – one in school and the other with us. The explanation was attached to a photograph of Pearl and Janice.



For many years, she was worried when she had a meeting with journalists. She always tried to avoid conversation about personal questions. But after around thirty years, in 1950, she broke her silence with an essay entitled *The Child Who Never Grew*. For the first time in her life, she made public her years of sorrow as a mother of an impaired child. Her story helped other parents of retarded children to liberate themselves from the sense of shame attached to retardation. Pearl was congratulated by physicians and public health authorities because retardation was then treated under other terms. Pearl became the voice of retarded children who could not express themselves.



Picture 10: Pearl's daughter, Carol, in the early 1940s.

Source: <http://www.orlok.com/pearl/pbph4.html>

A last note about Carol is that she stayed in Vineland for sixty years. Carol always received her Christmas presents. The first years, while Pearl



was still in China, she asked her American friends to buy Carol's gifts. When Pearl moved to the United States, she personally did that. However, when Pearl was older, she wrote two weeks before Christmas to a staff member of Vineland to remember the gifts for Carol: "crayons and coloring books, beads and glazed fruit and candy, doll blankets and a musical top" (Conn, 1996, p. 365). Parents will be parents until they or their children die. Pearl was not an exception.

1.5 HER SECOND MARRIAGE

1929 was a year that Pearl would never forget. Three important events occurred, events which affected Pearl for the rest of her life. We have to talk about the first affair: Pearl had left Carol in Vineland, thus solving, in part, the problem of her retarded daughter. The second matter was the publication of Pearl's first novel by the John Day Company. The third was a consequence of the second -the meeting between Pearl and the President of the publishing house, Richard Walsh. He would be her publisher, her confidant, and in 1935, her second husband, after he and Pearl divorced from their spouses.

In 1926, Pearl's first short story, ***A Chinese Woman Speaks***, was published by *Asia Magazine*. In 1927, Pearl hired David Lloyd as her literary agent. Because she needed desperately the money for her retarded daughter Carol, Pearl thought her first short story along with an unpublished



material would make a good novel. In 1928, she sent this material to David Lloyd suggesting publishing the novel under the title of *Winds of Heaven*. Although the literary agent delivered the manuscript to every publishing house in New York, only the John Day Company agreed to publish Pearl's novel. It was a consequence of the prejudice against Chinese books. However, the company was ready to challenge it.

In 1929, Pearl met Richard Walsh. He was a publisher and businessman graduated from Harvard. In 1927, he was appointed president of the newly founded John Day Company. Because of the crash of 1929, the company needed desperately a good book to continue working. Walsh had maintained the company afloat by applying different strategies: reducing staff, cutting his own salary, and even using his children's funds. When Pearl went to the John Day offices to sign a contract, Richard told her that the novel was not so good, but he had accepted to publish it because he was sure her next novel would be better. In Richard's opinion, some changes had to be made to improve the novel. First of all, he recommended the use of the title *East Wind, West Wind*, instead of *Winds of Heaven*. Pearl agreed to this and to most of the modifications suggested by Richard. She only defended the usage of the phrase, "Oh, my mother," that frequently appeared in a funeral passage of the novel because it was a repetitive Chinese mourning cry. Consequently, this rhetorical device was necessary.



For the first time, Pearl was going to receive royalties for her writing: “a rate of 10 percent, rising to 15 percent after five thousand copies. The book’s list price would be \$2.50” (Conn, 1996, p. 112).

The Bucks returned to Nanjing in 1930. Although she was sad over Carol’s separation, Pearl continued writing. In May, Pearl finished her second novel entitled **Wang Lung**. Pearl sent it off to David Lloyd. The new novel was accepted with enthusiasm by Richard Walsh. However, he suggested three things to improve the book. As with the first novel, Richard recommended a change of title. For him, **Wang Lung** had two problems. First, it was difficult to pronounce, and second, it could cause vulgar humor. Because the story had to do with a good deal of sweep and romance, he proposed the title **The Good Earth**. A second point focused on some changes in the second part of the novel because of the slow pace of the story. The third aspect was to postpone the publication until 1931.

East Wind, West Wind received a great number of critics, most of them favorable taking into account that it was a first novel. Most people welcomed the book. The readers said it was a story full of authenticity. The John Day Company had to deal with the requirements for translations. Also, the London publishing house bought the British rights. Pearl began to be known around the world because of her novel. Her readers were eager for a second book.

However, at home, Pearl experienced negative criticism. Losing congratulated Pearl on her success as Pearl congratulated him when he



published his book *Chinese Farm Economy*. But, Lossing considered his writing was more valuable than Pearl's because his was a scientific survey, while Pearl's was an amusing story. Absalom was indifferent. As always, he did not pay attention to Pearl's work because for him, women's work was not an important duty.

Richard Walsh proved not to be wrong. Pearl's second novel was a great success. Because of the quality of the author and the plot of the story, ***The Good Earth*** gained readers all over America and China in a relatively short time. The book received comments in pro and in con form, too. Most of the journal critics agreed that ***The Good Earth*** showed Chinese peasants as they were -human beings living in a rural landscape and overcoming several difficulties, such as droughts, floods, and war. The novel helped to cut down the Chinese stereotypes known in the United States that showed Chinese as mysterious people because of the different customs they had. The negative criticisms came mainly from Chinese intellectuals who thought Pearl had to write about the elite and not about the peasants. In this point, Pearl became again the voice of the voiceless people in China –the peasants.

For Pearl, most of her accomplishment was a consequence of Richard's advice. He made her promise she would allow the John Day Company would continue publishing her new books.



1931 was a year of contrasting events for Pearl. It began with the triumph of her novel but it continued with her father's death. Absalom died in August, after around fifty-one missionary years in China. Because of the flood of the Yangtze River, Pearl could not be with him in Kuling. Only Grace gave him the last good-bye.

1931 was also a year of liberation because, with Absalom's death, Pearl felt released from such religious duties as being a missionary daughter and wife. By that time, Pearl thought seriously about divorce and of a life in the United States as her new home.

1931 was a bad year for China. Aside from flood and the resulting famine, the Chinese had to deal with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, a rich zone located in the North. This event began World War II in Asia. Chiang Kai-shek decided to continue persecuting the Communists rather than to fight the Japanese. For him, Communism was worse than Japanese invasion. To Pearl, the Nationalist Revolution was a fraud because of the corruption of many of its members. Although she disliked Communism, she realized Communists would gain the civil war because they had involved the peasants in the revolution.

In 1932, the Bucks returned to America. Lossing wanted to complete his Ph.D. at Cornell, while Pearl longed to be with Carol. Pearl asked Richard to keep in secret the name of the hotel and the telephone numbers. Also, she desired to avoid social meetings because crowds made her



uncomfortable. Richard did what she wanted. However, he recommended her to accept some invitations, which were convenient for her reputation as the most popular writer of the United States. *The Good Earth* had been awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Everybody wanted to know more about Pearl, but she had decided to keep her private life from the press because she wanted to conceal Carol's retardation and the bad comments that surely would appear.

From that time, Richard Walsh became indispensable to Pearl. Richard performed different roles in Pearl's writing career: He was her editor and publisher, her advisor and spokesman. Also, he was her public relations director and manager. This writing and publishing partnership succeeded because Richard admired Pearl's work, and Pearl believed in Richard's advice. Proximity in their work helped them share enough time together to transform their friendship into love. Richard was filling the vacuum left by fifteen years of marriage with Lossing.

In August, Pearl accepted to go to a dinner in her honor in the Waldorf-Astoria. Among the guests were well-known writers, publishers, historians, and economists. Although she felt very nervous, Pearl seduced the audience with the reading of a Chinese passage. Her cadence caught the listeners' attention and applause.

Pearl began to express her actual feelings about missions and was involved in controversies with the Presbyterian Board for around a year. The



polemic started in November, 1932, when Pearl addressed a lecture to Presbyterians. More than two thousand people gathered in the Astor Hotel. The most prominent clerics of the city were there. For the occasion, Pearl had prepared an essay about foreign missions. In her opinion, there was no reason for them. The missionaries, fundamentalists mainly, were narrow-minded. They did not take time to comprehend the people they were converting. They did not appreciate the worthy customs and traditions of those people. Furthermore, most of the missionaries despised those people.

Presbyterians divided into two groups. The first of them said that Pearl had the right to express her opinion about foreign missions. Even a small number of missionaries agreed with Pearl. However, the second group, more radical, considered that Pearl had to be punished for her position in regard foreign missions.

In Pearl's favor, the book, *Re-Thinking Missions*, was published in October. One of the most prominent American philosophers, Ernest Hocking, was the chairman of a commission which had gone to China to investigate American missions because there was great criticism about them. Most people thought missionary activity was a synonym of destruction of foreign cultures. In *Re-Thinking Missions*, Hocking's group concluded that missionaries had to change their doctrine of damnation to a doctrine of love and universal brotherhood. Also, the commission suggested that missionaries "stop insisting that Christianity was the only true religion and acknowledge the value of other systems of belief" (Conn, 1996, p. 150).



The Presbyterian Mission Board had to make a decision about Pearl; she could not continue being a missionary. The most radical suggested reprimanding her publicly. However, because Pearl was a world-famous novelist, public reactions could affect them negatively. The controversy ended in May, 1933, when Pearl resigned from her missionary position.

Richard advised Pearl to enroll in academic and professional groups. Her agenda was full of meetings. Many speeches were addressed to different audiences: The American Academy of Political and Social Science, Philadelphia Quakers, the Institute of Pacific Relations, etc. In June, Pearl went to Randolph-Macon. Her old classmates could not believe the changes she had made. She looked different, more elegant, and sophisticated. When she was there in 1914, she was an outsider; by 1933 she had become a star known around the world. A few days after, Pearl received an honorary degree in Yale because Yale maintained relations with China and Pearl was the best representative of China; the award was appropriate.

By that time, Lossing had finished his doctoral work and had to return to China to continue his work. Pearl went with him, but they were accompanied by Richard and Rudy Walsh in the European portion of the journey.

While Pearl was in the United States, two of her books were published, ***Sons*** and ***The First Wife and Other Stories***. They were



welcomed by people. Richard Walsh made arrangements for the publication of a third book ***All Men Are Brothers***.

After the Walshes returned to America, Pearl and Lossing continued the voyage to China. Then Pearl told Lossing she wanted a divorce. The announcement did not surprise Lossing because he had realized Pearl and Richard were sharing more than work only. After the agreement, Pearl continued the journey to Nanjing alone.

At the end of 1933, Richard traveled to Nanjing where he joined Pearl. Richard was in China for two main reasons: tourism and business. He and Pearl traveled through Southeast Asia visiting Indochina, India, Thailand, and Burma. Then they went to Peking where Richard met an Australian journalist and proposed to him to be part of *Asia Magazine*. Within a few months, Richard was also the editor of that prestigious publication and petitioned good writers for articles about Asian politics. In 1934, Richard and Pearl traveled to Hong Kong, the Malay States, and the Philippines. After the trip they went to Nanjing.

Because Pearl's career and personal needs attached her to America, she made arrangements for a long visit to the United States. Pearl left China in May, 1934. Although she thought she would return some time in the future, she would never go back to her beloved China again as a consequence of her political position in regard to Communists who eventually gained the power in 1949; they have maintained until now.



The first months in America were for Pearl years of discovering. Although she was born in the United States, she had lived mostly in China - around four decades. Therefore, she had to learn more about her new home. Once her daughter Janice confessed to her mother that she, Pearl, knew everything about China, but about the United States, she knew nothing.

Pearl was fascinated by the different people, customs, and landscapes that could be found in only one country. She also noticed that her new home was a country of marked contrasts: the poor and the rich, the educated and the illiterate, etc.

Pearl could live wherever she wanted because she had enough money. Nevertheless, she chose Green Hills Farm, a stone house in Bucks County, near Philadelphia. Her decision was based on the premise that she had always longed to have a large family, so her house had to be large, too. Firstly, she had thought about West Virginia, where she was born and the land of her ancestors in America. However, the zone was still infested with the shadow of racism. She did not want to live in a place where people were classified as white or black in the use of such facilities as restaurants.



Picture 11: Green Hills Farm

Source: <http://mkasper.blogspot.com/2009/12/pearl-s-buck-house-perkaise-pa.html>



Picture 12: Green Hills Farm is a National Historic Landmark since 1980.

Source: <http://mkasper.blogspot.com/2009/12/pearl-s-buck-house-perkaise-pa.html>

Pearl had another idea of her country, an idea based on her mother's descriptions. In China, Carie had told Edgar, Pearl, and Grace that the United States was a nation where all people had the same rights, wars did not take place, and everything was love. Because of her visits to America, Pearl had realized her mother's descriptions were indeed her mother's ideals. Pearl made those ideals hers and during the rest of her life she struggled for women's equality, black people's rights, Amerasian children's welfare; that is,



she fought for minorities, she was the voice of the voiceless who belonged to a reduced group.

Two years passed from the time Pearl asked Lossing for divorce before the legal separation effectively occurred. Pearl's divorce took place at a time in which divorce implied two connotations: scandal and defeat. In June, 1935, the journals announced in great headings all about Pearl's divorce and remarriage. The Bucks and the Walshes had to journey to Reno for their respective separations. Pearl dissolved her marriage with Lossing by alleging incompatibility, and Richard's wife, Rudy, from cruelty. Then Pearl and Richard got remarried.

Pearl was reconstructing her life. She had the love and attention she always had longed for. Her husband admired her as a person, a woman, a writer, a wife and a mother. Pearl and Richard shared life and business.

In a short time, Pearl also had the large family she had dreamed of. In 1936, after consulting Janice, Richard and Pearl adopted two boys. Both babies were one year old. They were named Richard Stulting Walsh and John Stulting Walsh. In 1937, the family grew again. Richard and Pearl adopted two children more – a boy named Edgar and a girl named Jean.



Picture 13: Richard and Pearl with their new sons, Richard and John

Source: <http://www.orlok.com/pearl/pbph7.html>

Every August, Pearl and Richard took the children to the beach as a way to avoid Pennsylvania's heat and the hay fever season. Pearl enjoyed looking at the landscape, especially at the blue sky and the blue ocean. She also felt satisfied staring at the children digging in the sand. Those were good times. She was really happy with Richard and the children.

Although most of the time she was busy dealing with public, social, cultural, and political activities around the United States, Pearl reserved time to stay on Green Hills Farm during Christmas season. It was a special occasion to share with her large family –her and Richard's young children and Richard's grown children. There were fourteen people around the table tasting the turkey and the food most of which was prepared by Pearl herself. Her dream of having a large family had come true. The family grew more when Pearl and Richard adopted two mixed-raced girls: Henriette and



Cheiko. Their parents were two African-American soldiers. Henriette's mother was a German woman and Cheiko's mother was a Japanese woman.

Richard supported Pearl in every activity she was involved in aside from writing. They spoke about civil rights, women's equality, Amerasian children, fund raising, politics, etc. Pearl was finally feeling like a complete person -all her facets with their own flavor, color, challenges, and achievements.

Unfortunately, this dream life came to an end when Richard suffered a stroke in 1953. He became an invalid and his condition was failing as time went by. He could not continue being Pearl's advisor and confident. Pearl was feeling alone again. She once wrote that although she shared time and space with Richard, there was not the melting of two souls and thoughts that used to be and that had made possible her success.

Pearl had overcome hard events during her life: Carol's impairment, her hysterectomy, her failed marriage with Lossing, her father's indifference, etc. So she continued with her domestic and public affairs with calm and decision.

In 1960, while she was in Japan working on the film of her children's book, *The Big Wave*, Richard died on Green Hills Farm.



Thirty years of great companionship and business ended with Richard's death. Pearl now was alone, but this time she had experience, money, and prestige. These elements helped her to maintain involvement in her writing and public affairs until her death in 1973. Richard's companionship had made Pearl grow and mature. Now she was flying by herself.

1.6 HER LITERARY PRODUCTION

Pearl had a natural talent for writing. She began writing when she was a child, and continued writing at school and college. At that time, she wrote for pleasure and from academic duty. Nonetheless, she became a professional writer because of necessity. She wrote essays for different newspapers in her thirties. Then she wrote novels, short stories, biographies, and tales for children. The next paragraphs try to explain in detail the development of Pearl's writing.

When she was six years old, Pearl wrote a letter about her brothers and sisters who had died because they had become infected by tropical diseases in Chinkiang, China, where their parents were stationed as missionaries. She sent that letter to the editor of the Christian Observer in Louisville, Kentucky. The letter was published under the title of ***Our Real Home in Heaven.***



While she was studying at Randolph-Macon, Pearl wrote some poems and stories that were published in the undergraduate literary magazine. ***The Hour of Worship*** was the most interesting story Pearl wrote at that time.

We have mentioned that the Bucks enrolled at Cornell's graduate school to get their master's degrees in 1924. Because they were short of money, Pearl decided to participate in the best-paying graduate award, the Laura L. Messenger Memorial Prize, which included an economic reward of \$250. She was advised by a professor that this prize was always given to theses on History. Therefore, she wrote about the Western influence on Chinese society and entitled her thesis, ***China and the West***. Since the participants had to use a pen name in order to assure impartiality in the contests, Pearl signed under the name of "David F. Barnes" because the jury was comprised of male professors only. At the end, Pearl won the award which was used to buy new clothes.

We realize Pearl felt that she would be a good writer from the time she was a child. However, she began writing in earnest in the 1920s for three major reasons. First of all, she had decided to delay her goals in favor of the aims of her husband, Lossing. Second, she knew the time for writing had come when her mother Carie died in 1921; Pearl decided to write her mother's biography. However, the most important reason for Pearl's writing was that she needed to earn enough money to guarantee the welfare of her disabled daughter, Carol.



Pearl improvised a study in the corner of the living room of the house she and Lossing occupied in Nanjing University as professors of that institution. Pearl set a wooden screen as a barrier indicating that that zone was reserved for her writing and asked that when she was inside, she would not be disturbed. She reserved the mornings for her writing, and she was disciplined in doing this until the last years of her life.

Pearl started her career as a writer when cultural changes had taken place around the world, not only in America and Europe but also in China. In the Asiatic country, scholars of the University of Peking called for a reconstruction of the Chinese literary culture. They fought for the use of the pai-hua as the official language for professional and educational publications in China. The pai-hua was the spoken language, the language of the common people, while the wen-yen was the classical written language used only by the elite and the official language in use. The scholars said this would be the first step in the revolution in China because revolution required the involvement of the masses and the masses needed to communicate under a common language. The struggle reached its objective, and in 1920, pai-hua was recognized as the official language in China. The Ministry of Education decreed that pai-hua had to be taught in elementary schools.

Pearl's first professional works were essays for different dailies. Of course, the themes for her writings were related to China –its customs, traditions, education, politics, society, natural disasters, relationships with the Western powers, and so on. As a few examples, we mention the first essays



published by Pearl in 1924: *In China, Too* and *The Chinese Student Mind*.

They dealt with the cultural and social changes happening in China during those years.

Then Pearl tried novels whose plots were in connection with China. Some of them are *East Wind, West Wind*, *The Good Earth*, and *The Revolutionist*.

Her novels were translated into many languages. For instance, *The Good Earth* was translated into German, French, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian, by 1933, because its plot, related to peasants, is universal.

Pearl decided to translate into English the Chinese novel entitled *Shui Hu Chuan*. The novel has its origins in the Ming Dynasty and describes the different events a group of outlaws had to cope with, such as warfare, execution, battles with tigers, etc. This group had their headquarters on a mountain. The characters of the novel describe all the professions of people at the time it was written –scholars, priests, courtesans, farmers, merchants, warlords, politicians, aristocrats, and children. This novel was very popular among the Chinese people because the outlaws began fighting to overturn a tyrannical authority. Literally, the Chinese title is rendered in English as *Water Margin*, which describes the scenery where the events detailed in the book took place. Pearl's translation is titled, *All Men Are Brothers*, taking into account a famous phrase from the Confucian Analects: "Around the four



oceans, all men are brothers.” Pearl chose this title, *All Men Are Brothers*, because it would be more meaningful to Western readers.

Pearl spent five years on this translation, time during which she was in contact with classic Chinese fiction. This proximity influenced Pearl’s prose style. According to Peter Conn, the influence can be seen in the formulas and stock phrases Pearl used in her writings. In addition, she preferred narrative surface over psychological depth. The stories have episodic plots. The aim of Pearl’s stories is to entertain by using naturalism.

Pearl also dealt with her parents’ biographies. She entitled her mother’s biography as *The Exile* and her father’s as *Fighting Angel*. The two volumes were sold under the title of *The Flesh and the Spirit*. Through these biographies, Pearl gave the world a detailed account of Protestant evangelism in China.

Pearl also wrote her self biography, *My Several Worlds*, which is not her autobiography at all but the account of her experiences in China and in America. She explained by saying that “an autobiography is written from within, and I’ve always been much more interested in what was happening around me that in what was happening inside me” (Conn, 1996, p. 335).

Pearl also wrote books for children. *The Young Revolutionist* was the only book she wrote under a salary in exchange for a missionary loan.



Another example of books Pearl wrote for children is *The Big Wave*, written in 1938 and made into a film in 1960.

Because she was involved in public affairs related to civil rights, women's equality, Amerasian children, and politics in the USA, China, Korea, India, etc., Pearl wrote about these matters, too. She exposed her opinion in different dailies and magazines of great circulation. Years later, she also participated in radio and television programs.

As you can notice, Pearl Buck wrote fiction, non-fiction, biographies, autobiographies, translations, plays, and poetry. Her writing was addressed not only to an adult audience but also to children. Her writing was focused on entertaining people and on informing them about controversial and international issues that affected the society.

At the appendix of the thesis you can find a complete list of Pearl Buck's works.

1.7 HER HUMANITARIAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS EFFORTS

In order to understand Pearl's efforts for the civil rights of black people in the United States, first we show you a summary of the most important events before and after the Civil War related to the civil rights of African-Americans.



1.7.1 A brief review of what happened to black people in the United States from 1600 to 1876

- The Southern economy was based on large plantations which needed slave workers to grow cotton, rice, tobacco, and sugar. They were brought from Africa from the 1600s.
- Northern states gradually abolished slavery.
- In 1808, importation of slaves was outlawed.
- From the 1820's to the 1850's there appeared the Abolitionists which were a small but important group of reformers who worked hard to free slaves and to end the slave trade.
- In 1860, Abraham Lincoln won the presidential election. The eleven southern states proclaimed themselves a separate nation – the Confederate States of America. Thus, the Civil War began and lasted from 1861 to 1865.
- In 1863, Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation which granted freedom to all slaves.
- During the Reconstruction period of 1865 to 1876, federal law provided civil rights protection in the South for freedmen—the African-Americans who had formerly been slaves.
- Reconstruction was followed in each Southern state by Redeemer governments that constituted a powerful, conservative oligarchy formed by merchants, industrialists, railroad developers, and financiers. They passed the Jim Crow laws to separate the races, and voting disfranchisement which impeded black people to vote.



1.7.2 The Jim Crow Laws

The Jim Crow Laws enacted racial segregation in the southern and border states of the United States and were enforced from the end of the formal Reconstruction period in 1877 until the beginning of a strong civil rights movement in the 1950s.

The most important laws required that public schools, public places and public transportation, such as trains and buses, have separate facilities for whites and blacks. In short, Jim Crow laws allowed whites to legally segregate blacks.

These laws mandated "separate but equal" status for black Americans. In reality, this led to treatment and accommodations that were almost always inferior to those provided for white Americans. Although it was legally required that the facilities provided should be equal, they were not. As a consequence, African-Americans suffered the status of second-class citizens in a so-called democratic society.

The Jim Crow period or the Jim Crow era refers to the time during which this practice occurred.

In the Progressive Era the restrictions were formalized, and segregation was approved by the federal government by President Woodrow Wilson in 1913.



1.7.3 Voting disfranchisement after the Civil War

Between 1890 and 1920, many state governments prevented most blacks from voting by various techniques, such as poll taxes and literacy tests. It is estimated that of 181,000 African-American males of voting age in Alabama in 1900, only 3,000 were registered to vote.

Summary:

- In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln published the Emancipation Proclamation.
- In 1870, Amendment 15 gave to black people the right to vote. However, it was restricted because they had to pay a tax and most poor black people could not pay.
- In 1964, the poll tax was prohibited in national elections.
- In 1966, it was eliminated in all elections.
- In 1970, the government proscribed exams as a requirement to vote.

From now on, we will explain to you Pearl's attitudes with regard to the civil rights of African-Americans and the strategies she developed to help white Americans know and understand the difficult situation faced by black people in the United States.



Pearl believed in equality among human beings. Pearl believed all races should have the same rights and opportunities. From the time Pearl established herself in the United States as her permanent home, she was involved in activities related to the rights of minority groups that were discriminated against by American society. She immediately felt identified with African-Americans. They were despised by the white population. They were part of the American society, but they were considered an inferior race. Consequently, white Americans had privileges. In America, Negroes were suffering from discrimination and segregation. Pearl Buck suffered the same when she lived in China –she belonged to the minority group of white foreign people. So, she could understand the African-Americans' feelings and necessities.

Pearl's association with the civil rights movement began in 1932 when she made contact with two leading African-American organizations: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Urban League. Both associations published magazines: ***Crisis*** and ***Opportunity***, respectively. Pearl was a permanent contributor to these two magazines.

Elmer Carter, editor of ***Opportunity*** (the magazine of the Urban League), realized Pearl S. Buck understood the problem of race. He drew this conclusion after he read ***The Good Earth***. Once, he invited Pearl to a discussion about the black problem in Harlem in December, 1932. She focused on two points: 1. She felt identified with African-American



movements rather than with American prejudice. 2. She advised them to feel proud of their identity and achievements as Americans.

Walter White, general secretary of the NAACP declared that only a few white Americans were wise enough to see what was happening to African-Americans. In his opinion, there were two brave women who defended the civil rights of Negroes, Eleanor Roosevelt and Pearl S. Buck.

Pearl attended an art exhibition in Harlem. Lynching photographs witnessed that lynching continued being commonplace in America. She also realized that government did nothing. Franklin Roosevelt needed the help of Southern senators and congressmen to push the New Deal forward. So, he refused to support anti-lynching bills.

In 1937, Pearl wrote an article supporting her opposition to racist hierarchies. She had read a book written by Jacques Barzun entitled *Race: A Study in Modern Superstition*. She concluded that there was no superior race. Every race around the world was a mixture because there was no pure race.

Pearl did the review of another book about race, a book written by Ruth Benedict and entitled *Race: Science and Politics*. According to Benedict, the existence of a pure race is a myth. In addition, through her book, Benedict ended the long misleading idea of the superiority of one race



over another. There was no scientific study that had demonstrated that belief.

Another way to support African-Americans was to encourage their participation in the theater. Pearl made it clear that until then, African-Americans were represented according to white men's conveniences. However, African-Americans, as part of American history, had many things to tell American people. In order to be understood, those things had to be said by Negroes, in plays written by Negroes, and in settings designed by Negro artists.

Pearl also focused on racial discrimination in labor unions. While black soldiers were dying in Asia and Europe in support of the United States and democracy in the world, African-Americans were excluded from labor unions.

In 1941, Pearl published in *Asia Magazine* the political manifesto ***Warning to Free Nations***. In one part, she referred to the Negroes in the United States of America. They had been asked by the government to fight in favor of democracy but at the same time the American government prohibited Negroes to participate in the active life of the nation and to enjoy the same rights as white Americans.

The *New York Times* analyzed the high wave of crime in Harlem under the title of "The Other Side of Harlem." According to this daily, the cause of



crime was poverty. The daily proposed as solutions the increase of jobs and the number of policemen in Harlem. In response, Pearl wrote a letter explaining that most Americans did not understand that the basic cause of black suffering and of black hostility in white society was racial prejudice. It made African-Americans live in ghettos in bad conditions. It also made African-Americans take only certain jobs that had miserable salaries. Good jobs were reserved for white Americans. Consequently, the only way to change black suffering was to end racial prejudice.

Pearl's letter was republished in *Crisis* under the title, ***Democracy Negro***. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the National Urban League distributed copies of Pearl's letter.

In war times, racism continued against African-Americans in the military services and in defense industries. Black soldiers were posted in segregated units. They had to agitate for the right to join in combat. Black civilians were denied their right to work in defense industries although President Roosevelt had signed an executive order requiring equal employment opportunities. However, Northern and Southern executives stated they would not hire black workers. The worst example of racism was the attitude of The Red Cross War Drive which refused to accept blood from African-American donors.

Pearl was the voice of the voiceless. She opposed wartime discrimination by several actions. Pearl addressed an audience while taking advantage of a literary luncheon. She warned the audience that if the USA



did nothing against black racial discrimination, Americans would be fighting in favor of the AXIS. Pearl was a brave person who spoke loudly about Negroes while other people preferred to be quiet. Pearl also defended the work of the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC). Although it was attacked by big business and Southern politicians, the Commission warranted fairness in employment.

Because of discrimination, some blacks did not want to fight what they called “a white war.” However, most black leaders believed that African-American progress depended on joining the war effort. Pearl agreed with these leaders and in a lecture she gave at Howard University, she urged African Americans to support the war under the condition that the government of the United States could recognize the aspiration of black Americans for equality. She also invited African-Americans to join the non-white majority of the world to struggle for freedom.

By that time, J. Edgar Hoover was the new FBI director. The bureau demands for civil rights meant subversion. The FBI had opened a file for Pearl in 1937 when she supported the Spanish Loyalties and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. Taking into account that Hoover hated such writers, Pearl’s file grew to three hundred pages. However, Hoover did nothing against Pearl personally because the FBI did not want to have problems due to Pearl’s great prestige in the American society and the world.



The year 1954 brought good news for Pearl's tireless effort in defense of civil rights for Negroes. The United States Supreme Court declared racial segregation in the nation's public schools to be unconstitutional.

Pearl was recognized as one of the most tenacious white opponents of America's systematic wartime discrimination. She urged the American Civil Liberties Union to set up a national Committee Against Racial Discrimination (CARD). The committee lobbied for equal employment opportunity, a federal anti-lynching law, abolition of the poll tax, and elimination of segregation in the military. Unfortunately, these goals were achieved when the war was over.

Below there is a summary of the series of events leading to the recognition of African-American civil rights in the United States.

- After 1945, the Civil Rights movement gained force and used federal courts to attack Jim Crow Laws.
- The Supreme Court declared legal public school segregation unconstitutional in 1954, and it ended the practice in the 1970s. The court ruling did not stop informal school segregation, which continued in large cities.
- In 1963, President Kennedy told Congress that the new civil rights laws he proposed would involve every American's right to vote, to go to school, to get a job, and to be served in a public place without arbitrary discrimination rights which most Americans take for granted (The Civil

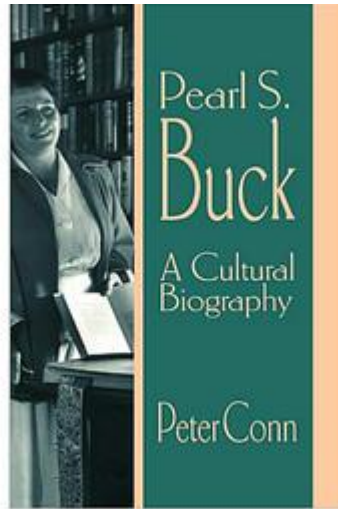


Rights Act of 1963). This act included laws to guarantee that all people would have equal access to hotels, restaurants, and other public places. The act also helped black voting rights and school desegregation.

- Sadly, President Kennedy didn't see his Civil Rights Act of 1963 become law. He was assassinated in November 1963. The act became the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and after one year it was finally passed when President Lyndon B. Johnson, building a coalition of northern Democrats and Republicans, pushed Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which immediately annulled Jim Crow laws that segregated restaurants, hotels and theatres; these facilities, with rare exceptions, immediately dropped racial segregation.
- The Voting Rights Act ended discrimination in voting for all federal, state and local elections.

Now black Americans can go everywhere, work in the fields as they desire, and participate actively in American politics. The United States has its first African-American President, Mr. Barack Obama. This is the result of the efforts of white Americans such as Pearl Buck and Eleanor Roosevelt, and of black leaders such as Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.

1.8 HER DEDICATION TO AMERASIAN CHILDREN'S WELFARE



Picture 14: Front cover of Pearl S. Buck, A Cultural Biography written by Peter Conn

Source: <http://www.csmonitor.com/Books/Readers-picks/2010/0629/Reader-recommendation-Pearl-S.-Buck-A-Cultural-Biography>

Peter Conn begins his book, *Pearl S. Buck, A Cultural Biography*, with the account of the annual meeting organized by the Welcome House, an adoption agency. How is Pearl S. Buck connected with an adoption organization? In 1949, Pearl founded the Welcome House, which was the first international, interracial adoption agency in the USA. Why did Pearl found that kind of organization? To answer the question, we have to remember some events related to Pearl and children. She always longed to have a large family. Unfortunately, she bore only one child, her daughter Carol, because after Carol's birth, Pearl's uterus had to be extracted. Pearl could not bear more children. However, her desire for a large family put her in contact with different adoption institutions. Pearl and her first husband, Lossing Buck, adopted Janice. After that, when Pearl got divorced and remarried, she and her second husband, Richard Walsh, adopted six children more. So, Pearl was a person in favor of adoption in contrast to the majority of Americans who believed orphans were illegitimate people and discriminated against them. Why did Welcome House focus on mixed-race



children? In the Christmas season in 1948, the Walsh Family gathered in Green Hills Farm. Suddenly a letter addressed to Pearl arrived. Knowing that Pearl agreed on adoption, a desperate mother asked her to find a home for her son Robbie; the mother was a white woman and the father was an American Indian. A few days later, another child came to Green Hills Farm – a newborn baby whose mother was an American nurse and whose father was a Chinese surgeon. Because she was fifty-six, Pearl could not adopt the children. Consequently, she called different adoption agencies that explained to her that the children were unadoptable because of their condition of mixed-race. Then Pearl decided to found her own adoption organization under the name of Welcome House.

Pearl began this project alone, but in a short time, her energy and enthusiasm made influential Bucks County residents join in her adventure. At the beginning, Pearl invested her own money in Welcome House. Then she organized fund raisings for the organization.



Picture 15: Pearl and one of the Welcome House children in the late 1960s.

Source: <http://explorepahistory.com/displayimage.php?imgId=5191>



Pearl was a persevering woman who tried to carry out her activities to her best ability. She organized Thanksgiving Day in Green Hills Farm for the Welcome House families. She also signed Welcome House Christmas Cards personally. On one occasion, she signed two thousand cards.

Pearl coined the term “Amerasian” to refer to children whose fathers were Americans and mothers Asian women. Americans were in Asiatic countries such as Japan, Okinawa, and Korea because of World War II. Babies born of these mixed-racial unions were despised by Americans and Asians alike. Amerasian children did not have economical, social or educational opportunities in Asia. To the contrary, they were beaten, killed or sexually mutilated.

Welcome House had a great obstacle for the fulfillment of its objectives –the restrictions on foreign adoption. The project required the legislators’ commitment. For Pearl, Amerasian children were an American responsibility, a responsibility growing everyday as a result of the lasting presence of American servicemen in Asiatic countries. Pearl exercised pressure by mobilizing public attention on Amerasian children. She wanted to eliminate the prejudice society had against mixed-race children. She wrote several articles and a book, ***Children for Adoption***. Through her writing, Pearl explained that children whose parents belonged to different races had better characteristics because they summarized the best features of each race. She concluded that she had read a book written by Ashley Montagu, *Man’s Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*. Montagu had analyzed



the qualities of alloys (mixture of pure metals) and hybrid plants (mixture of pure plants) and realized that most of the time, mixtures had better qualities. By analogy, Montagu concluded that in the case of human beings, when races mixed, the result was an improved race.

Pearl's effort got results. The regulations governing international adoption were revised and, gradually, liberalized. Then a second problem emerged against Welcome House work. Since Amerasian children were not orphans, they were not eligible for adoption. Pearl realized Amerasian children had to be helped in their own countries. She devised a new strategy: to raise money in the USA and send the funds to Asia where specialized institutions spent the money on children's health, education, and job training.

Pearl began raising money by a program called "Fathers Anonymous." This program appealed to veterans who had had an affair with Asiatic women to contribute economically to help Amerasian children. The strategy only raised \$50 given by veterans' wives mostly.

Since the "Fathers Anonymous" program failed, Pearl moved public attention by the founding of a new organization -The Pearl S. Buck Foundation. In 1964, Pearl received Philadelphia's Gimbel Award for the Humanitarian work done by Welcome House adoption. Pearl also received \$1,000 with the award. She announced that it would be the first contribution



to the Pearl S. Buck Foundation. In 1965, the foundation was legally established in Philadelphia.

Initially the foundation's expenditures were paid for by Pearl's money. Then she began a tour through the USA to get money. After that, she obtained funds by a column called *My World* that appeared in *The Ladies Home Journal*.

The foundation opened agencies in Korea (1976), Okinawa and Taiwan (1967), the Philippines and Thailand (1968), and Vietnam (1970). Pearl visited these agencies in the late 1960s.

Because neither Asiatic nor American governments felt concerned about Amerasian children, Pearl moved public opinion by the children's book ***Matthew, Mark, Luke and John*** published in 1966. In the book, Pearl explained the hardships faced by the Korean-American boys abandoned by their Korean mothers and American fathers. She described the precarious conditions of their lives – Korean-American boys had to beg or to live under a bridge to survive.

Pearl took advantage of every event to which she was invited to raise funds for the foundation and for Amerasian children. On one occasion, she transformed the Annual Meeting of the American Library Association into a fund raising. She was the main speaker, and around 1,200 librarians agreed to pay \$6.50 a piece to attend a lunch in Pearl's honor. After a few months,



This Week Magazine accepted an essay Pearl entitled *A Cry for the Desert* that was a claim for abandoned children. Finally, as a way to guarantee money for the foundation after she died, Pearl announced she was bequeathing her entire estate, including Green Hills Farm, to the Pearl S. Buck Foundation. In addition, after her death, all her royalties should be given to the foundation. Pearl's will provide around seven million dollars to the foundation and its work.



Picture 16: Pearl sitting among children Welcome House, circa 1968

Source: <http://explorepahistory.com/displayimage.php?imgId=4745>

1.9 HER AID TO CHINA AND THE CHINESE PEOPLE

China and its peasants were always in Pearl's heart although she was on the other side of the world. When they required her aid, Pearl was ready to help them in different ways. She joined organizations to raise funds in favor of the Chinese people, victims of the Chinese war. After that, she founded her own organization to get money in favor of China. Another way to help China was to assure Americans understood Chinese culture, politics,



and tradition through two means of communication: *Asia Magazine* and the East and West Association. In addition Pearl focused on the abolition of the Chinese Exclusion Act that had impeded the migration of Chinese people to the United States since 1882.

1.9.1 China Famine Relief

In 1938, Pearl and Richard joined the China Famine Relief Organization to get funds for victims of the Chinese war. Pearl identified with Chinese people, so the organization soon collected the money. Nevertheless, Pearl and Richard fell apart from the China Famine Relief organization because it was supervised by religious people. Pearl made it a policy to never associate with religious organizations.

Pearl continued her tireless effort for China relief. In 1940, she began a new strategy under the name of “The Book of Hope.” The plan was to raise money from a group of a thousand women each of whom would contribute a hundred dollars and would sign a decorated book. In that way, “The Book of Hope” received \$ 100,000. Eleanor Roosevelt was among the signers. The project was a subsidiary of the American Bureau for Medical Aid to China.



1.9.2 China Emergency Relief Committee (CERC)

Because of the results, and because of her devotion to Chinese people, Pearl decided to set up her own organization to help China. Pearl and Richard began their new venture – the China Emergency Relief Committee (CERC). They proposed to raise one million dollars in six months. They decided that the money would be used for humanitarian items only – hospital and medical supplies, food and clothing, and the care of orphans. Furthermore, CERC would not be engaged in official political activities. During most of 1941, Pearl’s dedication focused on CERC and fund-raising. CERC’s priority was to build two emergency medical training facilities in free China because there were so few Western-trained doctors in this Asiatic country.

1.9.3 United China Relief (UCR)

Again, because of the results, Pearl was invited to be the chairman of the United China Relief (UCR). This organization’s goal was to raise five million dollars. This campaign was launched with a dinner in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. During the event, the Chinese Ambassador Hu Shih announced that the Chinese government had awarded Pearl with the Order of Jade that represented an exceptional mark of recognition. Of course, under Pearl’s direction, UCR reached its goal.



1.9.4 *Asia Magazine*

Asia Magazine was an illustrated journal that advertised luxury cars and glamorous Asian tours. In 1934, Richard Walsh had taken over as editor of the magazine. Under his direction and with Pearl's support, *Asia Magazine* became a more serious journal which informed American readers of Asiatic politics, history, and culture. Americans had been more interested in Europe than in Asia. However, the Japanese aggression against Manchuria made Americans demand reliable reporting on Asian events and conditions. *Asia Magazine* took advantage of the situation, and its subscription list increased rapidly.

Aside from occasional stories, Pearl also contributed essays and book reviews. In 1935, Pearl took charge of the *Asia Book-Shelf* column for the magazine, assigning books for review and writing many of the notices herself. She read a lot of books for each monthly issue. After the outbreak of the Asian war, Pearl also read and wrote about political subjects.

Asia Magazine also published articles and stories from Asian writers. Western reports on the countries and cultures of Asia shared space with sketches produced by Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Indian, Filipino, Korean, and Burmese writers.

On August 6 and 8, 1945, the United States dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Japanese surrendered. With the



defeat of Japan, Asia was no longer news and American interest in the region rapidly diminished. Although Pearl and Richard made fund-raising campaigns to save *Asia Magazine*, they did not get the money. As a consequence, *Asia* ended publication in December, 1946.

1.9.5 East and West Organization

East and West Organization was a new mechanism that Pearl and Richard devised to keep American informed about Asia. In Pearl's words, the purpose of this organization was to help ordinary people on one side of the world to know and understand ordinary people on the other side. Pearl wanted a way to educate people about other peoples around the world. She thought that only education could promote understanding among different cultures. Her belief was strong enough that the organization began working with Pearl's own money. After that, Pearl and Richard raised funds for the organization.

Pearl tried to reach common people by different programs. For example, lecture courses all over the United States. These courses included films, music, art exhibits, and dramatic readings. Another project was "The Chinese Living Theatre" in which young Chinese actors performed shows throughout the nation. The organization also produced color cartoon supplements on Asia life that were distributed by two newspaper syndicates.



Indeed, East and West organization's programs reached millions of Americans. Once more, Pearl proved to be a gifted organizer, a fine judge of character, and a sharp businesswoman. The end of the World War II affected East and West organization in the same way as it affected *Asia Magazine*. Pearl tried to raise funds for the organization. However, it was impossible. She suspended the organization activities in February 1951. Although she thought it would be a temporary close, the East and West organization never opened again.

1.9.6 Chinese Exclusion Acts

After the end of the Civil War (1861-1865), the necessity for transcontinental railroads enforced the immigration of Chinese people. However, when the project finished, Chinese tried to get place in other jobs. Then surging claims against Chinese immigration because of the reduction of jobs for Americans. The first Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in 1882 and prohibited immigration for ten years. In 1892, the Chinese Exclusion Act was extended for another ten years and this policy continued for several decades.

When she studied in Cornell to get her master degree, Pearl wrote her thesis entitled "China and the West" and signed under the name of David F. Barnes to make sure she had a possibility to win the Laura L. Messenger Memorial Prize award for the best work. In this document, Pearl indicated that one of the causes for Chinese anti-foreign sentiment was the Chinese



Exclusion Act passed in 1882. For Pearl, this policy demonstrated the supremacy of the white race.

When Pearl was living in the United States as her permanent home, she analyzed Chiang's government and concluded that he was a bad president for China because of the corruption during his regime. In addition, she criticized Chiang and his wife because they did nothing to oppose the Chinese Exclusion laws when they shared good relations with American authorities. The opportunity came in 1943 because the politics of wartime alliance created a favorable framework for the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts. Chiang's wife knew the situation and did nothing, supporting indirectly the convenience of some labor unions and Southern politicians who wanted to maintain the exclusion intact and continue discriminating against people who were non-white. Pearl and Richard responded to the absence of Chinese leadership by setting up the **Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion (CCRCE)**. Pearl was the chief spokesperson. She prepared the way by publishing several articles against Chinese exclusion. She was terrified before the House Committee on Immigration and Nationalization. There she found racism, especially from the Representative of Louisiana. Both Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt gave vital support to CCRCE. Eleanor dedicated one of her newspaper columns to the exclusion and Franklin Roosevelt informed Congress that he regarded this legislation as important in the cause of winning the war and in establishing a secure peace. On October 22, 1943, the prohibition of Chinese immigration was



abolished. Since then thousands of Chinese have gone to the United States and have contributed to the development of that country.

1.10 HER LAST YEARS IN THE UNITED STATES



Picture 17: Pearl S. Buck, the last years

Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/47480924@N02/galleries/72157625734544148/#photo_1488378871

By the 1950s, Pearl's activities had diminished. Projects such as *Asia Magazine* and the East and West Association had come to an end. Some other activities Pearl had struggled for had reached their objectives. For example, the Chinese Exclusion Act had been abolished by 1943. However, others, such as the civil rights for African-Americans, were in stand-by after



World War II. At any rate, in 1954, racial segregation was declared unconstitutional.

Pearl focused her last years on children, disarmament, and world peace. She also kept on writing.

Pearl continued with Welcome House and created a new organization, the Pearl S. Buck Foundation, to help Amerasian children in their own Asiatic countries. In addition, she continued her support of the Vineland Training School. Her attachment to Carol was never forgotten by Pearl.

The most important book written during this decade was her autobiography *My Several Worlds* published in 1954. In this book, Pearl described the characteristics of the two societies in which she had lived – the Chinese and the American. Pearl also published *Imperial Woman* in 1956. It is the fictionalized biography of Ci Xi, the Empress Dowager.

Pearl felt the vacuum left by Richard after he suffered a stroke in 1953. He could not continue being the twin soul he used to be for her. Pearl tried, in part, to fill this space with Tad Danielewski, a Polish man, who was working in the newly created television enterprise. Under his encouragement, Pearl wrote plays based on her stories. Tad also encouraged Pearl to participate in television. Pearl and Tad produced two television scripts *The Big Wave* and *The Enemy*.



By this time, Pearl also started her last public crusade: nuclear disarmament. Although she had not objected to the American decision to drop the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, she opposed continued testing and proliferation of nuclear weapons. In 1958, she joined Linus Pauling and Clarence Pickett, Nobel Prize winners, in a call for peace and disarmament. Then Pearl decided to write a play related to nuclear disarmament. To fulfill this project, she began reading about atoms and atomic energy. After that, she interviewed the scientists who had worked on the Manhattan Project. Finally, she visited the laboratories where the first bombs were produced, Oak Ridge and Los Alamos. She wrote not only a three-act play, ***A Desert Incident***, but also a novel, ***Command the Morning***. Both the play and the novel made their debut in 1959.

The decade ended with Richard's death when Pearl was in Japan producing a film based on her children's book, ***The Big Wave***.

When Pearl returned to the United States, she was shocked by an article in *The Los Angeles Times*. According to this daily, for Chinese Communists, Pearl S. Buck was a leading American figure who was distorting Chinese culture by her novels related to Chinese peasants. Pearl felt outraged. She thought that she was the person who most had struggled for the cultural understanding between the East and the West by different strategies as *Asia Magazine* and East and West Organization. She was sure that the declarations in the newspaper belonged to Chinese politics, and they did not surge from common people, her beloved Chinese people.



In 1962, Pearl was invited to the White House for a dinner honoring American Nobel Prize winners. She met John F. Kennedy and after a brief conversation about Asia, she felt disappointed because of Kennedy's abysmal ignorance about Asian politics and history. Then Pearl decided to write a historical novel about Korea as a strategy promoting the cultural understanding of a country about which most Americans knew nothing. Pearl entitled her novel, *The Living Reed*, which explains Korean history from 1833, when Korea signed its first treaty with the United States, until the end of World War II, when the Allies liberated the peninsula from Japanese occupation.

After Richard's death, Pearl separated from Tad Danielewski. At the same time, Ernest Hocking sent Pearl a book he wrote after his wife died. Pearl knew Ernest when she was living in Nanjing and he was touring China as a chairman of the Laymen's Inquiry Commission investigating the state of overseas mission work. After that, they saw each other once in a while. In 1963, Pearl sought Ernest and they became a couple. The relationship was extended until 1966 when Ernest died. Pearl wrote *The Goddess Abides* in which she described her relationship with Ernest.

By 1966, most of Pearl's children had grown up and moved away. After Ernest's death Pearl felt alone and needed companionship. At this time, Pearl met Theodore Harris, and formed her last relationship. He had gone to Green Hills Farm to give dance lessons to Pearl's youngest daughters. In a short time, he had become a member of the family. He became Pearl's



escort, advisor, employee, collaborator, and co-author. He accompanied Pearl until her death in 1973. Ted would be Pearl's perfect companion. However, because of his ambition and reputation, Pearl was involved in public scandals. Fortunately, Pearl's image held intact because of her prestige after around forty years of public work in favor of humanitarian activities. Pearl's children did not like Ted because he tried to isolate Pearl from her family. Ted got Pearl to include him in her testament. Pearl's fortune was mostly for the Pearl S. Buck Foundation. Another part was for Ted and only a small portion was for Pearl's children.

Homesickness invaded Pearl when her eightieth birthday approached. She said that she had lived in China more than in the United States. She left China in 1934. She wanted to travel to China before she died. By 1971, the political relations between the United States and China had improved and Richard Nixon traveled to Peking in 1972. Then Pearl tried to get a visa. Although she wrote to every person she met who could convince Chinese authorities, Pearl did not get the visa. It was because of her declared position against the Communist regime. Below, we transcribe the message sent to Pearl by a Chinese envoy stationed in Canada. We extracted the information from (Buck, *China, Past and Present*, 1972, p. 171):

The Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Canada

May 17, 1972.

Dear Miss Pearl Buck,

Your letters have been duly received.



In view of the fact that for a long time you have in your works taken an attitude of distortion, smear and vilification towards the people of new China and its leaders, I am authorized to inform you that we cannot accept your request for a visit to China.

Sincerely yours

(H. L. Yuan)
Second Secretary

After 1972, Pearl went to Green Hills Farm for the last time. She celebrated her eightieth birthday with her family. Tensions between Ted and Pearl's children were inevitable. Then Pearl went to Vermont.

A week later, Pearl was taken to Rutland Hospital because of cancer and pleurisy. Friends, readers, and Pearl's admirers, including President Nixon, wrote telegrams wishing her a prompt recovery. After three weeks she left the hospital.

Pearl was a healthy person all her life. However, in September, 1972, she was taken to the hospital again. This time the problem was her gall bladder. Pearl remained in the hospital for three months because of complications. During this time, Pearl kept writing. The hospital conceded her a second room to be used as an office. Ted and Beverly Drake, a secretary, stayed with Pearl as her nursing assistants. In addition, Ted managed her finances, and Beverly typed her manuscripts and correspondence. Pearl spent Christmas in her Danby home and then returned to Vermont.



Pearl never recovered completely. Now she stayed in her bedroom upstairs wearing Chinese robes and looking at Vermont's landscape which reminded her of the beloved Chinese mountains.

As a farewell, in February, 1973, Pearl asked Beverly to bring Dickens's old novels and placed them around her on the bed. In her style, Pearl was making contact with her first literary mentor, the author of the novels which gave her a lot of pleasure during her childhood and adolescence.

On March 6, 1973, Pearl died because of lung cancer. American dailies and newspapers around the world informed of Pearl's death through first-page stories. Her old adversaries left aside personal differences and concluded that Pearl was a great novelist. President Nixon expressed that Pearl had been the cultural bride that had joined East and West civilizations.

Pearl's funeral took place in Green Hills Farm according to her own instructions. Only her adoptive children were present while Ted was away. After a brief non-religious service, Pearl was buried under an oak tree located a few yards from her house.

Pearl had designed her own tombstone. She did not follow the tradition to sculpt her name on the stone. She preferred to place inside a cartouche on which, in Chinese characters, was written "Pearl Sydenstricker."



Pictures 18, 19, 20: Three sights of Pearl S. Buck's grave

Source: <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=pv&GRid=144&Pipi=80591>

A trial decided the controversy between Ted and Pearl's children over Pearl's fortune. Pearl's children accused Ted of using undue influence to enrich himself at their expenses. The jury decided in favor of the children and of course, of the Pearl S. Buck Foundation.



We want to end this chapter with Pearl's feelings after she knew she would never return to China. She said good bye to her beloved Chinese people through the last pages of her book *China, Past and Present* written in Dandy, Vermont, May 30, 1972. Pearl felt sad because she could not visit her Chinese friends again. She could not visit the places familiar to her during her childhood, adolescence, and young womanhood. However, she believed she had done her best helping Americans to know Chinese people through the stories of her books. Because her books were translated into many languages, not only Americans knew about China -the world knew about this Asiatic country through Pearl's novels. Then she remembered that her parents were buried there, in her beloved China. They had left their families to give China the opportunity to know about Jesus Christ. To Pearl's way of thinking, her parents had done their duty. They had fulfilled the Mandate of Heaven. She concluded that she also had done her duty by helping minor groups express their feelings and necessities. She expressed this conclusion by using a Confucius's phrase: "Under Heaven, all are one.

CHAPTER 2

BRIEF HISTORY OF CHINA FROM THE IMPERIAL ERA, THE POLITICAL TRANSITION AND THE COMMUNIST REGIME

China is a nation of millennial culture. On different occasions we have had the opportunity to admire Chinese shows of ballet and circus. The last most famous Chinese presentation was the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in 2008. The most remarkable aspects were the synchronization of the participants and the use of modern technology. From this presentation we could understand a little about the history of this huge country. However, it is difficult to summarize in a few words the 4,000 years of history of China. In order to be organized, we have developed this chapter to explain the following five periods: the Ancient Era, the Imperial Era, Modern China, the Republic of China, and the People's Republic of China.



Picture 21: Map of China

Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html>

2.1 ANCIENT ERA

This period began with Pangu and continued with the first three Chinese dynasties: The Xia, the Shang, and the Zhou.

2.1.1 Pangu

氏 古 盤



Picture 22: A portrait of Pangu

Source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pangu.jpg>

Chinese mythology indicates that Pangu was the creator of the universe. The legend says that in the beginning, the universe was like a cosmic black egg, inside of which there was only chaos. Pangu was sleeping in the egg. Indeed, he had slept for over 18,000 years. But one day, he felt suffocated and woke up. He cracked the egg into two pieces with his axe - the half above him was the heaven and the half below was the earth.

Then Pangu stood on the earth and held up the heaven by using his hands. The heaven and the earth began to grow ten feet a day and Pangu grew along with them. After another 18,000 years, the heaven was higher,



the earth thicker, and Pangu stood between them like a pillar. As a consequence, the heaven and the earth would never join again.

When Pangu died after all this effort, his limbs became the mountains, his blood the rivers, his breath the wind and his voice the thunder. His left eye became the sun and his right eye the moon. The parasites on his body became the ancestors of mankind. These sage emperors taught the ancient Chinese everything: how to cultivate, how to domesticate animals, how to write, how to communicate, how to trade, and how to cure illnesses. After a succession of wise emperors, there came Yu who supposedly founded the Xia dynasty that is considered “the first of the three ancient Chinese dynasties, the Xia, the Shang, and the Zhou” (Roberts, 2006, p. 3).

2.1.2 The Xia Dynasty

According to historical records, the Xia dynasty was located along the Yellow River valley. The historian Sima Qian (145 B.C. - 90 B.C.) and the Bamboo Annals mentioned that the Xia Dynasty lasted from 2100 B.C. to 1700 B.C. Archeological excavations made in Henan Province since the 1920s have helped to uncover palace-like buildings, tombs and bronze vessels. These evidences corroborate the existence of the Xia civilization in the same locations cited in ancient Chinese historical texts.



2.1.3 The Shang Dynasty

The second ancient Chinese dynasty was the Shang which lasted from 1700 B.C. to 1027 B.C. This dynasty had several capitals. The two most important were Zhengzhou and Anyang. Archeological studies made at those places indicate that the Shang society was an organized and stratified one.

The Shang state was led by a ruler, the king. The title was hereditary to surviving brothers. The ruler performed two functions - a ritual one and an administrative one. The king was supported by an aristocratic society that practiced military skills. Shang troops used horse chariots to fight frequent wars with neighboring settlements and nomadic herdsmen from the inner Asian steppes.

The Shang economy was based on agriculture. Millet was the most important crop. In addition, the Shang's diet was complemented by hunting and animal husbandry.

The Shang people developed a writing system with inscriptions made on the bones or shells of animals. Many of these inscriptions were used for divination. They were translated as questions addressed to an oracle. For this reason, these inscriptions are called oracle-bones.



Picture 23: A Shang oracle-bone

Source: <http://acc6.its.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~phalsall/images/shng-ora.jpg>

In addition, the Shang people introduced bronze metallurgy in China. The king controlled the production and use of bronze. With this alloy, skilled craftsmen manufactured vessels. The bronze vessels were decorated with stylized surface shapes and with jade. These vessels had ritual functions: they were used for the preparation of sacrificial meats and for the heating of wine.



Picture 24: Bronze *gui* food vessel with animal mask, excavated from Luoyang, Henan province.

Source: http://u21museums.unimelb.edu.au/museumcollections/hongkong/art_gallery/bronze_gui.html



When the king died, his corpse was set in a wooden coffin inside a vast pit. The coffin was surrounded by burial articles because the Shang people believed in an afterlife.

The bronze vessels, the oracle-bones, and the burial practices demonstrate that the Shang were religious people of a high level of civilization.

2.1.4 The Zhou Dynasty

When we talk of the Zhou dynasty we refer to the longest dynasty in Chinese history, from 1027 B.C. to approximately 221 B.C. This lasting period was divided into the Western Zhou, the Eastern Zhou, the Spring and Autumn period, and the Warring States period. The explanation for this division is the following: At the beginning of the Zhou dynasty, the capital was located near the city of Xi'an, in the western part of Chinese territory. Nevertheless, in 771 B.C. the capital was moved eastward to Luoyang, in present-day Henan Province. For this reason exist the names of Western Zhou and Eastern Zhou. In addition, during the Eastern Zhou, the royal line was broken and the kingdom was fragmented. Consequently, the Eastern Zhou was divided into two sub-periods: the first, from 770 to 476 B.C., was called the Spring and Autumn Period, after a famous historical chronicle of the time; the second was known as the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.).



Picture 25: Location of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty

Source: <http://www.history-of-china.com/img/zhou-map-b.gif>

The Zhou dynasty developed in a territory in the Western proximity to the Shang State. As a consequence many aspects of the Shang language, culture and administrative techniques were adopted by the Zhou people.

The Book of Documents indicates that the shortcomings of the last Shang ruler were the cause of the fall of the Shang dynasty. In this part it is important to comprehend the concept of “Mandate of Heaven,” a traditional Chinese concept that was enunciated by the philosophers of the Zhou period. According to this doctrine, the divine right to govern was given by Heaven when a ruler was a just person. If the ruler was a despotic person, the Mandate of Heaven (divine right) would be transferred to those who would rule best. In other words, the Mandate of Heaven had no time limitations because the divine right depended on the just and able performance of the ruler. For the same reason, the legitimate ruler could be of either noble or modest birth.



The protection of the Mandate of Heaven was taken from the Shang and given to the Zhou because the last Shang emperor was a despotic ruler.

Among the first Zhou emperors we can mention King Wen and King Wu. They were virtuous rulers. When King Wu died, according to Shang tradition, he had to be succeeded by his surviving brother, the Duke of Zhou. Nevertheless, he was succeeded by his son Zheng. This principle was considered by the following Chinese dynasties, that is, “that the heir should come from the succeeding generation” (Roberts, 2006, p. 9).

Because Zheng was a minor when he became king, authority was exercised by his uncle the Duke of Zhou during the first part of king Zheng’s reign.

The Duke of Zhou consolidated the Zhou authority in the Eastern part of the Chinese territory occupied by the survivors of the deposed Shang dynasty. He based his actions on two strategies. First, he defeated the rebellions in the Eastern part of the territory, and second, he continued to appoint members of the defeated Shang lineage to be in charge of that part of the territory.

Bronze vessels were given during special ceremonies as a way of formalization of grants of territories made under the Western Zhou, whose characteristic caused the rapid but unstable expansion of the kingdom.



Also, during this period Chinese peasants practiced communal agriculture: "Plots of lands were divided into nine holdings, eight of which were farmed by individual families, with the ninth farmed communally and the produce delivered to the lord" (Roberts, 2006, p. 13).

During the **Spring and Autumn period**, as a consequence of the rise of states, wars among these sections were frequent because of the rapid political, social, and economic changes. Nevertheless, many technological advances were made during this period. For example, bronze was used not only for vessels but also for agricultural tools. At the middle of this period cast iron and steel were produced and they were used for the manufacturing of agricultural tools, too. Because of the use of the iron plough, the agricultural productivity increased. As a consequence, during the Spring and Autumn period, the communal agriculture began to decline. Instead of it, the King instituted a system of land taxation under which peasants had to pay taxes rather than to provide labor service. Finally, we need to mention that at the end of this period metallic currencies in the form of spades and knives were introduced.

During the **Warring States period**, the wars among the states continued but with a different character. The war during the Spring Period involved aristocratic monopoly, whereas during the Warring States period, war was an activity which required an authoritarian leadership, standing armies, and peasants performing military service. Now the social, political and economic changes became more accelerated. Fertilizers and irrigation



were introduced in agriculture. Iron was used for weapon manufacturing. Also, the use of money increased as a consequence of the development of trade. “Public works on a grand scale, such as flood control, irrigation projects, and canal digging were executed. Enormous walls were built around cities and along the broad stretches of the northern frontier” (*The Ancient Dynasties: II, The Hundred Schools of Thought*, <http://www-chaos.umd.edu/history/ancient2.html>).

The Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods are known as the era of the **Hundred Schools of Thought** because during this time different thinkers developed their philosophies. These thinkers taught their disciples and were employed as advisers by different rulers who needed counsel on the methods of government, war, and diplomacy. Their philosophies influenced the Chinese practices through classical writings of this era. These Chinese practices have survived through the history of China to the present. One of the most influential schools of thought was the School of Literati that is known by the Westerns as the **Confucian School** named after its founder Confucius (551 – 479 B.C.), also called Kong Fuzi or Master Kong. For him, China had experienced a golden age during the early Zhou period. He also believed that in order to live in a society in harmony, each person had to do his duties; as Confucius said: "Let the ruler be a ruler and the subject a subject" (*The Ancient Dynasties: II, The Hundred Schools of Thought*, <http://www-chaos.umd.edu/history/ancient2.html>). For him, the ruler had to be a virtuous person and had to “select good officials, set a moral example and treat his people with benevolence” (Roberts, 2006, p. 15). For



Confucius there were two kinds of people – the gentleman and the small man. They were different not according to their breeding but to their moral attitude: “The gentleman understands what is moral. The small man understands what is profitable” (Roberts, 2006, p. 15). In addition, Confucius paid special attention to the relationship between children and parents. For him, children had to be obedient to their parents and when the parents got old, children had to take care of them.



Picture 26: A portrait of Confucius

Source: <http://www.notablebiographies.com/Co-Da/Confucius.html>

Mencius (372-289 B.C.) was the synthesizer and developer of applied Confucian thought. He declared that man was good by nature. According to him, “a ruler could not govern without the people's tacit consent and that the penalty for unpopular, despotic rule was the loss of the “mandate of heaven” (*The Ancient Dynasties: II, The Hundred Schools of Thought*, <http://www-chaos.umd.edu/history/ancient2.html>).



Confucius and Mencius's work provided a comprehensive behavior system for the traditional Chinese society. This framework explained the way to behave in every aspect of life. Although the Confucian thought had opponents, it influenced the lifestyle of hundreds of Chinese generations.

2.2 IMPERIAL ERA

The period of time which elapsed from 221 B.C. until 1911 A.D. is known as China's Imperial Era. The mandate of heaven was fulfilled during this time. In this way, many dynasties arose because there were moments in which the emperor lost the divine right for different reasons, such as despotism, rivalries, corruption among the governing group, etc. In other words, dynasties were living entities which surged, flourished, matured, and declined. Generally, each dynasty was better than the former because each dynasty was founded on the best features of the former. As a result, the Chinese culture improved and gave the world innovations, such as printing, silk, gunpowder, and porcelain.

The Imperial Era began with the Qin dynasty and ended with the Qing dynasty. In the following pages we have summarized the most significant aspects of the different Chinese dynasties.



2.2.1 Qin Dynasty (221 B.C. – 206 B.C.)

After the Warring States period, there were only seven states in China. The strongest of them was the state of Qin which in 214 B.C. subjugated the others. When the Qin King consolidated his power in 221 B.C., he took the title of Qin Shi Huangdi that means the First Emperor. Under the Qin, the kingdom was guided by the doctrine of Legalism that is opposed to Confucianism. While for Confucianists, the king had to rule taking into account people's welfare, Legalists urged the king to consider the interests of the state first. As a consequence of legalism, the emperor had absolute power. Communal agriculture was abolished and replaced by free market in land. Farmers were honored because of their productivity. On the other hand, traders were prone to punishment because their activities were against the interests of the state. Criticism against the emperor meant death. When Confucian scholars criticized the emperor's decisions, he ordered more than 460 of them to be buried alive.

Qin Shi Huangdi had started to plan his tomb even before he became emperor. Although its localization was known for a long time, its discovery occurred in 1974. Worldwide it is known as "The Terracotta Army of Qin Shi Huang."



Picture 27: The Terracotta Army

Source: <http://www.chinaholidays.co.uk/the-teracota-warriors.html>

Among the contributions of the Qin Dynasty we mention the following: The beginning of the Great Wall of China, the construction of a network of roads radiating from the capital, the concept of a centralized government, the unification of the legal code, written language, measurement, and currency of China. Under the Qin, standard gold and copper coins were introduced. The shape of the coins had changed; now coins were round, pierced by a square hole.



Picture 28: The Great Wall of China

Source: <http://www.history-of-china.com/img/china-great-wall-of-china-b.jpg>



2.2.2 Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220)

The system of bureaucratic government introduced under the Qin was maintained by the Han emperors. According to this system, three senior officials –the Three Excellencies - assisted the emperor. The Excellencies in turn were assisted by nine ministers. Confucianism was the philosophy practiced in China under the Han Dynasty and until the end of the imperial era. Confucian scholars had defined that the emperor had obligations to Heaven, Earth, and Man. In order to accomplish those threefold duties, the emperor had to be a moral person, feed silkworms, and establish schools. A civil service examination system was initiated in order to recruit qualified people for working as part of the government. Many people studied the Confucian texts. After that, they took the exam. If they passed, they became eligible for an official appointment. Nevertheless, some people with hereditary appointments continued acceding to office. In addition, during the Han Dynasty many advances in arts and sciences were accomplished. Paper and porcelain are two great Chinese inventions of this time. China's most famous historian, Sima Qian (145- 90 B.C.), came out during this period. His Historical Records provide us with a detailed chronicle from the time of a legendary Xia emperor to that of the Han emperor, Wu Di, who consolidated and extended the Chinese empire. This enabled the first opening of trading connections between China and the West. This route is known as the Silk Road because it was used to export Chinese silk to the Roman Empire.



It is important to mention that the Han court established a “tributary system” in order to ensure peace with the non-Chinese states which were allowed to remain autonomous in exchange for symbolic acceptance of Han overlordship. Intermarriages at the ruling level and periodic exchanges of gifts and goods confirmed and strengthened the tributary ties created.

After 400 years, the Han dynasty declined because the Han rulers were unable to adjust to a growing population and an unequal distribution of wealth among the population. The upper classes wasted money while poor people had nothing.

2.2.3 Era of Disunity

An age of civil wars followed the collapse of the Han dynasty. For around 400 years China was ruled by warlords. At the beginning of this period, the country was divided into three kingdoms which were unified under the **Jin dynasty** (A.D. 265-420). However the unity was fragile and in 316 A.D. the North and the South separated. In the North there were six dynasties and in the South sixteen kingdoms. This fragmentation lasted from 304 A.D. to 589 A.D. and it is known as the period of **the Southern and Northern Dynasties**. During this period, Buddhism gained popularity in China. Although Buddhism was originally from India, it reached China through the Silk Road. An important aspect to highlight is that during the



political disunity, notable technological advances were made, such as the invention of gunpowder and the wheelbarrow.

2.2.4 Sui Dynasty (581 A.D. -617 A.D.)

Unity returned to China under the Sui Dynasty. Two emperors must be mentioned during this period: Wendi and Yangdi. The first, Wendi, devised important strategies in his efforts to reach stability in China. He maintained a bureaucratic system during his government. Wendi himself travelled through his kingdom to corroborate his officials' work. Under Wendi, the examination system was consolidated. The Board of Civil Service was established in order to examine the candidates. Wendi also paid attention to law and taxation issues. As a result, he promulgated the Kaihuang Code "which synthesized Northern and Southern legal traditions and abolished some cruel punishments" (Roberts, 2006, p. 48). According to this code, guilty officials had the opportunity to change their sentences by paying a fine or by accepting downgrading. In the aspect of land distribution and taxes, Wendi restored the distribution of land to the common people who had to pay three taxes: "a land tax payable in grain, a textile tax payable in silk or linen, and a labor tax requiring 20 days' labor per year from adult males" (Roberts, 2006, p. 48). With the purpose to increase the productivity in the North, Wendi began the construction of the Grand Canal. Yangdi was Wendi's second son. He continued with the Grand Canal building, but he went further than his father in creating a network of canals that extended for about 1200 miles.

This canal network was considered an engineering feat of its time, but it required the labor of thousands of men and women under conscription and a large-scale state intervention in the economy. At the same time, Yangdi had the obsession of the conquest of Korea. Nevertheless, his military campaigns failed. After that, he was assassinated. In this way, the Sui dynasty disintegrated through a combination of popular revolts and disloyalty.

2.2.5 Tang Dynasty (618 A.D. – 907 A.D.)

The year 618 A.D. was the beginning of the Tang dynasty that historians refer to as a high point in Chinese civilization -equal, or even superior, to the Han period because it was an age of prosperity and innovations in arts and technology.



Picture 29: Location of the Tang Dynasty

Source: <http://www.history-of-china.com/img/tang-dynasty-map-b.gif>



The Tang dynasty was established when Gaozu took the throne. Chang'an (modern Xi'an) was the national capital. It is said that it was the world's largest city at the time. Buddhism became the predominant religion and was adopted by the imperial family and many of the common people, thus becoming a permanent part of Chinese traditional culture.

Under the Tang, the government system was supported by a large class of Confucian literati who were selected through civil service examinations. Nevertheless, the Tang emperors were aware of the imperial dependence on powerful aristocratic families and warlords who would cause destabilization. For this reason, the Tang rulers created a body of career officials –scholar officials- who often functioned as intermediaries between the grass-roots level and the government. This situation persisted from Tang times until the closing days of the Qing Empire in 1911.

China maintained extensive trade with distant foreign countries because under the Tang, like the Han, the trade routes were kept open to the West and South. For the same reason, many foreign merchants settled in China.

The Tang rulers were also aware of land distribution. They introduced the "Equal Field System" during their mandate. According to this system, the emperor gave land grants to families based on their needs, not their wealth.

The Tang period was the golden age of literature and visual arts. In addition, important technical advances were made in ceramics, including the development of porcelain. The invention of block printing made written works available to more people.



Picture 30: Black glazed pottery figure of a horse.

Source: <http://www.history-of-china.com/img/tang-forahan-horse-b.jpg>

The last part of the Tang dynasty was dominated by misrule, court intrigues, economic exploitation, and popular rebellions. Northern invaders took advantage of this situation causing the end of the dynasty in 907A.D.



2.2.6 Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907 A.D. - 960 A.D.)

Between the Tang and the Song dynasties, there was a period of political disunity known as the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period because during half a century China was divided into five successive northern dynasties and ten southern kingdoms.

During this era of disunity, three important developments took place. First of all, the ruler created a professional army loyal to him. This army consisted of infantry and cavalry. The second development was related to the situation along the northern frontier. It was occupied by the Shatuo Turks who established allegiance with the Tang. When the Tang dynasty collapsed, the Turks founded their own dynasty called the Last Tang and consolidated their supremacy along the Northern frontier. This event helped the reunification of China in future years. The third development happened in the South where fragmentation into ten kingdoms improved the economy and trade among them. However, during these years of division, there was lack of copper. Instead of copper, iron, lead, and even pottery were used as coinage. It is considered that these coins were the forerunners of a paper currency. In addition, a lively literature developed in the South which became the refuge of former Tang officials, poets, and artisans. As a consequence, the best characteristics of the Tang dynasty were preserved and were the base of the Song dynasty.

2.2.7 Song Dynasty and Liao, Jin, Western Xia

After a half century of disunity, four dynasties emerged in China: the Song dynasty (960-1279), the Liao dynasty (907-1125), the Jurchen Jin dynasty (1115-1234), and the Tangut Western Xia dynasty (1032-1227). The Song dynasty consolidated its power over most of China Proper in 960. Meanwhile, the Liao dynasty ruled over Manchuria, present-day Mongolia, and parts of Northern China. Nevertheless, the Jin dynasty annihilated the Liao dynasty in 1125. Finally the Western Xia dynasty was established by tribes located in the Northwest of China from 1032 to 1227.

The Song period was divided into two phases: Northern Song (960-1127) and Southern Song (1127-1279). Kaifeng, in the North, was the capital of the Song Dynasty until 1127 when the Jin forced the Song Court to move to the South, to Hangzhou, the new capital. As a consequence, in the following years China was divided into the Song dynasty (South), the Jin dynasty (North) and the Western Xia (Northwest).



Picture 31: Location of the Northern Song Dynasty

Source: <http://www.history-of-china.com/img/song-dynasty-map-b.gif>



The Song rulers based their power on an effective centralized bureaucracy staffed with civilian scholar-officials centrally appointed instead of regional military governors and their supporters. As a consequence, the concentration of power in the emperor and his palace bureaucracy was greater than in the previous dynasties.

Under the Song, many cities emerged as a result of trade, industry, and maritime commerce, and not only for administrative purposes. Private trade grew and the use of paper currency was necessary. A market economy began to link the coastal provinces and the interior. Consequently, commerce was the new means of gaining wealth and prestige aside from landholding and government employment.

A revival of Confucianism took place under the Tang and went on under the Song. The intellectuals at the time looked for answers to all philosophical and political questions in the Confucian Classics because Buddhism offered few practical guidelines for solving political and mundane problems. As a result of this research there emerged Neo-Confucianism. The most influential of the Song Neo-Confucian philosophers was Zhu Xi (1130-1200). He synthesized Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and other ideas into a single doctrine that became the official imperial ideology from late Song times to the late nineteenth century. Zhu Xi's philosophy was incorporated into the examination system creating a rigid official creed "which stressed the one-sided obligations of obedience and compliance of subject to ruler, child to father, wife to husband, and younger brother to elder brother.



The effect was to inhibit the societal development of pre-modern China, resulting both in many generations of political, social, and spiritual stability and in a slowness of cultural and institutional change up to the nineteenth century. Neo-Confucian doctrines also came to play the dominant role in the intellectual life of Korea, Vietnam, and Japan” (*The Imperial Era: II, Restoration of Empire*, <http://www-chaos.umd.edu/history/imperial2.html>).

When we refer to the painting under the Song, we focus on the bird-and-flower and bamboo paintings which show us a characteristic of Neo-Confucianism that is the deep and delicate examination of the visible world.

The technical improvements in ceramics started under the Tang continued during the Song dynasty obtaining high-quality wares. The Ding ware was developed under the Northern Song. Celadon is the best known Southern Song porcelain. It became a major export item, especially going to Japan.

Southern Song experienced technological developments in the military field because they had to fight with their Northern threat, the Jin. As a consequence, gunpowder weapons were manufactured and China's first permanent standing navy was assembled.



2.2.8 Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368)

By the mid-thirteenth century, the Mongols had subjugated North China, Korea, and the Muslim kingdoms of Central Asia and had twice penetrated Europe. With the resources of their vast empire, the Mongols defeated the Jin dynasty and then proceeded to defeat the Southern Song. Kublai Khan (1215-94), a grandson of Genghis Khan (1167?-1227) and the supreme leader of all Mongol tribes, wanting to adopt the customs of China, established the Yuan Dynasty. This was the first alien dynasty to rule the whole of China from Beijing as the capital. In the Yuan Dynasty, the Mongols were divided between those who wanted to remain based in the steppes and those who wished to adopt the customs of the Chinese.

Although the Mongols sought to govern China through traditional institutions, using Chinese (Han) bureaucrats, they were not up to the task. The Han were discriminated against socially and politically. All important central and regional posts were monopolized by Mongols, who also preferred employing non-Chinese from other parts of the Mongol domain--Central Asia, the Middle East, and even Europe--in those positions for which no Mongol could be found. Chinese were more often employed in non-Chinese regions of the empire.

As in other periods of alien dynastic rule of China, a rich cultural diversity developed during the Yuan dynasty. The major cultural achievements were the development of drama and the novel and the



increased use of the written vernacular. The Mongols' extensive West Asian and European contacts produced a fair amount of cultural exchange. Western musical instruments were introduced to enrich the Chinese performing arts. From this period dates the conversion to Islam, by Muslims of Central Asia, of growing numbers of Chinese in the northwest and southwest. Nestorianism and Roman Catholicism also enjoyed a period of toleration. Lamaism (Tibetan Buddhism) flourished, although native Taoism endured Mongol persecutions. Confucian governmental practices and examinations based on the Classics, which had fallen into disuse in north China during the period of disunity, were reinstated by the Mongols in the hope of maintaining order over Han society.

Advances were carried out in the fields of travel literature, cartography and geography, and scientific education. Because of constant famines, granaries were built throughout the empire. In addition, road and water communications were reorganized and improved, facilitating the first direct Chinese contacts with Europe. Certain key Chinese innovations, such as printing techniques, porcelain production, playing cards, and medical literature, were introduced in Europe, while the production of thin glass became popular in China. The first records of travel by Westerners date from this time. Adventurers such as Marco Polo travelled to China and when they returned to Europe they talked about the Chinese wonders. Europeans began to know the secrets of this huge country.



2.2.9 Ming Dynasty, the last Han Chinese dynasty (1368-1644)

The causes of the decline of the Yuan Dynasty can be summarized in the following way: Rivalry among the Mongol imperial heirs, natural disasters, and numerous peasant uprisings. Chinese people had a strong sentiment against the foreign rulers. As a consequence, in 1368 the Mongols were pushed back to the steppes and the Ming dynasty was founded by a Han Chinese peasant who adopted the reign title of Hongwu.

Hongwu's government was autocratic. He paid attention to education ordering the establishment of schools supported by the state. He also revived the examinations. As always, the number of people who succeeded in the examinations and got public posts was lower in comparison to those who had hereditary titles. The Ming based their economy on agriculture. However, many small-scale industries grew up in the fields of paper, silk, cotton, and porcelain goods.

At first, Nanjing, in the South, was the capital of the Ming dynasty. However, Emperor Young-le moved the capital to the North, to Beijing. The main reason for his decision was to keep a better control of the military forces posted there. It made necessary the restoration and expansion of the Grand Canal in order to secure the food supply. Additionally, this project stimulated domestic trade. Another outstanding point made by emperor Young-le was maritime exploration. The Chinese fleet travelled beyond the Chinese seas reaching the east coast of Africa.



Picture 32: Location of the Ming Dynasty

Source: <http://www.artsmia.org/art-of-asia/history/ming-dynasty-map.cfm>

We have mentioned that the Great Wall was built to protect China from foreign invasions. During the Ming dynasty the Great Wall was repaired and concluded. In this period, for example, the watch towers were redesigned, and cannons were placed along its length.

Hongwu decided to reform the tax system. First, he needed to know in detail all information about households. He ordered that each household had to obtain a registration certificate which contained information related to the status and occupation of the family. The information on the certificates was consolidated in the Yellow Books. The emperor also planned a cadastral survey impossible to be fulfilled because of the large population -65 million, and of the rudimentary technological means. Any way, the tax reforms failed because they were based on wrong data. The emperor thought he was over-taxing the population. Instead of that, he was under-taxing the population. Consequently, he did not have enough money for the public services.



2.2.10 Qing Dynasty (1644 - 1911)

The decline of the Ming rule was caused by the following factors: Long wars with the Mongols, incursions by the Japanese into Korea, and harassment of Chinese coastal cities by the Japanese in the sixteenth century. Under these circumstances, the undermined Ming rule was easily taken over by the Manchus who in 1644 invaded China from the North taking Beijing and establishing the last imperial dynasty, the Qing (1644-1911).

In order to comprehend who the Manchus were, we must remember that they “were descendants of the Jurgen tribes who had founded the Jin dynasty in 1122” (Roberts, 2006, p. 134). These tribes survived by hunting, practicing agriculture and trading with the Chinese. They were organized in groups known as “banners” because of the distinctive flag adopted by each group. There were eight Manchu banners. Banner membership had its foundation on traditional Manchu skills, such as archery, horsemanship, and frugality.

In what way did the Manchus conquer China? In order to answer this question it must be said that because of the contact maintained between the Manchus and the Chinese, the former soon realized that if they wanted to subjugate the Chinese they would have to use not only military force, they would have to become Chinese in some aspects, such as government, military strategies, examinations for civil service, religion, etc. Consequently, the Manchus employed Chinese people. Soon the Manchus had learned how to cast cannons, for example. For this reason, Franz Michael declared,

“It was the Chinese system, Chinese officials and Chinese ideas that enabled the Manchus to conquer China” (Roberts, 2006, p. 136).

After the conquest, the Manchus maintained many of the Ming institutions. They also continued the Confucian court practices and temple rituals and the Confucian civil service system. However, the highest offices were exclusively for the Manchus.



Picture 33: Location of the Qing Dynasty

Source: <http://www.chinahighlights.com/image/chinamap/ancient/qing-dynasty-map1.gif>

During the Qing dynasty the Han Chinese were forced to adopt the Manchu queue hairstyle as a symbol of subordination. If the Han Chinese did not obey, the penalty was death. Consequently, they had to shave their head except a patch at the back where the hair was grown and braided into a queue.



In order to avoid the absorption of the Manchus into the Han Chinese population, three strategies were adopted:

1. The Manchu communities were maintained separate from the Han Chinese population.
2. The Manchus were prohibited to engage in trade or manual labor. Instead, they had to develop skills related to archery and horsemanship.
3. Intermarriage between Manchus and Han Chinese was forbidden. In addition, Manchu women worn their hair in a distinctive style and did not bind their feet. Instead, they wore “horse-hoof” shoes.

Under the Qing, the obedience of subject to ruler was emphasized by the Neo-Confucian philosophy. It demanded “the total subjection of women, the indisputable authority of fathers and the unquestioning loyalty of subjects to rulers” (Roberts, 2006, p. 149).

We must mention Emperor Kangxi who ordered the creation of the most complete dictionary of Chinese characters ever put together at the time. In general, the Manchu emperors supported Chinese literary and historical projects. This fact explains the survival of much of China's ancient literature until our days.

Under the Manchus, China Proper developed internal stability because the Qing subdued the different rebellious internal groups. Additionally, they secured stability along their borders by conquering the threatening neighbors.



In this way, the empire increased its territory and the revenues enlarged by receiving tribute from the Border States.

Nevertheless, the Qing dynasty declined ending a period of around a millennium of dynastic rule. Why did that happen? Because the Manchus did not understand that there were new political rules governing the relations among the different countries around the world. In addition, they could not respond adequately to the new challenge.

2.3 MODERN CHINA

We have mentioned that China began to have contact with the West from the fourteenth century. For Western countries, China was a treasure, so Western powers wanted to take it over. Western people devised strategies to put China in difficulties. Chinese authorities had to sign inequitable treaties which were profitable for the Western nations only. That was the international context of China during the Qing dynasty. Domestic affairs were not good at all. The population was discontent because authorities ruled in favor of the nobility. Chinese people did not believe any more in the dynastic system. Conversely, they began to think of a republic. This is a period of continuous internal and external wars. In this way, Chinese dynasties ended and the period of Modern China was on the track.



2.3.1 The First Opium War

China and Great Britain maintained commercial intercourse during the eighteenth century. The British imported Chinese tea and exported woolen and metal goods to China. Also, opium from Bengal, India (British possession), was introduced into China by smugglers. It constituted an illegal but lucrative trade. At the beginning, there was great demand for Chinese tea and the trade balance was in favor of China. Great Britain had to pay the deficit in silver.

The Chinese wanted to increase maritime trade, but they were suspicious of foreign intercourse. For this reason, the Chinese had restricted the port of Guangzhou for this commercial activity. In addition, foreign traders had to obey strict regulations and were allowed to stay in Guangzhou only during the trade season.

On the other hand, Great Britain wanted to increase its commercial activity throughout Asia and into the Pacific. Consequently, a British embassy was sent to China in 1792. It was headed by Lord Macartney. His mission was to reach the following goals: 1. They wanted to have a resident minister in the Chinese court. 2. They needed other ports for the maritime trade, not only Guangzhou. 3. They wanted to establish a permanent settlement near the tea and silk production areas. The mission failed because Macartney refused to follow the protocol for tribute missions and to perform the kowtow. The trade between China and Great Britain continued



under the existing rules. We must remember that the Chinese thought China was the center of the world in culture and trade. As a result, the Chinese determined the rules and the other nations had to obey them in order to get Chinese favor.

In 1816, a second embassy was sent to China. This time, British requests were rejected abruptly. Opium consumption inside China increased because Bengal opium diminished its price. The quantity of opium imported into China was so large that it caused a deficit in the trade balance. China had to cover the deficit in silver. Consequently, Chinese peasants had to pay land taxes in silver.

At the same time, in Beijing, officials and degree-holders debated on how to end opium smuggling. Officials thought that a practical action was to legalize and tax the importation of opium and to allow the growth of the opium poppy in China. However, a group of degree-holders, the Spring Purification circle, rejected this proposal. They suggested starting a crusade against opium consumption. Opium addicts would be punished with death if they did not give up the habit. The crusade began in Guangzhou where Chinese authorities arrested opium suppliers. In addition, authorities ordered foreign smugglers to hand them their opium stocks in three days and sign an agreement stating that “they would either cease trading in opium or suffer death” (Roberts, 2006, p. 164). As a reward, British authorities advised smugglers to obey. As a reward, British authorities would compensate the cost of the confiscated opium.



Meanwhile, British merchants insisted on better conditions for trade with China. British authorities planned a strategy in order to force Chinese authorities to concede an island base and to compensate British merchants for the loss of opium. This tactic was comprised to invade strategic Chinese ports. First, the British blockaded Guangzhou. Then they captured Xiamen, Zhoushan, and Shanghai. Under these circumstances, the emperor ordered his men to negotiate with British authorities. The result was the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing. The Chinese conceded five ports for trade and for residence. The island of Xianggang (Hong Kong) was conceded to Britain. Additionally, a fixed tariff for trade was established. Finally, China had to pay for the opium confiscated in Guangzhou.

The Nanjing Treaty was the first of many treaties signed between China and the West. These were unequal treaties because they benefited only Western powers. China did not get advantages from them. These treaties had four basic features: The opening of treaty ports, extraterritoriality (exemption from Chinese laws), external tariffs fixed by treaty, and benefits granted for other powers.

2.3.2 The Taiping Rebellion (1851-64)

Hong Xiuquan (1814 – 1864) was the leader of the Taiping rebels. He was a teacher who had failed the examinations four times. He was



influenced by Christianity. He had strange dreams in which a venerable man and a middle-aged man helped him to fight against devils. His interpretation of those dreams was that God and his son, Jesus Christ, were giving him the task of the restoration of the true faith in China. Hong himself was God's Chinese son. With these ideas in mind, he began his mission by converting his family members. After that, he took away the Confucian tablets from the village school because he based his philosophy on Protestant ideas. In a short time, he had followers by the thousands because people kept an anti-Manchu sentiment. In 1851, Hong Xiuquan began an uprising in Guizhou Province. He proclaimed himself the king of the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace. In this new order, peasants possessed the land. At the same time, slavery, concubinage, arranged marriage, opium smoking, foot binding, judicial torture, and the worship of idols were all to be eliminated. Nevertheless, the Taiping Rebellion failed for three main reasons: 1. It attacked Confucianism that was accepted by the majority as the moral foundation of Chinese behavior. 2. The Taiping army had not established firm base areas. 3. There were feuds, defections and corruption among the movement's leaders. Meanwhile, Zeng Guofan from the Han Chinese elite was appointed imperial commissioner. He formed a strong army to defeat the rebels. The rebellion ended because of this popular powerful army and because of the help of British and French forces. Nevertheless, these events produced the emergence of the Han Chinese elite and eroded Qing authority. Other uprisings took place in North China (the Nian Rebellion) and southwest China (the Muslim Rebellion). They confirmed Qing weakness.



We must highlight that more than 30 million people died during the 14 years of these rebellions in China.

2.3.3 The Tongzhi Restoration and the Self-Strengthening Movement

The Tongzhi Restoration was an effort to reverse the dynasty's decline by restoring traditional order. This attempt took place during the reign of the Tongzhi Emperor (1862-74) and was devised by the young emperor's mother, the Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908). Since the 1840's, scholar advisers had become aware of the superiority of Western powers in terms of military technology. As a result, they recommended building ships, making weapons and learning techniques according to the Western understanding. In 1860, advisers called for the adoption of Western knowledge. The efforts developed to implant the Western technology in China were known as the Self-Strengthening Movement with the slogan, "Chinese learning as the base, Western studies for use" (Roberts, 2006, p. 183).

The Self-Strengthening Projects included the establishment of schools where Western languages and mathematics were taught together with Chinese classics. Additionally, Chinese people were sent to study in the United States. Industries for weapon and ship manufacturing were established. Also, industries oriented to the production of textiles were installed. Communication and transportation facilities were developed to complement the industrial activities. In 1880, the Imperial Telegraph



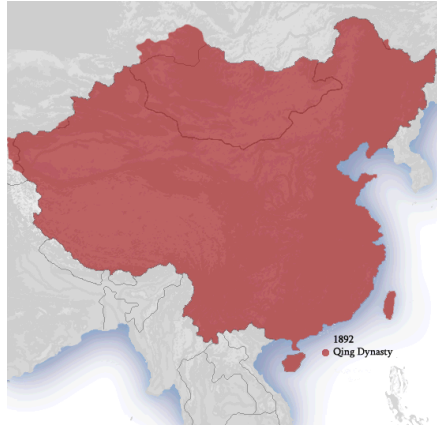
Administration created a national network of telegraph lines. The China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company competed with foreign shipping over China's coastal commerce. However, in order to accelerate the process, Chinese bought foreign machinery and technology. These self-strengthening projects failed because of the cost of the foreign machinery and of the dependency on foreign technology. Chinese products were too expensive and obsolete.

In conclusion, the Self-Strengthening Movement was a failure. There were four main reasons to explain this result. First of all, China's cultural tradition and Confucianism were contrary to the priorities of a modern state. Some authorities did not agree with the study of foreign languages and mathematics. Second, the role played by central government was not correct. The Empress Dowager was more worried about her own selfish interests, such as the reconstruction of the Summer Palace. Third, modern management techniques were not introduced into China. The supervision of the self-strengthening enterprises was made by officials. Consequently, these enterprises were vulnerable to the officials' demands and could not compete with private enterprises. Fourth, there was low revenue to be invested in the self-strengthening enterprises because Western forces threatened China. As a consequence, China had to install modern military industries and to pay indemnities for military defeats.



2.3.4 Western Imperialism in the late Qing period

Foreign powers considered China as their great booty. All of them wanted their part of the spoils. Consequently, they began to fragment the Chinese empire knowing of its military, social and political issues. First, Russia got its part because it knew China well as a result of Russian residence in Beijing for around a century. Tsarist troops attacked Manchuria, and China had to cede it to Russia in 1860. Then foreign powers paid attention to the peripheral states that had recognized Chinese sovereignty and given tribute to the emperor. Western forces decided to seize control of these peripheral states. France began colonizing Cochin China (southern Vietnam). Also, France took Annam after its victorious war against China in 1884-85. Then Britain gained control over Burma. Additionally, Russia penetrated into Chinese Turkestan. Japan defeated China in the war of 1894-95. Consequently, China had to cede Taiwan and the Penghu Islands to Japan, pay a huge indemnity, permit the establishment of Japanese industries in four treaty ports, and recognize Japanese hegemony over Korea. Finally, in 1898 the British acquired a ninety-nine-year lease over the so-called New Territories of Kowloon which increased the size of their Hong Kong colony.



Picture 34: Territory of Qing China in 1892

Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ching_Dynasty_1892.png

As you can see, Britain, Japan, Russia, Germany, and France had territorial cessions in China. However, the United States did not have any, and in 1899 the U.S. asked for an "open door" policy in China. All but Russia agreed to the United States approach.



Picture 35: Famous French political cartoon from the late 1890s.

Source: http://familypedia.wikia.com/wiki/File:China_imperialism_cartoon.jpg#filehistory

A pie represents "Chine" (French for China) and is being divided among the nations of Britain, Germany, Russia, France and Japan.



2.3.5 The Hundred Days' Reform and the Aftermath

The young Guangxu Emperor had exercised nominal authority since 1889 when the Empress Dowager retired officially. After the defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese war in 1895, Chinese intellectuals proposed radical reforms for China's survival. One of the most radical thinkers was Kang Youwei who advised the emperor to make a "revolution from above" in the same way as Japan had done in order to acquire modernization thirty years before. The emperor, with the assistance of Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and Tan Sitong, promulgated forty edicts to carry out reforms in China. The reforms considered major points, such as the elimination of the formal examinations, the creation of a ministry of agriculture, and the establishment of a national conscript army. In addition, the edicts promoted practical studies instead of Neo-Confucian orthodoxy. Nevertheless, the reforms lasted only from June 11 to September 21, 1898, because the Empress Dowager devised a coup with the support of radical conservatives and of Yuan Shikai, a political opportunist. As a result, Emperor Guangxu was imprisoned for being mentally disabled, the reforms were overturned, and the most important reformers were executed, among them Tan Sitong. Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao fled abroad to work for a constitutional monarchy in China. However, they did not succeed.

Most of you might ask why the Empress Dowager was opposed to the reforms. The answer is simple: Because her position was threatened by them.



2.3.6 The Boxer Rebellion

The Boxer rebellion was the major peasant uprising in North China during the twentieth century. It was a movement that was against foreigners and Christians. The Boxer rebels were established in the Northeast of China and had the support of the Qing court. In 1900, they attacked Christian settlements located in Beijing and Tianjin (North China). In response, the Eight-Nation Alliance - Britain, Japan, Russia, Italy, Germany, France, USA and Austria – sent troops and defeated the rebels. As a consequence, the foreigners occupied North China and the Qing had to sign the Protocol of 1901. Allies requested the execution of ten high officials, indemnity payments, stationing of foreign troops in China, and demolition of some Chinese fortifications.

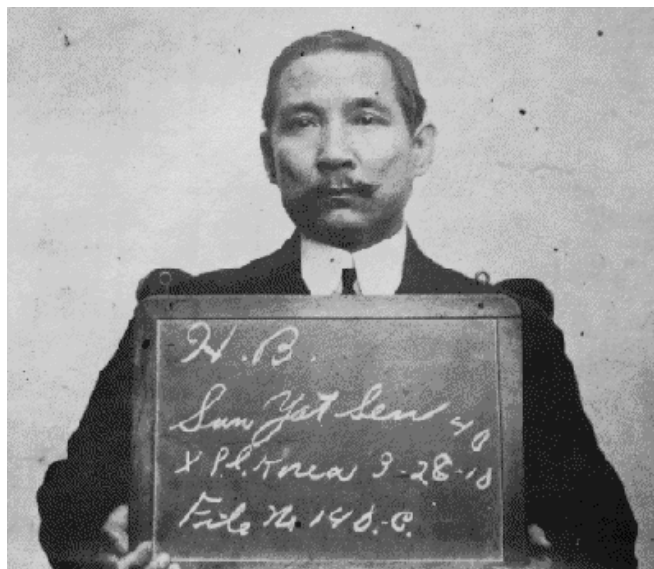
2.3.7 The Republican Revolution of 1911

During the late ten years of the empire, the Qing carried out some reforms related to the abolition of the Confucian-based examinations, the modernization of the educational and military fields following the Japan model, and the establishment of a constitutional and parliamentary government. However, these reforms failed because they did not focus on the elimination of the anti-Manchu sentiment. Conversely, they allowed the rise of a new category of educated youth and soldiers who thought of



nationalism and were apprehensive of the Manchus. Additionally, the new reforms required revenues. New taxes were imposed by the government, provoking new rebellions. People were waiting for a responsible cabinet. However, it consisted of eight Manchus, one Mongol and only four Chinese.

In this political atmosphere appeared a revolutionary leader, Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) who was a republican and anti-Qing activist. In 1905, he founded the United League based on three political principles - nationalism, democracy and people's livelihood. These principles demanded actions to carry out reform. "Nationalism" required the defeat of the Manchus and the end of foreign hegemony over China. "Democracy" described the necessity of a republican form of government elected by the Chinese population. The "People's livelihood" was focused on helping the common people by regulation of the ownership of the means of production and land.



Picture 36: Sun Yat-Sen, initial arrival photograph, April 1904

Source: <http://www.archives.gov/publications/record/1998/05/sun-yat-sen.html>



A revolt planned by officers of the New Army units broke out in Wuchang on October 11, 1911. A military government was established and was supported by the Hubei provincial assembly. Hubei declared independence from the empire and the founding of a republic. By December 1911, fifteen of the twenty-four Chinese provinces had declared themselves independent.

While these events were taking place in Central China, Sun Yat-sen was in the United States collecting funds. When he returned to China in January, 1912, he was declared President of the Republic of China in Nanjing. Meanwhile, the Qing court asked Yuan Shikai (1859 - 1916), the creator of the New Armies, to be Prime Minister. He accepted. The imperial forces tried to recover the independent provinces, but they failed and fled to Nanjing. Yuan Shikai understood that the future of China was with the republicans and suggested to the emperor that he abdicate. In addition, Yuan Shikai proposed to the republicans to accept a China united under Beijing government with him as president. Sun Yat-sen accepted in order to avoid more bloodshed generated by civil war and by the intervention of foreign forces. Yuan Shikai was declared President of China in March, 1912.



Picture 37: Yuan Shikai in uniform

Source: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/654504/Yuan-Shikai>

2.4 REPUBLICAN CHINA (1911 – 1949)

The new republic had difficulties. Yuan Shikai, the president, wanted to do his will, and he declared himself emperor. However, he did not have enough support and had to resign. When he died, the warlords took control of China.

Nationalists and Communists joined to defeat the warlords and to reunify China under a sole force. The Soviet Union helped both groups. However the Nationalists-Communists alliance broke. Communists and the left wing of the KTM set a base at Wuhan. On the other hand, the right wing of the KTM joined with southern warlords and established a base in Nanjing, the capital of the Nationalist government for a decade.



The Communists were persecuted by Chiang Kai-shek (1887 – 1975), the new leader of the Nationalists after Sun Yat-sen's death. Then the Communists began the Long March. After fighting with the Nationalist Army, the Communists got to the north base of Shaanxi. Mao Tse-tung became the indisputable leader of the CCP.

During the Sino-Japanese War, Nationalists and Communists joined again to defeat the Japanese. The alliance broke again. When the war between China and Japan ended, civil war broke out. At the beginning the Nationalists had advantages. However they lost popular support because of taxes. The Communists gained the population's support because of the land reform. The Nationalists were defeated and fled to Taiwan.

2.4.1 Yuan Shikai, China's first president

The constitution of the new republic established that the power of the government had to be shared among the president, the prime minister and the provisional parliament. The prime minister and four of the cabinet ministers belonged to the Revolutionary Alliance and did not agree with the enthusiasm of Yuan Shikai for foreign loans. After a few months of government, they resigned. Elections for the parliament were announced. The Revolutionary Alliance joined with other political groups founding the Guomindang known as the Kuomintang or KMT or the Nationalist Party. The KMT won the majority of the seats. Its first actions were focused on criticizing



Yuan's administration and on demanding more power for the parliament. One of the KMT cabinet members was assassinated as Yuan's revenge.

In 1913, Yuan Shikai effectively contracted a foreign loan which, he said, was to be used to cover China's debts and to reconstruct the country. Nevertheless, Yuan's actual purpose was to use this money to push his political opponents out. As a consequence, a Second Revolt took place. Many uprisings broke out in different provinces. However, Yuan's military forces suppressed the rebellions. He changed the constitution and proclaimed himself dictator. Immediately he dissolved the KMT party, the parliament, and the provincial assemblies. He wanted to return to the monarchy regimen and in 1915, he declared himself emperor.

However, many of Yuan's subordinates did not agree with his decision. Some provinces declared independence. Yuan's supporters deserted. As a result, he had to abdicate in 1916 and in a few months, he died of natural causes producing a vacuum of power in China.

2.4.2 The Warlord Era (1916-1928)

The Warlord Era is known as a period from 1916 to 1928 because during these years there was no central government which could exercise authority throughout China. Instead, the power in China was held by military governors of provinces, more commonly called warlords.



Warlords had some common features, but they differed in others. Among the common characteristics, we mentioned that most of them had a military background and a territorial base. Their armies were loyal to them. Warlords got funds through taxes on land, monopolies of consumer goods, business, railway companies, etc. In some cases, warlords printed their own currency. On the other hand, warlords did not profess a common ideology. On the contrary, according to the doctrine practiced by them, warlords could be divided into three main groups: 1. Conservatives who supported Confucianism. 2. Reactionaries who desired to restore the Qing. 3. Reformists who advocated education and literacy.

At present, most scholars consider Warlordism as a fatal chapter in China's History because of the absence of a central government, the removal of intellectuals from public service, wars, disastrous economy, and invasions of Western powers. Nevertheless, there were positive consequences, too. For example, despite the fact that each warlord had his own interests, most of them agreed with Nationalism. In addition, during the First World War, China's exports increased, and Chinese industries flourished. Ideological conformity was replaced by intellectual freedom. As a result, the May Fourth Movement emerged. Moreover, the Chinese Communist Party or CCP was founded and the Nationalist Party or KMT was reorganized with the purpose of reunifying China.



2.4.3 The Fourth May Movement

During the presidency of Yuan Shikai the First World War broke out. Japan joined the Allies and declared war on Germany in order to seize a German base located in Shandong, China, and to obligate the Chinese government to sign a document known as the Twenty-One Demands. Yuan Shikai agreed with most of those demands, such as that German possessions in Shandong were now in Japanese control. Also, Japan would have a major share in commercial and industrial Chinese fields. However, Yuan did not accept the imposition of Japanese advisers in the military, police, and financial fields of his administration. Under these conditions, the Twenty-One Demands were signed in 1915.

Four years later, the First World War ended. Delegates of the different nations attended to the Paris Conference to sign the Versailles Treaty. According to this document the concessions that Germany had in China before the signature of the Twenty-one Demands would remain in the power of Japan. The news reached Beijing on May 4, 1919. Immediately, students protested in Tiananmen Square because Japan did not give back the Chinese territories under its control since 1915. More students joined the protest in many cities throughout China. Initially, the students were arrested, but after that the authorities ceded to their demands. The government fell in a short time. The Chinese delegates in Paris did not sign the Versailles Treaty.



The Fourth May National Protest was the main event organized by the Fourth May Movement. Nevertheless, its members also paid attention to other themes related to the exchange of Confucianism for new ideas, and the development of a literary revolution. More young people had the opportunity to study in universities where Western-style studies were included and liberal ideas were promoted. New young Chinese intellectuals tried to change the Confucian tradition of a submissive woman to two liberal concepts – equality and independence. These ideas were spread by articles incorporated in Chinese newspapers. In addition, new intellectuals asked for a literary revolution in which the vernacular would be used in all kinds of writing (books, newspapers, fiction works, translations, etc.) because the classical style was available only for wealthy people. In 1921, the minister of education decreed that the vernacular, not the classical, had to be used in Chinese school texts.

2.4.4 Nationalists and Communists embarked on the Northern Expedition

After Yuan Shikai's death, many warlords succeeded him in the government in Beijing. The warlord regime was internationally recognized as the legitimate one. Nevertheless, at the same time, Sun Yat-sen had gotten support from southern warlords and by 1921 there was a southern KMT-warlord government, too.



Sun tried to get backing from the Western democracies, but his cause was ignored. Then Sun decided to ask for help from the Soviet Union. The answer was affirmative. The Soviets began to aid nationalists and communists at the same time. By 1922, the CCP had only 300 members and the KMT, 150,000. The Soviets wanted to win anyway, so they helped both parties in order to get the advantage. It did not matter which group succeeded. The alliance KMT-warlord broke in 1922 and Sun fled to Shanghai. Sun asked for help from the Soviets again. In 1923, an agent of the Comintern (a Soviet organization), Mikhail Borodin, arrived in China to help in the reorganizing and fortifying of the KMT party taking as a model the Soviet Communist Party. Sun wanted the KMT and the CCP to melt and form a unique stronger political party, the China party. However, the Comintern requested the members of CCP to cooperate with the KMT while keeping their own identities. By the end of 1923, the alliance KMT-CCP established a military academy in Guangzhou and this was the base of the government.

Sun died of cancer in 1925. Chiang Kai-shek (1887 – 1975) succeeded him. He was in Moscow in 1923 taking a course on military tactics and politics. He commanded the National Revolutionary Army which was created to unify China. During the summer of 1925, he decided to begin the Northern Expedition to subjugate the warlords located in North China. The Comintern had advised him to postpone this military campaign because the northern warlords were too strong to be defeated easily.



Picture 38: Chiang Kai-shek during his visit to Army Air Force base, 1945

Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chiang_Kai-shek.jpg

In 1926, the alliance between the KMT and the CCP proved to be fragile. First, Chiang Kai-shek thwarted a kidnapping against him. He immediately broke off relations with Soviet advisers and established restrictions on the CCP political participation.

In 1927, the KMT was divided into two bands – the right and the left wings. The right wing headed by Chiang established a military-civilian government in Nanjing. However, the CCP and the left wing of the KMT moved to Wuhan and set up there their regime. Finally, in Beijing the warlords continued exercising power.

The alliance CCP-left KMT instructed by the Comintern, tried to seize some cities, such as Guangzhou, but they failed. In addition, Mao Tse-tung (1893-1976) organized a peasant revolt known as the Autumn Harvest Uprising. He and the peasants were not sufficiently prepared and had to flee

to the mountains. However, Chiang went on the Northern Expedition with the support of influential warlords, and in 1928, the National Revolutionary Army reached Beijing. For a decade Nanjing was recognized as the sole regime of China which would be governed under KMT guideline.



Picture 39: A portrait of Mao Tse-tung

Source: <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/1999/china.50/inside.china/profiles/mao.tsetung/>

2.4.5 The Nanjing Decade (1928 – 1937)

The period from 1928 to 1937 is known as the Nanjing Decade. During this time, the Nationalists, led by Chiang Kai-shek, tried to make of China a modern nation-state. Signals of modernization and Westernization could be seen in the more than 2,000 industries installed in coastal cities. However, in the countryside the story was different. Peasants were in absolute misery so that they had to sell their daughters. Modern studies pointed out that this situation was the result of the lack of programs focused on agricultural technology rather than on the abuse exercised by the landlords.



In 1931, a provisional constitution was issued. It established that the government had to have five branches – the executive, the legislative, the judicial, the examination bureau and the control bureau. These branches are the consequence of Western influence, the three former, and of Chinese tradition, the two latter.

In the religious field, during the Nanjing Decade, Confucianism was reinstalled in China because Chiang Kai-shek professed this philosophy. Moreover, in 1934, he founded the New Life Movement which encouraged the practice of the four Confucian virtues –propriety, justice, honesty and self-respect and publicized the ideas on hygiene spread by Westerners. The New Life Movement also had a Christian influence taking Jesus as a model to follow.

The government introduced the Chinese silver dollar in order to have a unified currency. In addition, a Central bank was created and specialized bank institutions were established for three main purposes – to deal with foreign exchange, to supply credit for peasants, and to encourage transportation modernization. However, there were financial difficulties because of the large military spending. The government could finance only 80% of the cost. The remainder was covered by government bonds creating speculation.

The government also focused on communications. Railways and roads were improved and enlarged, thus creating a transportation net that



facilitated domestic commerce and cultural exchange, and fortified nationalist sentiment.

Education was also taken into account during the Nanjing Decade because the government believed that education was the cornerstone to create a nation-state. The Nationalists were advised by the League of Nations to establish an adequate educative reform. Nevertheless, schools were mostly located in the cities rather than on the countryside. Additionally, only 15% of the students were women. In this part, we must mention Dr. James Yen, who led the National Association for the Promotion of Mass Education. This association tried to extend educational opportunities to broader rural areas. Now focusing on superior education, universities with modern staff and facilities were established in coastal cities. Students of other universities had difficulties. At any rate, students were enrolled in research and publication. Furthermore, an institute for national research was created in 1928.

The government also dealt with Western powers. The authorities preferred the use of diplomacy rather than the use of threats to reach their goals in international affairs. Among the achievements, Britain voluntarily surrendered its concessions in China. Nevertheless, little advance was made in order to end extraterritoriality.

Making a balance, Nationalists struggled in creating a nation-state. They sometimes had success, sometimes had reverses. We do not know



what more they could do because they were abruptly stopped by the Japan War in 1937.

2.4.6 The Communists and their Long March

Because of the bad results suffered by the CCP in the uprisings in urban and rural areas in 1927, Chinese Communists had to define a new strategy. They formed the Red Army in order to fight against the Revolutionary Nationalist Army. The CCP followed two lines of action. One group was based in Shanghai and continued working in cities and industrial areas planning strikes for the seizing of cities. The other group focused on the rural areas. The first group attacked some cities in 1929. Initially, they had success, but the Red Army could not continue resisting the Nationalist Army. The first group had failed again.

Meanwhile, Mao Tse-tung fled to the mountains after he was defeated in the Autumn Harvest Uprising in 1927. At the beginning, he established himself in Jiangxi. However, the area was not appropriate for the setting up of a base. Then he moved to Ruijin in southern Jiangxi. Mao Tse-tung believed that peasants would be an important force in the Chinese revolution. He continued training rural peasant associations.



Mao Tse-tung based his revolutionary strategy on three principles:

1. In order to make the Red Army a real force, every soldier had to be a disciplined person. Soldiers had to be clear about their duties: to be ready to obey orders, to take nothing from the peasants and to share the seized goods. In addition, they had to become aware of the important role they played in the revolution. There were no distinctions among soldiers, all of them received the same wages and participated in the making of decisions.
2. The second principle had to deal with the land reform. In 1927, the CCP had determined to take the land from the landlords and redistribute it among the peasants. However, the members did not agree about the rich peasants' land. Mao Tse-tung adopted the following policy: He formed revolutionary committees in the villages and divided people among landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants and poor peasants. They seized the land from the landlords only and redistributed it among the middle and poor peasants. The rich peasants were allowed to retain their land.
3. The last principle was concerned with the social reform and focused on the role of women. Mao Tse-tung did not agree with arranged marriages. He believed in freedom of marriage and divorce. He also encouraged the establishment of female associations.



In 1931, the CCP group of Shanghai recognized Mao's work in rural areas and moved to his base in Ruijin. There, they established the Chinese Soviet Republic with Mao as the first president. However, this rural regime was short. There were two main reasons for it. First of all, Mao Tse-tung could not exercise his authority because of the "Twenty-eight Bolsheviks." They were Chinese Communists who were trained in Moscow. They adopted drastic policies. The land reform changed. Landlords and rich peasants' lands were confiscated. In 1933, there was formed the Land Investigation Movement to avoid land evasions. Nevertheless, they applied oppressive tactics. Many landlords and rich peasants were killed. As a result, the CCP lost popular support. On the other hand, Chiang Kai-shek began his fifth encirclement. The Nationalist Army was supported by German advisers and was equipped with heavy guns and airplanes. Consequently, in 1934, the CCP members abandoned the Ruijin base and began the Long March. During the rally, they overcame natural obstacles, such as rivers, snowy mountains, and swamps. Also, they defeated the Nationalist Army legions they encountered. Finally, they reached the north base of Shaanxi in 1935. Mao Tse-tung became the indisputable leader of the CCP.

2.4.7 The Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)

Japan had invaded Manchuria in 1931 in order to get raw materials and food supplies for its great population. The Japanese purpose was to continue encroaching on northern China and there establish autonomous



regimes under their control. At the beginning, Chiang Kai-shek did nothing against the Japanese. Instead, he went on with his persecution of the Communists. To him, Communists were more lethal enemies than the Japanese. J. A. B. Roberts indicates in his book, A History of China, that Chiang Kai-shek compared Communists to a heart illness while the Japanese were a skin disease only. Nevertheless, Chiang had to confront the pressure created by student protests in Chinese universities in 1936. In addition, Nationalist troops located in Xi'an mutinied and retained Chiang until he agreed to end the civil war with the Communists and to plan the attack against the Japanese. By 1937, members of the KMT and the CCP agreed to form a coalition to overcome Japanese aggression. China declared war on Japan after a skirmish at Marco Polo Bridge in July, 1937.

At the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War, Japanese troops continued invading Chinese territories while Chinese armies tried to counteract. Where Chinese armies were well organized, as in Shanghai, the Japanese could not seize the cities. However, the Japanese advanced to Nanjing. Chiang's orders were to defend the Nationalist capital anyway. Nevertheless, Japanese troops took over the city in December, 1938, and perpetrated atrocities. Some historians compared this event as a holocaust in which thousands of Chinese people were killed. This regrettable episode is known as the Nanjing's Rape. As a result, the Nationalist regime had to move its capital from Nanjing to Chongqing, a city also on the Yangtze River. This decision was a great reverse for the Nationalists because they lost their main sources of revenue – the custom duties – and they had to compensate



for their great wartime costs by collecting the land tax. In addition, they imposed a grain tax on peasants in order to have a food supply for the Nationalist armies. However, these attempts did not balance war expenditure. To the contrary, officials' salaries decreased, originating corruption. Moreover, there was lack of petrol provoking a black market.

The United States did not agree with the Japanese invasion in China and from 1938 had sent aid to the Nationalists. After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, the United States and China became allies. American advisors required the Nationalist armies to help the British to keep the Burma Road open. However, Chiang Kai-shek refused. In 1944, Japan carried out the Operation Ichigo, which was a victory, and revealed the corruption and incompetence of the Nationalist army.

Finally, in August, 1945, the United States decided to bomb the Japanese islands of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to put a swift end to the Second World War and consequently, to the Sino-Japanese War.

2.4.7.1 The Nationalists and the Communists during the Sino-Japanese War

When the war between China and Japan began, Nationalists and Communists had established the zones where each army had to fight. Some Nationalist commanders did not agree with Communist troops on the



Yangtze River and ordered them to move to the north. As a result, the Nationalist-Communist alliance was broken.

The Nationalists had the control of half of China. This territory was known as the Free Zone and its inhabitants were in the majority peasants. If the Nationalists wanted to defeat the Japanese, they would have to gain the peasants' aid. However, the Nationalists lost the peasants' support because of taxes and conscription. The grain tax was a heavy burden for the peasants of the Free Zone because of the transportation costs. In addition, this tax produced a famine between 1942 and 1943. Furthermore, conscription required males, from 18 to 45, to enter the army. Most were from poor families.

After the Long March, the CCP established themselves as refugees at Yan'an, in north Shaanxi. For the majority of the new members, Marxism did not have a significant meaning. Also, they did not agree with the discipline required by the party. Then Mao Tse-tung began to write the ideological bases of the CCP. He focused on the importance of the peasants' participation in the Chinese Revolution and an adaptation of Marxism to Chinese peculiarities. After that, in 1942, he began the Rectification Campaign, that is, a process by which he formed trained leaders or Cadres. He required them to attend a Party school where they participated in Mao's lectures and reviewed Mao's writings. If they wanted to continue in the CCP, they would have to be well-prepared. The Communists had control of some border regions and central areas. Just as the Nationalists, they had to



establish an adequate wartime economy. After the CCP broke the alliance with the Nationalists, they continued with the land tax reform seizing the land of the landlords and redistributing it among the peasants. In addition, the Party introduced a program of land registration. Moreover, the Communists improved the security of tenure. As a result, the CCP gained the peasants' support.

2.4.8 The Civil War in China

After the ending of World War II, the United States tried to get a cease-fire between the Nationalists and the Communists. Each side apparently accepted. However, both bands only wanted to gain time to prepare for a civil war.

At the beginning, the Nationalists had great advantages. They had control of the main Chinese cities, including Manchuria. Their armies were numerous. They had twice as many soldiers as the Communists. They also had the support of an air force and a small navy.

The strategy followed by the Communists was to surrender territories and then to persecute and to damage the Nationalist armies. Acting in this way they stopped the advance of the Nationalists and seized most of Manchuria. In addition, they got the support of many peasants and the Communist armies increased. Moreover, the Communists obtained weapons



and equipment. As a result, in 1949, the Communists had control of Nanjing, the Nationalist capital, and later of Shanghai. The Nationalist armies had surrendered while Chiang Kai-shek fled to Taiwan.

The defeat of the Nationalists and the victory of the Communists can be explained taking into account the Nationalists' errors and the Communists' successes.

The Nationalists had lost popular support because of four main reasons. First of all, they did not punish people who had helped the Japanese. Only some collaborators were executed. Second, they did not pay attention to the protests of the university students who suggested the Nationalists join the Communists and form a coalition government. Third, they did not carry out the necessary actions to establish a constitutional government. The constitution drafted in 1936 was promulgated late in 1947. The elections for the National Assembly were a farce. Finally, the Nationalists made many economic mistakes. They introduced the gold yuan note without the back of reserves. The rich had to give their reserves to the government which tried to solve the problem by increasing the taxes on consumer goods. These actions led to a disaster. People considered the Nationalist government a corrupt, inefficient and undemocratic one.

The Communists had gained popular support because they promised to give peasants the landlords' land and the possibility of participating in the decision of the government if they helped the CCP by paying taxes, by



supplying military and conscription service, and by giving food for the People's Liberation Army. In places where there was no landlordism, the CCP urged people to get liberation from the exploitation exercised by the elite class. The CCP also promoted woman's emancipation by enforcing the new marriage law that took into account aspects, such as divorce and custody of children. Also, Communists secured women a share of the land confiscated from the landlords. By these actions, the Communists got the support of male and female peasants. Another factor was the security sensation created by the good management of the cities under Communist control.

Consequently, people gave their support to the Communists who promised to end the war in a short time.

2.5 THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

With Mao Tse-tung's announcement of the creation of a people's democratic dictatorship, the establishment of the People's Republic of China was formalized. Mao was the chairman of the CCP while Zhou Enlai (1898 - 1976) was the Premier of the Administrative Council.



Picture 40: A portrait of Zhou Enlai

Source: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/656977/Zhou-Enlai>

In order to comprehend better what happened in the People's Republic of China, we are going to divide it into two phases: The revolutionary one which lasted from 1949 until 1976 when Mao Tse-tung died, and the pragmatic one from 1976 until the present day.

2.5.1 The Revolutionary Phase (1949 – 1976)

China was at peace after a long time of war. The first regime's purpose was to consolidate its power throughout China by focusing on four major points - Politics, economy, territory, and foreign relations.

In the first field, the government established a 'democratic dictatorship' led by the CCP which assured human civil rights and women's equality. The regime promised to continue with the land reform, the development of heavy



industry and the increment of educational opportunities for the population. It also paid attention to the safeguards of the rights of minority groups.

In the economic field, the government's first actions were directed toward stopping inflation by the establishment of a unified fiscal system and the selling of bonds.

In the third point, the regime integrated some territories considered to be part of China, such as Manchuria and Tibet. Nevertheless, Outer Mongolia and Taiwan remained independent.

In the fourth aspect, the regime tried to show China as an unaligned power. However, Mao had to lean to one side choosing the Soviet alliance. In December, 1949, he went to Moscow to negotiate with Stalin. The outcome of this meeting was the signature of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Alliance for mutual assistance against enemies such as Japan. The Soviet Union gave China a loan of 300 million dollars.

The Sino-Soviet alliance generated consequences for China such as its participation in the Korean War. We must remember that before 1945 Korea was ruled by the Japanese. When the Second World War ended, Japan surrendered and Korea was divided by the 38 parallel into two countries –North Korea occupied by the Soviets (Communists) and South Korea led by the United States (Capitalists). The Korean War began when North Korean troops invaded South Korea. During the war, North Korea was



supported by the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China whereas South Korea was aided by the United States and the United Nations. The conflict lasted until 1953 when an armistice was signed.

China's participation in the Korean War had positive and negative effects. China's population supported the regime, but the relations with the United States weakened. Foreigners and Christian missionaries were considered United States agents. The United States supported the Nationalists who stayed in Taiwan.

Because of the Korean War, the Chinese regime began massive campaigns against suspected counterrevolutionaries, against corrupt cadres and against capitalists. These campaigns mobilized the population and altered the business network.

During the revolutionary phase, the government executed three major policies: 1. The Soviet Period, 2. The Great Leap Forward, and 3. The Cultural Revolution.

2.5.1.1 The Soviet Period (1953 -1958)

In 1953, the Chinese regime began the transformation to socialism by the First Five-Year Plan whose purposes were industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture.



Industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture required the centralization of the CCP and the government administration. In 1953, elections were held to define the members of the First National People's Congress. In 1954, the Congress promulgated the constitution of China and elected Mao Tse-tung as President of the People's Republic of China, Liu Shaoqi as chairman of the Party, and Zhou Enlai as Premier of the State Council.

The government struggled to develop the steel, oil and chemical industries following the Soviet model. That implied the use of Soviet technology. Soon Soviet machinery was introduced into China. Soviet technicians were sent to supervise the installation of the productive plants which would be managed by the one-man Soviet way. In addition, many Chinese students were sent to Russia to study. Moreover, in China, colleges and universities were organized following the Soviet lines. Russian advisers determined the educational programs and Russian texts were used.

A census was carried out and then it was known that the population of the People's Republic of China was around 500 million inhabitants. The government had to define a strategy to increase the agriculture to have food for the population and to generate the money necessary for the development of the heavy industry. The solution was the collectivization of agriculture. At the beginning, farmers joined to work their farms cooperatively. That means, the members of the cooperative kept their rights to their plots and the crops were distributed according to the labor supplied by each family. However, by



1956, collective farms were organized. Private landownership was abolished and members received remuneration according to their labor only.

One important aspect to be mentioned here is what happened to the intellectuals during these years. Intellectuals congratulated the Communists' victory in 1949. Nevertheless, the regime warned intellectuals not to oppose the collectivization of agriculture. As a result, they kept silent. However, in 1956, Zhou Enlai pointed out the need of the intellectuals' participation in the renovation of the bureaucracy of the party. Mao Tse-tung changed his mind, and by saying "Let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools of thought contend," (Roberts, 2006, p. 263) he encouraged intellectuals to say what they thought about the policies adopted by the regime in China. Intellectuals began to criticize the CCP, the educative policies, and Mao himself. As a result, the party counteracted with the Anti-Rightist Campaign. Some intellectuals were sent to labor camps. Finally, Mao declared that intellectual people lacked revolutionary sense and he rejected intellectuals as the key to the economic development of China.

2.5.1.2 The Great Leap Forward (1958-1960)

When the regime analyzed the outcome of the First Five-Year Plan, they found that the objectives had not been completely obtained. Heavy industry had been developed, but they had forgotten to fortify light industry. In addition, agriculture had increased only a little above what was necessary



to satisfy the population's demands. A new strategy had to be defined because the government wanted to complete the transition to socialism and to initiate the transition to communism. This strategy was a Second Five-Year Plan called the Great Leap Forward which was launched in 1958.

Mao believed that it was necessary to be in a permanent revolution. He rushed through an irrigation project and increased the targets established for heavy industry. In his speeches, he justified his decisions pointing out that it was necessary to work more and faster to reach the level of development of other powers, such as Great Britain, in a short time, maybe in fifteen years. People trusted Mao and worked to satisfy the regime's requirements.

A strategy to release people for large-scale projects was the establishment of communes which were the result of the amalgamation of the productive brigades, that is, the former collective farms. Each commune was formed by the union of 5000 families who had the control of all the means of production. Each commune had to be self-sufficient to produce enough food by agriculture and to produce goods by the establishment of small-scale local industry. For example, people were encouraged to install their own "backyard steel furnaces." Additional aspects in which the commune had to be self-sufficient were education, marketing, administration, and local security. This latter requirement was supplied by militia organizations. First, communes were organized on the countryside, and afterwards in the cities, too. Rural markets were closed.



A way to make sure of women's participation in labor projects was the establishment of nurseries and collective kitchens. Also, a free food system was introduced.

The one-man management Soviet system was changed to a system of collective leadership controlled by the Party. In addition, some changes were made in education. Educational opportunities were increased, especially in the countryside by the opening of middle schools and universities. Schools were organized on the "run-by-people" principle and productive labor was part of the curriculum.

The Great Leap Forward was an economic fiasco. The joy of 1958 was changed into sadness in 1959 when the CCP admitted that the favorable production reports of the last year were exaggerated. Indeed, local authorities frequently reported unrealistic production figures to avoid punishment. Conversely, the objectives of the Great Leap Forward were not obtained. Industrial objectives were unrealistic. There was a lack of raw materials and the overproduction of goods of bad quality. Now it is known that there was a great famine which caused the death of around 20 million people. The irrigation projects were poorly planned, and, instead of increasing yields, they had diminished them. Natural disasters had enlarged the problem.

The regime tried to back down from the Great Leap Forward amid the general population's demoralization. Communes were reorganized into the

former productive brigades. Also, communal eating ceased and rural markets were reopened. Political consequences followed. Liu Shaoqi was designated President of the People's Republic of China while Mao Tse-tung remained as chairman of the Party, Zhou Enlai as Premier, and Deng Xiaoping as the General Secretary of the CCP.



Picture 41: Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping

Source: <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/watkins/liuzhoudeng.gif>

The Great Leap Forward also affected the alliance between China and the Soviet Union which always experienced tensions. However, some events deepened the rift between the two countries. Mao and Khrushchev had different opinions with regard to Communism and Capitalism. Mao was radical while Khrushchev believed in a peaceful coexistence. Khrushchev had criticized Stalin after Stalin's death. Mao considered this act a fault because it could produce splits among the Communist countries in times where it was necessary to join against Capitalist powers. The Soviet Union had led Socialism in the world. Its leadership was being threatened by Mao



by the establishment of the communes as a short cut to Communism. Khrushchev criticized Mao's communes and Mao rejected Soviet economic methods. Two international affairs finally produced the break of the Sino-Soviet alliance. In 1958, China had resumed the bombardment of Taiwan where the Nationalists had stayed since the end of the civil war in 1949. The United States accused China of trying to liberate Taiwan. The Soviet Union was cautious in its declarations in respect to this incident. In 1959 the Dalai Lama, leader of the Tibetans, took flight to India. The Soviet Union gave moral support to India instead of China. As a result, the Soviet Union declined its offer of nuclear assistance and Soviet technicians began to leave China affecting the Chinese plan for developing industrial and high-level technology.

2.5.1.3 The Post-Leaf Forward Period (1960-1965)

During this period, political direction was given by Liu Shaoqi as President of the People's Republic of China, Zhou Enlai as Premier, Deng Xiaoping as the General Secretary of the CCP, Lin Biao as Minister of Defense, Chen Yun in economical issues and Jiang Qing, Mao's wife, in cultural affairs. She made Mao Tse-tung's thought be present in Chinese politics. This group of people developed strategies to recover from the Leap Forward fiasco. For example, Chen Yun developed an economical strategy based on state investment in agricultural machinery and fertilizers. Many state enterprises were closed down and there was a return to the one-man



management of the First Five-Year Plan, that is, production authority was restored to factory managers. By 1963, industries had recovered their pace and the petrochemical industry arose. By 1965, the agricultural output had reached the levels of 1957. The party also paid attention to the strengthening of defense and the establishment of internal security. It is important to highlight that these targets were carried out when China did not have Soviet aid.

Nevertheless, government people were divided into two groups – the first formed by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, and the second comprised of Jiang Qing and Lin Biao. There was tension between these two groups because they had different points of view about what had to be done in China. Mao believed China had to become self-sufficient. Liu thought conversely. For him buying was better than manufacturing, and renting was better than buying. Also, in 1962, Deng criticized the communes and recommended the abandonment of collectivized farming. He thought any form of production which could help to recover and increase agriculture outcome was useful. He pointed out his thought by saying “Yellow or black, a cat that catches mice is a good cat” (Roberts, 2006, p. 270).

For these reasons Liu and Deng were called “capitalist-roaders.”

Lin Biao completed the modernization program of the military army. He also supported nuclear development, so China could detonate a nuclear device in 1964. However, he had political ambitions and compiled Mao’s



thought as a book which latter would be titled *Quotations form Chairman Mao Tse-tung*. It was known as the famous *Little Red Book*.

During the Post-Leap Forward period, Mao Tse-tung was regaining control of the party with the aid of his wife and Lin Biao. Mao Tse-tung paid attention to education and culture. Mao believed that the incentives given to peasants had generated capitalist and antisocialist trends in the country. In order to eliminate them, he launched the Socialist Education Movement in 1963. Its purpose was to re-foster the revolutionary fervor in the party and government bureaucracies, and to increment class struggle. He also criticized the confidence placed on examinations and the high esteem given to teachers. He thought it was necessary to link education with production. In culture, Mao always thought artists should help revolution by endorsing proletarian values. In the 1960s novels about political affairs appeared. One of them was “Hai Rui Dismissed from Office” written by Wu Han who was a historian and Beijing Deputy Mayor. The novel was about an upright official (Hai Rui) who was dismissed by the emperor because he did not accept the confiscation of the land of peasants. The novel was considered a criticism of Mao’s actions during the Great Leap Forward. Consequently, Mao ordered his wife to define a culture program. Finally, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966.



2.5.1.4 The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution lasted from 1966 until 1976; that is, it ended with Mao's death and the arrest of the Gang of Four - Qing Jiang, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen.

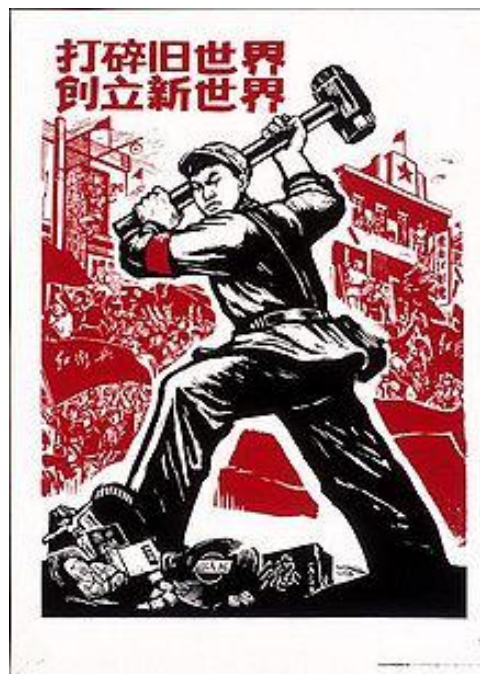
The purpose of this Cultural Revolution was, according to Mao, to clean China of people holding authority positions who were becoming capitalists. Mao thought education, culture, and art had to be removed from any element which did not agree with socialism. In other words, the Proletarian Cultural Revolution was the first mass action against the CCP apparatus itself.

The Cultural Revolution did not have the whole approbation of the party. There were two positions. Mao and Lin Biao, with the support of the People's Liberation Army, were in favor of the Cultural Revolution, while Liu Shaoqi and Den Xiaoping were against it. In an effort to reconcile these two factions, Premier Zhou Enlai remained loyal to Mao.

At the moment, Jiang Qing and Lin Biao had begun Mao's cult of personality. In a speech Lin said that Chairman Mao Tse-tung was a genius and just one of Mao's words could take priority over thousands of the words of others. Reactions shortly came out. In May, 1966, a philosophy teacher at Beijing University put a big-character poster on the wall of the campus indicating that the rector and other academic authorities were against the

CCP. Mao ordered his people to broadcast the incident and in a short time many big-character posters criticizing educational leaders and educational policies appeared in different universities throughout China. In addition, there was formed the Red Guard, a guard of young people whose purpose was to punish and to neutralize both the intellectuals and Mao's enemies.

The Red Guard groups could travel freely throughout the country. They were encouraged to destroy the four olds: old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits. Below, there is a Chinese poster of the Cultural Revolution time urging people to smash the old world and to construct a new world following the example of a worker who crushes the crucifix, Buddha, and classical Chinese texts with his hammer.



Picture 42: "Destroying the old world," poster of the Cultural Revolution

Source: <http://elzine.com/cultural-revolution-campaign-posters.html>



The Red Guard's duties were supported by the "four big rights;" that is, speaking out freely, airing views fully, holding great debates, and writing big-character posters. These features were institutionalized in the constitution of 1975.

The Red Guard groups did not act only in the universities and colleges. They also were permitted to enter factories and communes. As a result, worker organizations took control of some cities while local authorities were forced to resign. Then Mao and the Gang of Four endorsed a new structure - the Revolutionary Committee- which was formed of representatives of mass organizations, Party cadres, and the People's Revolutionary Army. However, there was internal fighting because among these people there were radicals and conservatives who competed among themselves; also, everyone wanted protection against the others.

The Red Guard groups and mass organizations had obtained arms and there were pitched battles everywhere. China was in chaos. Mao, with the support of Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai, purged some radicals from the Cultural Revolution Group. Civil order was restored by the People's Revolutionary Army. People were encouraged to read the little red book in order to reach a revolutionary consensus.

In 1968, Mao Tse-tung was aware of the necessity of giving up revolutionary violence because in 1967 Liu Shaoqi, Den Xiaoping, and their fellow revisionists and capitalist supporters had been purged from the public



arena. In the case of Liu, he was imprisoned and beaten. In 1968, he was taken to a solitary prison where he died sick and alone. Meanwhile, Deng Xiaoping was removed from top offices but not imprisoned. He was sent to a remote factory to work as a machinist.

As Mao with his supporters was in command of the political scene, the Red Guard groups were disbanded.

The activist phase of the Cultural Revolution was formally ended at the CCP's Ninth National Party Congress in 1969. The CCP had gotten a new leadership, Mao was confirmed as the supreme leader, and Lin Biao was promoted to the post of CCP vice chairman. In other words, Lin Biao was named as Mao's successor. However they had different points of view about foreign policy. While Lin Biao thought China had to fight against the Soviet Union and the United States and to ally with oppressed and revolutionary peoples, Mao believe in improving the relations with the West, in general, and the United States, in particular. This was the advice given by Zhou Enlai and a group of regional commanders who disagreed on certain of Lin Biao's policies. Indeed, in spite of radical objections, China shifted toward the right of the center. China's decision of a rapprochement to the United States was carried out in 1972 by President Richard M. Nixon's visit.

Mao began suspecting Lin's actual intentions. Mao was not wrong. In 1971, Lin with his son planned a plot to kill Mao. The coup failed and Lin fled with his family. Regrettably, they died when their plane crashed in Mongolia.



The first consequences were the purge of Lin Biao's closest supporters. Also, the PLA was depoliticized and efforts were made to professionalize it. Finally, those people who had been persecuted or who had fallen into disgrace between 1966 and 1968 were rehabilitated.

Mao's major issue was to find a successor. He thought of Zhou Enlai who was always a faithful supporter. However, Zhou was diagnosed with cancer. Then Zhou Enlai encouraged Mao to consider Deng Xiaoping who was rehabilitated in 1973. Together, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping came to exert strong influence, although following a moderate line. Deng began the four modernizations; that is, the postponed reforms in agriculture, industry, defense, and science and technology.

When Zhou Enlai died in January, 1976, Mao changed his mind about supporting Deng Xiaoping as a consequence of his wife's influence. Nevertheless, Mao did not choose any of the Gang of Four to become the new Premier. Instead, he considered Hua Guofeng, the former First Secretary of the Party in Hunan. Nevertheless, the Gang of Four criticized him openly.

On April 5, people gathered in Tiananmen Square to mourn the death of Zhou Enlai and also to show their discontent toward the Gang of Four. The Central Committee ordered police to disperse the crowds. The Gang of Four accused Deng Xiaoping as the author of the incident and Mao had his chance to remove Deng from the office. Deng was put under house arrest.



When Mao died in September, 1976, Mao's wife thought the Gang of Four would succeed Mao. She was wrong. Hua Guofeng ordered the arrest of the Gang of Four. They were accused of trying to usurp the power. After four years, they were on trial because they were accused of being part of the coup led by Lin Biao against Mao. Jiang Qing was given life imprisonment. Mao's wife could not cope with the penalty and committed suicide in 1991.

A short reflection about the consequences of the Cultural Revolution is given in this part. For Mao Tse-tung the aims of the Cultural Revolution were fulfilled because revisionism and bourgeois influences were gotten rid of.

However, this chapter of China's history had negative effects that have continued affecting the Chinese population until the present. We have to indicate that the campaign of the "Destruction of the Four Olds" caused the devastation of religious buildings, such as temples, churches, mosques, monasteries, and cemeteries. The worst aspects of this destructive campaign were incidents of torture, rape, and killing. Many of the persecuted people preferred suicide to beatings and humiliation. In addition, young students could not study because they became members of the Red Guard. When it was disbanded, many students were sent to the countryside to do manual labor and they had to learn from the peasants.



2.5.2 The Pragmatic Phase (1976 –)

The post Mao Tse-tung's era was dominated by Deng Xiaoping. He was restored to office and began developing the functions which he had executed before the incident in the Tiananmen Square in 1976. For four years, he focused on the rehabilitation of the victims of the Cultural Revolution. During this time, Hua Guofeng remained premier. Nevertheless, he had to resign because of the bad performance of the People's Liberation Army in an incident trying to support Cambodia. Then Deng Xiaoping took the control until 1987 when he resigned from the Central Committee. However, he influenced Chinese politics until his death in 1997.

2.5.3 China under Deng Xiaoping

After Mao's death, people wanted Deng Xiaoping to be returned to power. The Central Committee exonerated Deng from the incident in Tiananmen Square in 1976, and he assumed the posts he had exercised before the incident. In 1977, Hua was confirmed as chairman of the Party and Deng as one of the vice-chairmen. Deng was an important person in the Party. Indeed, he was number two in China.

In 1978, there were two factions in the Party –Hua's faction and Deng's faction. Hua was named leftist and he called for large-scale projects and the following of Mao Tse-tung's thoughts. Meanwhile, Deng was



supported by students who set big-character posters against Deng's enemies. Deng changed the Party's structure by purging leftists and placing his allies in high positions. In addition, he proposed to change the "two whatevers" policy by the Four Modernizations. The "Two whatevers" policy meant the support of whatever policy decisions Chairman Mao had made and the following of whatever instructions Chairman Mao had given. Den was proposing that instead of the class struggle, the government would base itself on "seeking truth from facts." In other words, the regime decided to march according to economics instead of politics.

In 1979, the CCP began to analyze its actions from the time of its foundation, and especially during its thirty years of Communist rule. They made an assessment of the Cultural Revolution. The official historical judgment took place in Beijing from late 1980 to early 1981. The Party declared that the Cultural Revolution was a grave error led by Mao Tse-tung under the counterrevolutionary manipulation of Lin Biao and the Gang of Four. The Party also pointed out that the Cultural Revolution caused chaos inside the Communist Party and among the Chinese population. This decision is part of a historical document titled "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China." The Party also praised Mao's contributions in favor of the Chinese revolution and his legacy because they were more significant than the mistakes he made. In this way, the CCP closed the Maoist era and began the Four Modernizations' stage known as the Second Revolution.



Because of the shift of growth of China's population, in 1979 the "one-child" policy was introduced. The government gave incentives for couples who accepted the policy. However, couples who did not accept could lose their private plot of land or their contracts. Of course, the government made exceptions in the case of couples who had children with congenital defects.

The Party defined as its new target the transformation of China into a modern socialist country for the twentieth century. Consequently, in the 1980s, China became involved in reforms as a way of reaching the goal of the Four Modernizations. There were reforms of everything: Politics, economics, the military, culture, arts, etc. Instead of the communes, a responsibility system was established to make decisions about production and distribution aspects which before were determined in Beijing. For example, the household-responsibility system allowed families to lease a plot and cultivate crops of their election. In addition, families could retain or sell the surplus of the contract. This policy incentivated people and the grain output grew from 3.5 to 5 percent annually. There were necessary additional strategies, such as more agricultural machinery, chemical fertilizers, and electric power.

In the industrial sector, in the 1980s incentives for workers were introduced and the industries began to produce consumer goods. Foreign trade increased and industrial output doubled. Economic politics changed from a centralized planning determined by the government to be controlled by the market force. In other words, before the government ordered each



industry what to produce, where to buy the raw materials, where to sell, and the price of the products. Now, the enterprises complied with the law of supply and demand.

Similarly, as in previous times, foreign experts were invited to join in the Chinese reform. Foreign investment took place while Chinese students were abroad to specialize in technical and scientific fields.

As the basis of the Four Modernizations was technological expertise, the Second Revolution was expensive and required the support of the Chinese people. A self-sufficient concept was changed for foreign loans and other capitalist practices.

Because political and economical reforms were carried out at the same time, the reformers had to make corrections in order to balance the forces and keep the pace of the Four Modernizations. Decision making was based on actual data in order to avoid the failures, such as those which occurred during the Great Leap Forward.

Party members realized that China was in the initial stage of Socialism because of the leftist errors, such as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, which had impeded socialist modernization. Deng believed that the party had to change its ideological basis in order to achieve reform. He proposed to base his policy on the Marxist-Leninist creed after



making adaptations according to the special characteristics taking place in China.

Authorities were aware that instituting reform brought difficulties because they had to restructure the economy while avoiding production disruptions. They had to design a framework that allowed carrying out the Four Modernizations. This framework had to cope with practical difficulties, such as the lack of markets, and bank and taxation systems. The actual levels of supply and demand were not accurately known. Also, authorities had to make reforms in laws. Constitutional amendments were necessary to legitimize private business and land sales and to encourage foreign investment.

In the 1980s, China improved its relations with other countries in its effort to open up to the outside world. China practiced a foreign policy of peace.

In 1987, there was a renovation of the Party Political Bureau. Veteran militants, Deng Xiaoping among them, stepped down in favor of younger and technically oriented members. In the case of Deng, he retained his position as chairman of the party. It is important to indicate that from that time, the Political Bureau's role changed from being an influential group to being a consensual decision-making association.



About the democracy movement in China, it sometimes was endorsed by the CCP and other times, it was suppressed. That happened under Mao Tse-tung and also under Deng Xiaoping. In 1978, the movement was comprised of workers and technicians. They put posters in Beijing saying that democracy had to be the fifth modernization. At the beginning, Deng agreed with them because it helped to defeat the remaining group of Maoists. However, by 1979, Deng removed some democratic freedoms promoted by Mao Tse-tung during the Cultural Revolution and recognized in the Constitution. They were known as the "four big rights;" that is, speaking out freely, airing views fully, holding great debates, and writing big-character posters. Many members of the government who agreed with the democracy movement had to resign. The worst demonstration against the democracy movement took place in June, 1989, in the proximities of the Tiananmen Square. Because of the seventieth anniversary of the end of the imperial era, some people asked for freedom to express their opinion. Initially, the People's Revolutionary Army did nothing because in May Mikhail Gorbachev was in China for an official visit. However, on June 4 and 5, the army killed around 800 people. The government said that the action had to be fulfilled because those people had tried to generate a coup.

Deng abandoned the political scene in 1992. Because of the Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989, his economic reforms began to have less power and there emerged opponents within the Party. For this reason, Deng carried out his southern tour of China.



Although Deng Xiaoping died in 1997, his influence in China went on under Jiang Zemin who maintained Deng's political and economic reforms.

2.5.4 China since the Death of Deng Xiaoping

Jiang Zemin helped the elite. He did not have military support, so he made strategic appointments, encouraged military modernization, and increased military funding. In 2003, Hu Jintao was the President and Wen Jiabao was the Premier. Together they tried to generate a policy whereby the majority of the population could satisfy their primary necessities.

The government had tried to keep control over information broadcasting through the media. This task became difficult when the Internet and cell-phone companies came out. The government formed the "Internet police force" as an attempt to prevent the spread of suspect information. In addition, authorities asked Microsoft to develop a new monitoring software. Also, bloggers and hosts of international chat shows had to register with the authorities. In recent years, groups of Internet commentators have appeared with the task of controlling the discussion of delicate issues.

When China decided to enter the World Trade Organization, the government had to define drastic measures. It was necessary to close many state-owned enterprises and to reduce state employment. As a result of these actions, around the third part of China's workforce lost their jobs. The



government offered to relocate workers. That never happened. Conversely, they had to survive with their families' aid. It is estimated that by 2000 around 20 percent of the population was unemployed.

In the 1980s, China began to export clothes, zippers, toothbrushes, and children's toys. In the early 2000s, China was exporting washing machines and cameras. At present, Chinese television sets, cell phones, and computers are found around the world.

This economic development has had advantages and disadvantages. Some people have made fortunes and have improved their lifestyles. However, the great majority did not earn enough money to satisfy their primary necessities. The differences between the lifestyle in the city and in the countryside are now wider than before. For this reason, around 50 million poor people desiring to improve their economy have moved from the countryside to the cities, especially to the coastal ones which have achieved a major economic development.

Another negative aspect of development is pollution. China's energy requirements have been supplied by unwashed coal producing high pollution with emissions of sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide. China produces 10% of the carbon monoxide emissions in the world, so it is highly involved in the greenhouse effect. For this reason, China, India, the United States, and South Korea have made an agreement in order to reduce the emissions of carbon monoxide. However, there is much to do in the future.



The “one-child” policy is carried out rigidly in the cities, but on the countryside two children are permitted. Actually, China’s population is around 1.3 billion. However, it is estimated that by 2033 China’s population will be 1.5 billion. This represents a huge problem because China is not self-sufficient enough to produce the required food for its population. At the moment, China is importing large quantities of soya cultivated in Brazil.

The former policy of the People’s Republic of China was to be self-sufficient. Indeed, it had become self-sufficient in the production of primary products. This was achieved by manufacturing products for exportation. At the present, China is a dependant country. Now China has to import the raw materials for its industries. In addition, China’s energy requirements are huge. For this reason, this nation has invested in Africa to make sure of its oil supply in the future.

China is in its economic boom and is known as the Asiatic giant country in which the economy challenges the economies of powerful nations, such as of the United States, Japan, and the European Union. Nevertheless, there are other aspects that have to be put in the Chinese government’s agenda: human rights, democracy, problems unsolved with some Chinese regions, such as Tibet, Taiwan, Xianggang, and more recently, the Uighur in Xinjiang.

When will the Chinese economic boom end? Nobody knows. However, an economic corollary indicates that when the economy grows,



there is no political discontent. Conversely, when the economy slows down, a crisis will break out. The cycle will close and the Mandate of Heaven will give power to someone else who deserves it. When that happens, will the Chinese population be willing to start a new revolution?



CHAPTER 3

HOW ARE THE TWO WORLDS, THE OLD AND THE NEW, REFLECTED IN HER NOVELS?

In order to develop this chapter, we chose the novel *The Good Earth* and analyzed it to determine the way the old and the new worlds are reflected in it. For this reason, we first focus on traditional Chinese practices to understand the plot of the novel. After that, we talk about *The Good Earth* itself. Then we refer to the novel's scenery, characters, and structure. We continue with a summary of the thirty-four chapters of the novel. After that, we analyze how the ancient Chinese customs are reflected in the main characters of *The Good Earth*, Wang Lung and his wife O-lan. Finally, we talk about the new world and the Chinese society after the Imperial era.

3.1 ANCIENT CHINESE CUSTOMS

Different customs were practiced in different places around the world. For example, many years ago, some tribes located in the oriental Ecuadorian territory used to shrink their enemies' heads to make "tzantzas." This could be something rare for other peoples. In the same way, westerners who traveled to China during the nineteenth century were impressed by two customs practiced by the Chinese: Foot binding and concubinage. Below



we explain these traditional practices because they are greatly focused on Pearl S. Buck's novel, *The Good Earth*.

3.1.1 Concubinage

In the nineteenth century, Chinese society was regulated by Confucian and Neo-Confucian rules which gave particular importance to the family as the primary social unit. These regulations also emphasized having male children to prolong the family line because female children belonged to their husbands' families. Furthermore, those norms placed women in a secondary background – the domestic one. Daughters' duties were to obey their parents' authority, assist their mothers in domestic tasks, and, in elite families, to learn to read and to write.

According to the traditional marriage system, Chinese men were allowed to have more than one wife. Conversely, Chinese women could have only one husband. When a woman had a lover, this was a cause for divorce and the affair was regarded as a criminal offense.

History tells us that emperors had concubines in the thousands. They, emperors and imperial concubines, lived in a place located far from the city called the "Forbidden City." Common men were unacceptable in that place. Only eunuchs were permitted to take care of the imperial concubines who had two purposes. First, making sure the emperor had an heir. Second,

assuring the emperor could feel sexually satisfied by the fulfillment of any of his sexual fantasies.

It is said that the most successful concubine in China was Yehenala who later became the Dowager Empress Cixi when she gave birth to the only male heir of the Xian Feng Emperor. Dowager Empress Cixi was an astute woman who by different ways took the control of the Chinese government for around half a century.

Below, we include one of the historical oil paintings by Western artists depicting Empress Dowager Cixi.



Picture 43: Empress Dowager Cixi, 1905

Source: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Empress-Dowager-Cixi1.jpg>



When Gu Hongming (1857-1928), a noted scholar of the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), was asked to explain the traditional norm ruling marriage in China, he replied using a practical metaphor: It is normal to set one teapot with four cups, but it is strange to set a cup with four teapots.

Among the most important reasons the patriarchal Chinese society justified concubinage are the following three: wives' sterility, absence of male descendants, and husbands' sexual satisfaction.

When wives could not become pregnant after some years, they had to encourage their husbands to find a concubine. Otherwise, sterile wives could be thrown out by their husbands because not having children was one of the seven reasons for divorce.

If a woman could not bear male descendants, the man had the right to look for them in other women –concubines- to continue the family lineage.

Confucian scholars also spread the idea of having a wife for her virtues and then a concubine for her beauty. This practice had the following explanation: Since the parents or the matchmaker arranged the marriage, a man only knew his wife on the wedding day. If the wife was a beautiful woman, the man could feel satisfied. However, if his wife was not beautiful, he could take a concubine for her beauty. If the bride's mother was a wealthy woman, she could get attractive servants for her son-in-law's



pleasure. In that way, a Chinese man could have a sexual mate without searching out of his house.

Concubines could come mostly from a poor family or from a tea house (Chinese elegant brothel). Whatever the source, the possession of a concubine was a sign of wealth and power. Indeed, only rich men could afford concubines. As a result, the concubine's owner was a person admired and respected by his friends, neighbors, and the society in general.

Since in ancient China concubinage was allowed and regulated by the law as a legal custom, concubines' status was only inferior to that of the first wives and it depended on their lords' favor and the first wives' benevolence. "A concubine could improve her lot by producing an heir (although their sons would be inferior to legitimate children), but this could happen at the expense of the goodwill of the wife" (*Concubines of Ancient China*, <http://www.beijingmadeeasy.com/beijing-history/concubines-of-ancient-china>).

Finally, we focus on wives' and concubines' roles. Undoubtedly, they had different responsibilities. Wives were responsible for the running of their households: making food, caring for the children, having clothes ready, arranging of the house, and training their daughters how to manage their own households in the future. On the other hand, concubines had the duty of being ready for their masters' sexual satisfaction. They had to maintain themselves beautiful and to be available for their masters' sexual desires.



Concubines usually had their own courts where they had to stay. If they had gained some power and influence, it would have been the result of their ability to captivate their masters and to get their favor.

3.1.2 Foot Binding

Sometimes it is difficult to know the true origin of some Chinese customs because of the diversity of them, of the extension of the country, and of its society. Nobody knows accurately how the practice of foot binding began. However, there are four stories that have tried to explain the origin of that practice.

1. It is said that a poet-king of the Song dynasty (960 A.D. – 1279 A.D.), named Li Yu, thought a dancer would dance gracefully if she had her feet bound in cloth. He had his favorite dancer's feet bound with cloth decorated with pearls and precious jewels in designs to resemble lotus flowers. Consequently, the practice of foot binding with these decorated cloths began to be called "little golden lilies." The poet-king wrote verses explaining the beauty of bound feet. As a result, the practice of foot binding became a fashionable thing in China.
2. The second story is about a king of the Tang dynasty (618 A.D. – 907 A.D.) and one of his concubines who had devised a way to please her master and to become the favorite. She had bound her feet. The king



felt so pleased over his concubine's bound feet that the ladies of the Court began binding their feet to please the king.

3. The third story says that during the Shang dynasty (1700 B.C. - 1027 B.C.) lived the Empress Tak-ki who had club feet. She felt so ashamed of her deformed feet that she forced women in the kingdom to bind their feet.
4. The last story explains that there was a king whose wife was always interfering with ruling affairs. The king was so desperate that he ordered his wife's feet and the feet of her followers to be bound. Indeed, the measure made the queen stay in her quarters because of the pain of her feet in walking and keeping her balance. Now the king could rule in peace.

As you can see, these four stories have to do with royalty, power, sophistication, and social prestige. Consequently, although the practice of foot binding began in the Court, in a short period of time, it was adopted by the upper class, and after that, it spread throughout the kingdom. The technique of bound feet had its apogee for a thousand years, a period during which approximately a billion women underwent the torture of Chinese foot binding.

The process of foot binding began when a girl was between four to seven years old. The feet were bound tightly with bandages of ten foot length



and two inches width making sure that the four small toes were bent under the sole and the big toe almost touched the heel. In the future, the woman would stand on her deformed heel and toes. The process produced lack of circulation, so that the feet did not grow normally. Conversely, they were shrunken progressively because the bandages were tightened every day. The tightening of the bandages ended when the deformed feet could fit tiny shoes of 3 or 4 inches. The process of foot binding deformed the feet into a moon shape.



Picture 44: Bound foot

Source: <http://library.thinkquest.org/J0111742/footbinding.htm>



Picture 45: A slipper for a bound foot

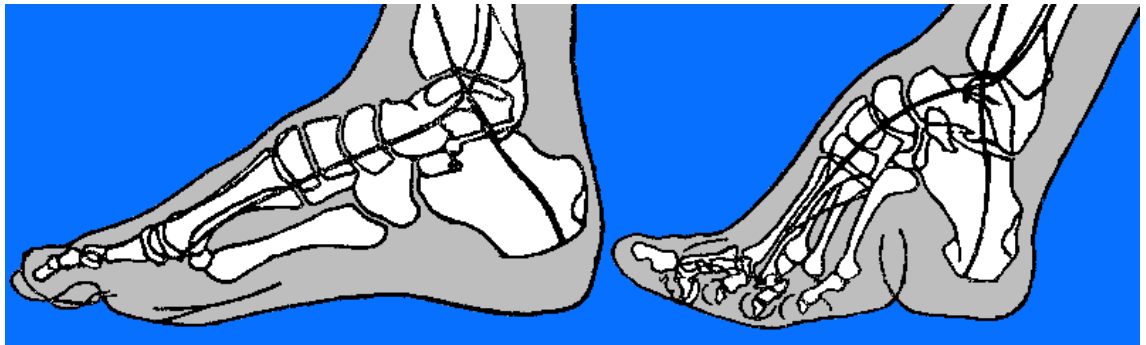
Source: <http://library.thinkquest.org/J0111742/footbinding.htm>



Picture 48: Left: Bound feet

Right: Normal feet

Source: http://www.google.com.ec/imgres?imgurl=http://img32.imageshack.us/img32/1131/0702a03b3pu.jpg&imgrefurl=http://aorijia.com/2006/12/&usg=__0hjZjH5IVHKTEQdGlpfTAghP9pw=&h=300&w=400&sz=12&hl=es&start=277&zoom=1&tbnid=d9g4QwWhDz9EBM:&tbnh=167&tbnw=246&ei=CzF4TeiOJ5Gctwe3x5WqBg&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dfoot%2Bbinding%26um%3D1%26hl%3Des%26biw%3D1230%26bih%3D506%26tbs%3Disch:1&chk=sbg&um=1&itbs=1&iact=rc&dur=387&oei=_jB4TfeKClG00QGlXZG4Bw&page=26&ndsp=13&ved=1t:429,r:9,s:277&tx=64&ty=57



Picture 49: X- Rays Left: Normal feet Right: Bound feet

Source: http://www.google.com.ec/imgres?imgurl=http://ancient-chinese-civilization.wikispaces.com/file/view/Foot_binding_X-ray.gif/72139589/Foot_binding_X-ray.gif&imgrefurl=http://ancient-chinese-civilization.wikispaces.com/Group%2BG&usg=__ZzTOjuaHe9ULAX1_UxrMWJUoiHg=&h=242&w=800&sz=12&hl=es&start=0&zoom=1&tbnid=VvuEsdHipWenzM:&tbnh=43&tbnw=141&ei=sTF4TaCGC4m2tweV9lycBg&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dfoot%2Bbinding%26um%3D1%26hl%3Des%26biw%3D1230%26bih%3D506%26tbs%3Disch:1%2C0&um=1&itbs=1&iact=hc&vpx=163&vpy=229&dur=1988&hovh=123&hovw=409&tx=247&ty=85&oei=5jB4TbKkMaqV0QH_uvCgBw&page=1&ndsp=21&ved=1t:429,r:8,s:0&biw=1230&bih=506



The process of foot binding lasted many years and involved pain and dangers such as infection, gangrene, and, finally, death. The following old Chinese saying explains in a few words the painful process of foot binding: “for every pair of small feet, there is a jar full of tears.”

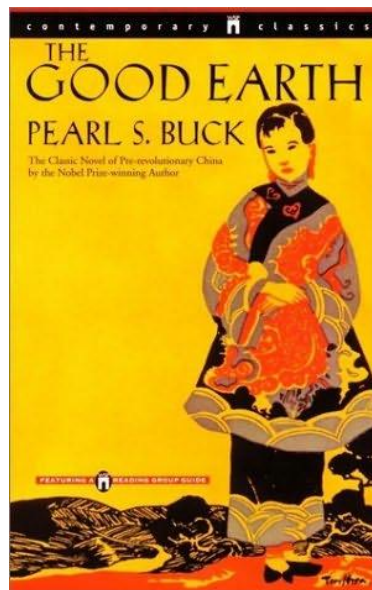
Because perfect tiny feet were appreciated by men in power or with a lot of money, women throughout the country bound their feet. Although foot binding was a painful process, the results could guarantee a woman a future of luxury and prestige. Emperors and poets traveled to the southern provinces to get to know its famous women with perfect bound feet.

Having bound feet was also a way of seduction. Men thought that when a girl had bound feet, her waist was slender and her breast and hips became bigger and shapely.

In sum, foot binding became part of Chinese culture for two reasons. First, it was enforced by the Confucian teachings that focused on the subjugation of women to men. A woman with bound feet was a person who depended completely on her husband who could punish her, with or without reason, and she could not defend herself. Also, bound feet made women stay at home all the time because walking was difficult and painful for them. This situation guaranteed a wife’s chastity. Second, foot binding was also enforced by men’s sexual satisfaction. Foot binding deformed feet into a shape that resembled a crescent moon which was taken as an erotic symbol. It is said that there were written a great number of ways of getting sexual

pleasure by manipulating bound feet. Indeed, foot binding became a prerequisite for marriage.

3.2 *THE GOOD EARTH*



Picture 50: Front cover of the novel, *The Good Earth*

Source: <http://img1.fantasticfiction.co.uk/images/n26/n132022.jpg>

In January, 1931, *The Good Earth* was chosen by the Book-of-the-Month-Club as the best book. The decision came from the panelist Dorothy Canfield Fisher who once she began to read the novel could not stop reading until she finished it. According to Fisher, *The Good Earth* was a book of “first importance” (Conn, 1996, p. 123). Consequently, when the panel met again, they agreed unanimously on the selection of *The Good Earth* as the book of that month. The members of the club enjoyed reading Pearl’s novel. Knowing that, Richard Walsh published the book in March, 1931.



Picture 51: “The Good Earth desk”

Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/8856520@N07/1488378503/in/gallery-47480924@N02-72157625734544148/>

People welcomed Pearl's novel. Newspapers and magazines gave great reviews. Indeed, *The Good Earth* was the best selling book in 1931 and 1932. As a consequence, Pearl won a Pulitzer Prize. In November, 1935, the American Academy of Arts and Letters awarded Pearl with the prestigious Howells Medal. Pearl felt encouraged because that distinction was given each fifth year to the most distinguished American fiction published during that period. A few weeks later, the American Academy honored Pearl again. This time, Pearl was made a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Pearl thought that for the first time her work was recognized by literary experts. In 1938, Pearl won the Nobel Prize of Literature. She was the first American woman and the third American to win the Swedish award, after Sinclair Lewis in 1930 and Eugene O'Neill in 1936. The academy awarded Pearl for the body of her work; that is, for her Chinese novels and the biographies of her parents: *The Exile* and *Angel*.



Picture 52: Pearl receiving the Nobel Prize form King Gustavus V in Stockholm, December, 1938

Source: http://arthostage.blogspot.com/2007/06/tale-of-two-icons-pearl-buck-back-bob_28.html

The popularity of *The Good Earth* could be explained in its plot. The novel shows the reality of the peasants' lives in China. In the book, there are no stereotypes. Conversely, it focuses on the daily routine –land labor and traditions- and problems – flood, drought and famine- that poor peasants have to confront. In addition, *The Good Earth* indicates what was happening in China after the overthrow of the ancestral dynasties; that is, the book reflects some aspects of the Chinese revolution.

The Good Earth had critics, mainly Chinese intellectuals and authorities who thought Pearl should write about other themes and not about Chinese peasants. However, Pearl wrote about what she witnessed during her stay in China. In the chapter I, we have explained that Pearl was the voice of the voiceless and in *The Good Earth* she gave her tribute to the



mass of poor peasants who were not benefited by the dynasties. Although Pearl did not agree with Communism, she recognized that only Communists took into account “the proletariat” (peasants). This fact had placed Communists in power in China from 1949.

Pearl also received bad critics from the missionary community because her novel did not focus on the American missionary work done in China. To the contrary, Pearl’s novel is secular.

Before *The Good Earth* appeared, Americans thought of Chinese people as strange people because they behaved differently from them. Westerners only knew oriental stereotypes shown in magazines or cartoons. As an example, Chinese men wore long pigtails and Chinese women had bound feet. Also, when Chinese people were mourning their dead, they wore white instead of black clothes as Western people were accustomed to do. Furthermore, Chinese people removed their shoes instead of their hats when they entered a house. In *The Good Earth*, Pearl S. Buck tried to demonstrate to American people that the Chinese were human beings having good and bad times, human beings with different customs; in sum, human beings with feelings, aims, and necessities. In this way, Pearl began her crusade of multiculturalism by building bridges to connect the East and the West based on her own experiences after living for forty-two years in her beloved China.

Although most Americans did not like books about China, *The Good Earth* stayed in the book market for six decades. There are four reasons for the success of this novel. First of all, Pearl Buck was a fine storyteller. She



described the rural life in detail: the earthen houses, the rural landscape, the tools used in land labor, the clothes, the food, the customs, etc. Second, she used a formal style that dignified the ordinary peasant life. Third, the novel focused on the universal theme of farmers. Americans felt caught up by the theme because when the novel appeared in 1931, they were coping with the years of the Great Depression when thousands of farmers were pushed off their homesteads because of economic collapse and natural disasters such as droughts. Finally, Americans have always placed high value on the simple life. *The Good Earth* tells about the simple life of farmers in rural China.

In 1937, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's adaptation of *The Good Earth* opened in theatres across the United States. It was a success. The actor Paul Muni as Wang Lung and the actress Luise Rainer as O-lan played the two most important roles of the movie. **The Good Earth movie** was nominated for a total of five Academy Awards® including Best Picture, Best Actress (Luise Rainer), Best Direction (Sidney Franklin), Best Cinematography (Karl Freund), and Best Film Editing (Basil Wrangell). At the end, **The Good Earth movie** won two Oscars, one for the Best Actress and one for the Best Cinematography.

3.2.1 Scenery

The plot of *The Good Earth* took place in Anhwei (Anhui) in the 1920's.

Anhwei is located in Eastern China and it is one of China's smallest provinces. Until 1949, most of its population was rural, and the standard of its agriculture was low because of poor use of water resources. The region is watered by two important rivers: the Huai River in the north and the Yangtze River in the south. Chief crops are wheat and cotton in the north, and rice and silk in the south.



Picture 53: Location of Anhui province in China

Source: <http://www.chinatoday.com/city/anhui.htm>

Pearl and Lossing lived in Nanhsuchou, Anhwei, China from 1917 to 1919. Tiny villages and graves stood out from the arid landscape. The Bucks had to cope with a harsh climate. The dust was in the air all the time. They did not have amenities at all, and they had to cope with bandits and soldiers. During this time there was no central government in China.



Instead, in each province there was a strong leader named the warlord. In sum, at this time Wardorism controlled China's politics.

During her stay, Pearl saw the poverty of the people of that region who lived on the edge of starvation. She also knew about the beliefs and practices of China's farmers. She admired the integrity of farming families. To Pearl, the farmers were the ones who worked the most and earned the least. They were the most genuine people of that region. They were exposed to natural disasters and found consolation in their goods. They faced birth and death - good and bad crops. Their motivation and hope was their plots of earth from which they got everything: house, utensils, food, and a place for eternal rest.



Picture 54: A Chinese peasant with his loyal labor companion, an ox

Source: http://www.vigoenfotos.com/china/guilin_campos_arroz_rice_2.html#menu



Picture 55: Rice cultivation in China

Source: http://www.vigoenfotos.com/china/guilin_campos_arroz_rice_2.html#menu



Picture 56: A farmer walks on a dried-up field at Sanshigang Village of Hefei, Anhui province, 2009

Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/11/02/us-china-crops-weather-idUSTRE5A10J920091102>

3.2.2 Characters

In order to comprehend the summary of the novel The Good Earth in the best way, it is necessary to mention some details related to Chinese names. First of all, in China the last name is always written first. Consequently, in the Chinese name Wang Lung, Wang is the last name or family name and Lung is the first name. Second, in Chinese names, it is also common to refer to a person by his or her profession. For example, Wang Lung is a peasant farmer. In some parts of the novel he is mentioned as “Wang, the farmer.” Another example is “Liu, the grain merchant.” Finally, some characters are designated by taking into account their relation to another character. As an example, Wang Lung has an uncle and his uncle has a son; the son is named as Wang Lung’s uncle’s son or the uncle’s son.

In the novel *The Good Earth*, the following characters appear.



Wang Lung, the farmer

Wang Lung was a peasant farmer whose life was bound to the earth. After getting excellent harvests, he could get some land from the House of Hwang. However, Wang Lung and his family had to go to the south because of a great famine. In the south, he worked pulling a rickshaw. Suddenly, the poor attacked the house of a wealthy family. Wang Lung got some gold thus becoming a rich man. He returned to the north and founded the House of Wang.

Wang Lung's father

He was an elderly man who lived with his son in an earthen house. He got a wife for his son. His daughter-in-law, O-lan, made his life more comfortable. In the south, he took care of his grand-daughter because O-lan was pregnant again. He appreciated O-lan and felt sad when she got sick.

Wang Lung's wife: O-lan



O-lan was a servant in the House of Hwang, a wealthy family living in the north. She was an excellent cook but an unattractive woman. She had big unbound feet, something that Wang Lung detested. However, she became Wang Lung's wife because Wang Lung was a farmer and did not have enough money to get a beautiful wife. O-lan dedicated the rest of her life to being a good wife, mother and worker who helped her husband in the land labor. She also obtained some jewels in the south when the poor attacked the rich and helped her husband to become a wealthy man. She never asked for servants although she became the wife of a rich man. Conversely, her husband got a concubine although O-lan was a great wife, mother, and companion.

Wang Lung's uncle

He was the younger brother of Wang Lung's father. He was a bad farmer who sold his crops at low prices because he did not wait until the grain was ripe. He always said he was an unlucky man because he had two daughters. During a great famine, he joined a band of thieves named The Red Beards. When Wang Lung and his family returned to the north, the uncle asked for help. Wang Lung helped his uncle and his family. However, after some years, Wang Lung could not bear his uncle, his uncle's wife, and his uncle's son because of their behavior and abuse. Wang Lung could do



nothing because he knew his house was safe because his uncle was living there. Otherwise, the band of thieves would attack the house.

Wang Lung's uncle's wife

She was a fat woman who did not take care of her house and her family. She was happy living in Wang Lung's house because she could eat the delicacies cooked by Cuckoo. She could do what she wanted because she became Lotus's friend.

Wang Lung's uncle's son

He was a lustful man who taught Wang Lung's eldest son to have contact with prostitutes. When Wang Lung's youngest daughter became a beautiful teenager, uncle's son wanted to abuse her sexually.

Wang Lung's concubine: Lotus

She was a beautiful woman who was slender as a bamboo. Wang Lung admired her beauty, especially her bound feet. With the uncle's wife help, Wang Lung made Lotus his concubine and took her to his house. The



villagers envied Wang Lung because everybody wanted to have a toy such as Lotus –she was the dream woman.

Wang Lung’s concubine’s servant: Cuckoo

Initially, she was a servant in the House of Hwang. She was the concubine of the Old Lord. She was a smart woman. When the lord died, she worked in the House of Flowers, a great tea shop, getting men for beautiful prostitutes. She joined Wang Lung and Lotus. She became Lotus’s servant and when years had gone by, she became Lotus’s friend.

Wang Lung’s first son: Nung En

When he was born, his father felt proud of him and dyed some eggs red and gave them to relatives, friends, and neighbors to indicate that he had had a son. Because Wang Lung did not write or read, he had problems at the grain market. Although he was a wealthy man, he could not know what he was signing for. Many merchants made a fool of him. Wang Lung decided to send his eldest son to school to help him in the grain market. However, the eldest son was a lustful man and learned to go to visit prostitutes and even went with Lotus, his father’s concubine. Then his father sent him to the south to study. The eldest son returned when his mother was



dying and married the grain merchant's daughter, a delicate and wealthy woman.

Wang Lung's second son: Nung Wen

He went to school with his older brother. When he was a teenager, his father enrolled him as an apprentice in the grain market. He became a good grain merchant and established a grain market by himself.

Wang Lung's third son

He was a silent boy, as his mother. He wanted to study instead of learning the farm labor. When he was an adolescent, he made the decision to be a soldier and he became a military person in the revolution in the south.

Wang Lung's first daughter: The poor fool

This girl did not have enough food when she was a little baby because of a great famine. As a consequence, her mental development was irregular. When the family was in the south, Wang Lung thought to sell her to get money to return to the north. However, Wang Lung was touched by his



daughter's glances and hugs. The girl could never talk and Wang Lung made the decision of taking care of her.

Wang Lung's second daughter

The second daughter was born during a dreadful famine year which obligated the family to go to the south. Immediately after the birth, O-lan smothered the girl. Wang Lung wrapped the little body with a mat and placed it in an abandoned grave. Immediately, a starving dog came and began to eat the body. Wang Lung could do nothing.

Wang Lung's third daughter

She became a beautiful adolescent. Wang Lung got a husband for her –Liu's son. She went to live in Liu's house before the wedding as a way to protect her against the sexual abuse of the uncle's son.

Pear Blossom

She was the daughter of a poor peasant who, in a great flood, had sold her to get money for food for his family. Because of her beauty, Lotus took her as her servant. Pear Blossom was a delicate girl. When the uncle's



son became a soldier and stayed at Wang Lung's house in the city, he wanted her in bed. She refused and Lotus stopped her appreciation of her. Conversely, Lotus accused Wang Lung of having relations with her because he helped Pear Blossom by sending another servant to the uncle's son. Finally, Lotus's words became truth –Pear Blossom preferred to stay the rest of her life with Wang Lung, an elderly, kind man, rather than to share her life with a young, lustful man.

Wang Lung's neighbor: Ching

He was a poor farmer as Wang Lung was. During the great famine, Ching's wife died and he sent his daughter with a soldier. When Wang Lung returned to the north, he helped Ching as Ching had helped him once by giving some beans for Wang Lung's family. Ching became Wang Lung's friend and worker. Wang Lung appreciated Ching's friendship and labor. When he died, Wang Lung ordered his family to mourn. In addition, he ordered his family to bury Ching in the enclosure for Wang Lung's dead. Furthermore, Wang Lung's desire was to be buried next to Ching when the dying time came.



Liu, the grain merchant

He was a successful merchant in the grain market. Commercial and familiar bonds joined Wang Lung's and Liu's lives. First of all, Wang's eldest son's married Liu's daughter. After that, Liu gave Wang Lung's second son the opportunity to be an apprentice in the grain market. Finally, Wang Lung's second daughter married Liu's son.

The Old Lord Hwang

He was a wealthy man living in a house in the city. He had a great extension of fertile land. However, he lost his fortune in concubines. Wang Lung's dream was to get Old Lord's land. When he got enough money and jewels, Wang Lung acquired the Old Lord's land and house.

The Old Mistress Hwang

She was a wealthy woman who smoked opium. In a ceremony, she gave O-lan to Wang Lung. She also asked O-lan to return with her first son. O-lan fulfilled the demand. The Old Mistress became thin and yellow because of her opium addiction.



3.2.3 Structure

The Good Earth is a novel in the form of a biography of a Chinese farmer named Wang Lung. The story is told chronologically from the hero's young manhood to his old age, a period covering roughly forty years.

Pearl Buck developed through thirty-four chapters the two main parts of the novel.

First part: Chapters 1 to 14

Wang Lung was a poor farmer who prospered because of his daily hard land labor, his wife's cooperation, his father's advice, and the practice of traditional values. However, a great famine forced the family to go to a southern city where, after a lot of new experiences, Wang Lung and his wife got gold and jewels to return to the good earth in the north.

Second part: Chapters 15 to 34

Wang Lung was now a wealthy man who fulfilled his dream of having the land and the house of the formerly well-off family Hwang. He changed his lifestyle because of the money he had. He decided to have a concubine and bought slaves for his family. He became an admired and respected man in his village. His fellow citizens asked him for advice. However, he had

problems with his sons and his uncle. His faithful wife and elderly father died. The good earth always helped him encourage himself and find solutions for solving his difficulties. Wang Lung felt sad because his sons were unsympathetic to traditional ways and to the land, and even his grandchildren laughed at him for his old-fashioned ways. After living in the old House of Hwang for a time, he moved back to his farmhouse with a young slave girl who acted as a daughter and with his own mentally retarded daughter whom nobody else would care for.

3.2.4 Summary

In this part, we present a synopsis of each of the thirty-four chapters of *The Good Earth*.



Picture 57: Wang Lung and O-lan working together

Actor Paul Muni and actress Luise Rainer, *The Good Earth*, the movie, 1937.

Source: <http://www.allstarpics.net/pictures/0653707/the-good-earth-pics.html>



Chapter 1

Wang Lung got up early his marriage day. He looked through a broken window at the bronze dawn. He felt the wind which contained rain. That was a good omen. Rain would make earth to produce grains and vegetables. Water was a precious thing for farmers as Wang Lung, so he had to use it cautiously. However, that day he wanted to bathe his whole body. He poured a jar of water into the cauldron and lit the fire.

Since his mother had died six years before, Wang Lung's duty was to light the fire, boil water, bring it to his father, and prepare breakfast. But this was the last time he would do it. From the next morning, that would be his wife's duty.

Wang Lung's father entered into the kitchen. Wang Lung prepared tea and gave it to his father who complained to his son for using so much water for a bath. The father also refused to drink the tea because tea was expensive. Then Wang Lung reminded his father that it was a special day, his marriage day. He promised to pour the water in the earth after he bathed.

Wang Lung put on the blue cotton garments he wore for festival days. He combed his hair into a long braid. Then he prepared breakfast –corn meal mixed with water. After that he left the house and went to the city to buy food and some incense. He had invited some male relatives and



neighbors for dinner. He would also shave. He wanted to be neat for his wife.

After eating noodles for breakfast, Wang Lung went to the House of Hwang where his wife was waiting. He did not meet her. His father had made the deal for a woman slave because for farmers only slaves were available. Wang Lung only knew that she was not a pock-marked woman, and that she did not have a split upper lip, either.

Wang Lung explained to the gateman he was there for his wife. After he gave the man some money, the gateman took him to the Old Mistress. The ancient woman was wearing elegant satin clothes and was sitting in front of an opium pipe. The gateman announced the presence of Wang Lung to take his wife. The old lady ordered a slave girl to call O-lan. After a while, O-lan appeared. She was a tall woman. She had brown skin and unbound feet. The Old Mistress explained to Wang Lung that O-lan had been sold by her father because they did not have money after a terrible famine. She added that although O-lan was not beautiful and intelligent, she was a good woman. She cooked well. The old lady asked Wang Lung to take care of O-lan and then she asked O-lan to obey her husband and to come back with her first baby. After that, Wang Lung and O-lan went to the street.

They left the city and went to the temple of the earth which was a small structure built by Wang Lung's grandfather. Inside the structure, two figures made of earth stood – the god of earth and his lady. Wang Lung lit



the sticks of incense and stood side by side with his wife. This was the way to celebrate their marriage. Then they went to Wang Lung's house. He ordered his wife to prepare the dinner for the guests. When the food was ready, O-lan asked Wang Lung to bring it to the guests because she did not want to appear before them. Wang Lung was proud of his wife's attitude. The guests enjoyed the dinner. Indeed, O-lan was an excellent cook. When the guests left the house, Wang Lung took his wife to their room and the marriage was consummated.

Chapter 2

The next morning, Wang Lung stayed in bed while his wife lit the fire, boiled the water, and brought it to her father-in-law and to her husband. From now on, Wang Lung would work the fields without the pressure of preparing the meal. When he returned home, he found the meal served, the floor swept, and some twigs and dried leaves gathered for the fire of the night. In the afternoon, O-lan went to the road which led into the city and gathered animal excrements to be used to fertilize the fields. Then at home again, she mended the old clothes. At night, she prepared dinner and fed the ox which helped to work the earth. That was O-lan's daily routine. However, if there was something to do in the field, she also helped her husband with this task.



One day, O-lan told her husband she was pregnant. Wang Lung was happy, as was his father, when he told him the news.

Chapter 3

Because the time for birth was approaching, Wang Lung explained to O-lan the necessity to look for a woman to help her. O-lan answered, “No woman.” Wang Lung insisted. Maybe a slave woman of the House of Hwang could help her. For the first time, O-lan spoke a lot. She explained to her husband she would go to the House of Hwang when her baby was born. She would wear new black clothes and her baby, red clothes. Then she would stand in front of the old lady. For a moment, Wang Lung was surprised. He only asked if she needed money. “Three silver pieces,” she said.

O-lan gave birth in the evening after working the whole day in the field. She entered her room while Wang Lung and his father waited outside. After a time, the cry of a baby broke the silence. O-lan gave birth to a male baby. Wang Lung was a father. Next morning, he would go to buy some red sugar for O-lan and some eggs. He would dye them red. In that way, the relatives and neighbors would know he had a son.



Chapter 4

The day after the birth, O-lan got up and prepared the tea and the breakfast. She did not go to the field in the morning, but she did go to there in the afternoon. In the meanwhile, after dyeing the eggs, Wang Lung bought four sticks of incense which he lit in the temple of the god of the earth and his lady. He was thanking god for his son who grew healthy and strong because of her mother's milk and care.

O-lan kept the house cleaned and arranged. She also always had something special for meals, such as pork or chicken stuffed with salt. In addition, she made the shoes for the whole family.

The harvests were excellent for Wang Lung. His house was bursting. Wheat and rice were placed in jars made of reeds that O-lan had woven. From the beams, strips of dried onions and garlic hung. Wang Lung was a fortunate man. He got more money than he expected. He and his wife hid the money in a hole they made in the wall behind their bed. Only they knew of the place which was filled with a clod.

Chapter 5

Because of the proximity of the New Year, every family made preparations. O-lan baked moon cakes with rice flour they had ground and with the white lard Wang Lung had bought. O-lan decorated the cakes with



patterns of flowers in red and green. These cakes would be brought by her when she visited the Old Mistress on the second day of the New Year.

The day came. Wang Lung and O-lan dressed in black satin clothes and their son in red. They went to the city bringing the cakes. The gateman recognized Wang Lung with his family. They were led to the hall where the Old Mistress was. Only O-lan and the baby entered.

After a while, O-lan left the hall and explained to Wang Lung that the Hwang family was in economic problems, so they had decided to sell a good plot of land located outside the city wall. Rice grew well in that place because it was easily flooded by the moat around the wall. Wang Lung immediately made a decision – he would buy that land nearby the city wall.

Chapter 6

Wang Lung and O-lan worked hard to make the earth produce that year. O-lan was pregnant again. At first, the news made Wang Lung angry because the child birth would coincide with harvest time. However, O-lan said that the second birth would be easier. Indeed, she gave birth and immediately worked in the field.

Wang Lung was father of a second son. The harvests were excellent. He realized O-lan had brought fortune to his house. He had more money this



year because of the rice of his new plot of land nearby the city wall. He decided to buy a new plot of land from the House of Hwang. Wang Lung's first son would sleep with his grandfather making nights more comfortable for him because of the heat of two bodies in the same bed.

Chapter 7

Joy changed into sadness because of Wang Lung's uncle. His wife was an idle woman who did not care for her daughters and her house. She did not help to work the fields of her husband, either. In addition, Wang Lung's uncle gambled at nights and lost the little money he got from the earth. One day, Wang Lung spoke to his uncle's wife because his female cousin behaved inappropriately with men. The next day, his uncle went to talk to Wang Lung. The uncle explained that he was an unfortunate man with two daughters. He asked for help and Wang Lung had to help his uncle because they were of the same blood. Wang Lung gave him some silver. He felt angry because he had planned to buy a new plot of land from the House of Hwang. Now he had to wait one year more. Also, this year O-lan gave birth to a female baby. For Wang Lung, a daughter was a bad omen.



Chapter 8

Day after day, the sun shone and at night, stars appeared in the sky. The hope of rains did not come. Although Wang Lung worked his fields as always, the harvests were low. Without water, the grains did not grow. Only the field nearby the city wall produced good rice. Wang Lung had enough food for his family and got enough money to buy another plot of good earth from the House of Hwang. The former wealthy family now did not have money for the Old Mistress's opium pipe. As every year, the Old Lord had taken another concubine. As he got older, he was satisfied only with women younger than sixteen, or less. But, now he did not have enough money to buy jewelry for his concubines. So, when Wang Lung explained his desire for a new plot of land, the business was immediately accepted. This time, nobody knew about the new buying of land, not even O-lan.

The next year was worse than the one before. Rains did not come, and plants became yellow because of the sun. The old ox had to be fed with leaves of trees. Because the family was starving, Wang Lung's father decided to kill the ox. Wang Lung was reluctant. The old ox had been his companion in the fields. O-lan killed the ox while Wang Lung waited until the food was served at the table.

One day, Wang Lung was visited by his uncle for some food. Wang Lung explained to him that they had food only for themselves. However, his uncle went to the village and said that his nephew had enough food, but that



Wang preferred that his relatives die from starvation. When all the villagers had nothing to eat, they took poles and went to Wang Lung's house. He and his whole family were taken out of the house. Then the villagers looked for food. After bringing the last grains of beans and of corn, they decided to take the furniture. O-lan told the neighbors that they had taken all her family's food, and then she reminded them that they had furniture in their own homes, so they had to at least leave the family furniture. In addition, she said that now they had more food than her family taking into account that a new baby was in her body. The villagers went away. Wang Lung realized that people could not steal the fruit of his work because he had invested the money in land, and land would remain with him.

Chapter 9

Wang Lung was desperate. He saw his fields reduced to yellow plants. The bodies of his family showed their skeletons, no more. They had eaten the cob of the corn and the barks of the trees. They had nothing else to eat. Now the family stayed at home and slept. Wang Lung thought they should go to the south. O-lan agreed. However, they had to wait until the next day, after she gave birth. Ching, the neighbor, came and told them people in town were eating dogs. Wang Lung explained to him that his wife was going to give birth, and she would die if she did not eat anything. Ching went home and returned with some beans. Wang Lung gave most of them to O-lan.



After hours of anguish and pain, O-lan gave birth to a girl. She had used the old tub she kept for the purpose. However, after the first faint baby's cry, nothing else was heard. Wang Lung was worried and entered the room. O-lan said that the baby was dead. It had been a girl. Wang Lung wrapped the little body in an old mat. While he did that, he noticed two bruised spots on its neck. Wang Lung placed the corpse in an abandoned grave. Immediately, a famished dog came and began to eat the body. Wang Lung could do nothing.

After a few days, the uncle came with two men who wanted to buy Wang Lung's land. They offered a price so low that Wang Lung did not accept it. O-lan proposed to sell the furniture and the cauldron. The men paid two coins of silver for them. The family only kept the plow, rakes, and hoes to work the earth at their return.

Chapter 10

The family began the trip to the south. They brought only the clothes they wore and their rice bowls and chopsticks as a promise of finding food. When they reached the city wall, some people stood in front of the House of Hwang. The wealthy family had rice to make wine while poor people were starving. People wanted to burn the house.



Hearing these comments, Wang Lung and his family continued their trip. Suddenly, they found themselves in the middle of a great multitude of people who wanted to find a place in the firewagon in which to travel to the south. After some hesitation, Wang Lung and his family decided to take the firewagon.

Chapter 11

During the journey, Wang Lung met some people who had already been to the south. He asked one of them what had to be done to survive there. A man explained to him that first of all, a person had to buy six mats to build a shelter. A person had to pay only two pence for each mat. Then the person could beg. However, begging started after the person ate a bowl of rice which could be gotten by a penny in public kitchens. Then Wang Lung asked for another kind of job. The man mentioned the pulling of rickshas. Wang Lung moved apart from the group and counted the remaining coins. He had enough money for the mats and the bowls of rice.

After they arrived in the south, Wang Lung placed his family near a wall. He went to find the mats. After a while, he returned with the six mats, and then they decided where to place their hut. They realized that the best place was nearby the public kitchens. Wang Lung began to build the hut. However, because the mats were stiff, he became desperate. O-lan offered to do the task. In a few minutes, the hut was ready. Then they went to get



the rice. Each person brought a bowl and a pair of chopsticks. After they ate the rice, they went to the hut with full stomachs and slept well after the long time in which they had eaten nothing.

The next morning, Wang Lung was hesitating on what he had to do – beg or pull a rickshaw. O-lan helped him. She had decided to beg with the boys and the grandfather. She advised them how to beg. They had to bring the bowls and to say, “A heart, good sir - a heart, good lady! Have a kind heart –a good deed for your life in heaven! The small cash – the copper coin you throw away- feed a starving child!” (Buck, 2004, p. 100). Wang Lung was astonished. Indeed, he did not know his wife completely. O-lan explained that she had begged when her family had nothing to eat. At that time, she was sold as a slave.

The begging started. The two boys were begging together. In another place, the grandfather was stationed. O-lan, with the girl, begged apart. She asked for money while telling people that if they did not give her some money, the girl would die of starvation. People began to give money. O-lan observed that the boys had started to play. She punished them because they had to help the family in the begging. She slapped them so heavily that they sobbed. After that, they continued begging.

In the meantime, Wang Lung went to a place where rickshas were hired. He took one and began to train pulling the wagon with two wheels. He felt uncomfortable and planned to give the ricksha back. However, a man



with glasses who was well-dressed called him. He wanted to be taken to the Confucius Temple. Although Wang Lung tried to explain he did not know where that place was, the man understood nothing because he was deaf. Conversely, he got in the ricksha and Wang Lung began to pull forward. After a while, Wang Lung reached the temple. The man gave him a strange silver coin. Wang Lung changed the coin with a vendor. Wang Lung got twenty-six pence. Another rickshaw puller explained to him that the man had paid only half of the normal price. He also explained to Wang Lung that before he began to pull, he and the client had to agree on the price. In addition, the experienced puller suggested that only when the client was a foreigner, the puller could take advantage and ask for more money than was normal because foreigners knew nothing. With this advice, Wang Lung continued his pulling. At night, he went to pay for the hire of the ricksha. He had gotten only one penny for the work of the whole day. He became angry.

When he came to the hut, he realized the rest of the family, except for the grandfather, had gotten enough money for the rice. The grandfather, as old as he was, had passed the whole day looking at the people and sleeping.

Wang Lung changed his mind and felt happy with his penny. The family would survive.



Chapter 12

Wang Lung felt more confident knowing his pulling and his family's begging could get enough money to have food daily. In addition, he learned to know the city where they lived and its people. In the morning, women were dragged to the markets, while men were dragged to schools and businesses. He left them at the gates of such schools as "The Great School of Western Learning" or "The Great School of China." At night, men were dragged to big tea shops or to places for pleasure for game or women.

On the other hand, Wang Lung felt like an alien in that city. Although he had black hair and black eyes as most people there, he did not feel a part of the city. Once he heard a young man encouraging people to have a revolution in China. The young man also asked people to do something against the hated foreigners. Because Wang Lung thought the young man was referring to him, he went away. On another occasion, a man asked people of the city to educate themselves. Wang Lung did not realize the man was referring to people such as him.

To drag or to beg from a foreigner was a good thing because they gave silver coins rather than copper pence. But, this did not mean foreigners had good hearts. They did that because they were ignorant of the life in the city.



Wang Lung also realized of the abundance of food in that city. In markets, people could find varieties of fish, poultry, grains, and vegetables. However, poor people could not afford to buy them. They could buy only their daily bowl of rice.

One day, Wang Lung bought a cabbage. However, the children had to steal the fuel to cook it. On another occasion, the younger son stole a piece of pork. Wang Lung refused to eat it. He said, "Beggars we may be but thieves we are not" (Buck, 2004, p. 111). Everybody except him ate pork. After eating, he took the younger boy apart where O-lan could not hear. Wang Lung punished the lad while saying they were not thieves. After the boy went to the hut, Wang Lung realized the danger of living in a city where thieving was commonplace. He longed to return to work in the fields. He talked to himself, "We must get back to the land" (Buck, 2004, p. 112).

Chapter 13

Wang Lung realized that in the city there were two groups of people. In one group were those who had enough money to buy elegant satin and velvet clothes and to buy delicatessen food. The other group included those who worked the whole day long and got only some pence for a bowl of rice and sometimes, cabbage. These people had to sew rags to have something to cover their bodies.



With this in mind, Wang Lung talked to his father who was taking care of the girl because O-lan was pregnant again. Both men longed to return to their land because land was life for them. Then Wang Lung went to talk to his wife. He wanted to have something to sell to get money to go home. O-lan said, “You can sell the girl.” Wang Lung did not agree. O-lan reminded her husband that she was sold so her family could return to their land. Wang Lung thought of another way to go home.

Wang Lung met a man who worked at night. They talked for a while. The man explained to Wang Lung that the last year they got money by selling two of their girls to wealthy people. “It is better to sell slaves than to kill them,” he said.

Now Wang Lung knew that wealthy people lived behind the tall wall where many families had leaned their huts.

These wealthy people had slaves. They were so wealthy that even their slaves wore elegant robes. Sometimes their clothes had pearls, and their shoes, too. When the shoes had a rent, those people threw the shoes away, with the pearls, also.

For the first time, Wang Lung thought that selling the girl would be a good thing for the whole family. She would eat good food, whereas the rest of the family could go home. If wealthy people gave him enough money for the journey and the furniture, he would sell the girl.



Chapter 14

As spring came, the land was covered with green weeds, dandelions, and shepherd's purse. Poor women with their children went there and gathered the greens necessary for food without begging and without money. Each morning, O-lan and her two sons went to the countryside for food.

While in winter people used to be inside their huts, in spring they went outside and talked about how they spent the little money they got. For example, one man said that he had bought a small fish while another man had bought a foot of cloth. The talking invariably ended with the plans they would carry out if they had money. Some of them would buy elegant clothes while others would buy slaves to satisfy their lust. Wang Lung would return to his land.

Wang Lung knew things were different in the southern city. However, he accepted them without questioning. But one day, a foreigner gave him a paper with the figure of a white-skinned man hung over a cross of wood. There were black characters beneath. Wang Lung did not know the meaning of them. When he returned to the hut, he discussed the paper with his father and his sons. The children were afraid of the dead man. The grandfather thought he had been an evil person because of the way he had died. Wang Lung thought the foreigner had given him that paper as a way of frightening him. The dead man had been his fellow and the foreigner was looking for revenge. When this event was forgotten, O-lan joined the pieces of paper



with others she had received and sewed them in the shoes to improve the soles.

Another day, a person like Wang Lung, that is, with black hair and dark skin, gave him a paper showing a thin yellow man stabbed by a fat man. Wang Lung wanted to know the meaning of the characters beneath, so he paid attention to the explanation given by a young teacher. “You are the dead man and the rich capitalists, who have seized everything, are the fat man. The solution is in the hands of the rich who should give a part of what they have to the poor, so everybody will have something.” This was the man’s explanation. This reason did not satisfy Wang Lung because he was not a poor man; he had his land. But, because there was not the right proportion of sun and rain, the land did not produce fruit and they did not have food. Wang Lung gave the paper to O-lan to make their soles rigid. However, some of the people living in the huts knew of the young teacher’s words. If wealthy people would share something of what they had, everybody would have money and food.

Days later, Wang Lung saw how some pullers such as himself were seized by soldiers. He did not understand what was happening. He entered a hot water shop and asked for an explanation. An old man, the manager of the cauldron, explained that there was a war somewhere. The soldiers needed people who would bring the bedding, the guns, and the ammunition. Wang Lung asked if there was a wage. The old man said, “No, a wage no. There are only two bits of bread and a sip of the pond. Also, there is the



danger of being killed.” Wang Lung went to the hut and ordered the children to give back the ricksha. From now on, he would work at night pulling wagons of wares: silk, cotton, tobacco, perfume, and wine.

He was desperate. He wanted to sell the girl and to go to the north. O-lan had heard that something was happening, so she asked her husband to wait.

Although Wang Lung did not know where the battle was, its effects he did know. People were afraid. Rich men brought their possessions on horses to the river’s edge where ships took them to other places. In addition, other wealthy people had been led to the firewagon.

Wang Lung longed for his land and cried. O-lan said, “Yet a little while and we shall see a thing. There is talk everywhere now” (Buck, 2004, p. 131).

Since for Wang Lung the only solution was to sell the girl, he asked O-lan things related to slaves. For example, were slaves beaten? O-lan said that slaves were beaten with a leather thong. Then Wang Lung asked if pretty slaves were beaten, too. Pretty slaves were brought to bed. First, young lords took the turn, and after them, the male servants. Wang Lung cried bitterly.



Shops were closed because nobody wanted to buy or to sell things. Now Wang Lung could rest. However, they had no money. Also, the public kitchens were closed. People stayed in their huts. At night, soldiers marching could be heard. The enemy was approaching.

One night, people were awakened by a great noise. The gates of the house of the rich man were opened. O-lan and Wang Lung went to see. The poor entered first to the outer courts or courts of the slaves. Then they reached the kitchen. Everybody except Wang Lung took something. Then people went to the inner courts or courts of the wealthy people. They were abandoned. People took things they found. Then they reached the most inner court that led to the gate of life, a gate used to escape from danger.

Wang Lung went apart into a room where he found a fat wealthy man. The fat man asked for pity. "Do not kill me," he said. "I will give you the money you want." Wang Lung answered firmly, "Give me the money." The man gave Wang Lung a bag with gold. "Give me more money," Wang Lung replied. For the second time, the man gave gold to Wang Lung who placed the money in his bosom and went to his hut.



Chapter 15

Wang Lung bought seed from the south to sow it in his land in the north. He bought not only seed of wheat, corn, beans, and cabbage. He also bought seed of celery and lotus.

When the family was on his land, Wang Lung saw a wonderful ox. He wanted it at whatever price. Its owner preferred to sell his wife rather than his ox. However, after a long talk, Wang Lung bought the ox.

Then the family went to their house. The door had disappeared as well as the thatch, plow, rakes, and hoes. Because of the rain and snow, the walls and floor were in bad condition. Some neighbors said that it was because Wang Lung's uncle had stolen everything and burned the thatch. The uncle had joined a band of thieves and lived in Wang Lung's house. Now, nobody knew where he and his family were. They only knew the girls had been sold to soldiers going to battle.

Ching, the neighbor, came to greet Wang Lung. He was sad because his wife had died. He had given his daughter to a soldier. In addition, he did not have seeds for sowing.

Wang Lung never forgot that Ching had given him a handful of beans when O-lan was giving birth during the famine. Wang Lung gave Ching



seeds of wheat, rice and cabbage. Also, Wang Lung himself would sow Ching's field with his ox the next morning.

Wang Lung and O-lan went to the town and bought two hoes, two rakes, and a wooden plow. They also bought furniture, a paper god, candlesticks and incense. O-lan fixed the mats on the rafters, repaired the walls, and built a new oven.

Wang Lung thought only about his land, and wanted to plough it. The sky was cloudy. Rains would come soon. He would also buy incense for the god of earth and his lady in the small temple.

Chapter 16

One night, Wang Lung and O-lan lay in bed. Wang Lung discovered a bag between O-lan breasts. Wang Lung took it. After he unwrapped the heap, jewels of different colors appeared. "Where did you get them?," he asked. She answered that because she was a slave in the House of Hwang, she knew where rich people hide their treasures. When she was in the house of the rich man in the south, she observed a loosened brick in one of the courts. She moved the brick and found the jewels. Wang Lung thanked his wife. O-lan asked for only one thing –she wanted to keep two small pearls. Wang Lung agreed. She chose the pearls, wrapped them in the rags



and put the lump between her breasts. Wang Lung would buy land with the jewels because in that way the family would keep the money.

Next day, Wang Lung went to the House of Hwang. No gateman was there. After knocking, the Old Lord, followed by an attractive woman, appeared. Wang Lung explained to him that he wanted to buy land. Then Wang Lung did not understand what was happening. The Old Lord explained that the house had been robbed during the winter. Only he and his slave had survived. The woman was a clever person and now the affairs of the Old Lord had to be taken care of through her. The Old Lord went inside. Wang Lung was hesitant to work things out with the woman, so he promised to come back the next day. Wang Lung went to a tea shop and asked for information. The vendor explained that the House of Hwang had been robbed. The slaves had been raped. The Old Mistress had been bound with ropes to her chair and she had died of fright. Only the Old Lord and a woman slave had survived. Her name was Cuckoo and she had lasted for a long time with him because of her cleverness. Wang Lung went to the House of Hwang and asked the woman if he could buy land with silver, gold, or jewels. Her answer was, “with jewels.”

Chapter 17

Wang Lung sowed his land. He realized he needed help. He proposed to his neighbor Ching to sell his parcel to Wang, and live in his



house and work with him. Ching accepted. Wang Lung also bought an ass because the ox could not do the whole work. In addition, Wang Lung hired two men at harvest time.

That was an excellent year. A new room was necessary to store the grain. Wang Lung realized that when rains and sun were in right proportion, the harvest was good. But, when the rain was too abundant or not at all, there was no harvest. And that happened every five or ten years. Wang Lung did not want to abandon his land again. So he stored grain while the harvests were excellent to have enough food for the years in which there were no harvests. For this reason, he built a new house where his family would live. The old one would be for the laborers, six people in total.

Now O-lan did not go to the fields. She worked at home. She made new curtains, shoes, and bedding. When the time of birth came, she decided to be alone again. This time she gave birth to two children –a boy and a girl. Now Wang Lung understood why his wife had decided to keep two pearls.

Wang Lung's happiness was diminished because his older daughter could not talk. Now he spent more time with her.

Wang Lung wanted his two sons to learn how to work the earth. He ordered them to guide the ox and the ass each day, and they obeyed.



Wang Lung managed his land with the support of Ching, his steward. Ching maintained Wang Lung informed of everything happening on his land.

Now Wang Lung dedicated some of his time to learning. Because he did not write or read, many people made jokes about him at the grain market at the time of signing the contracts. Wang Lung sent his two sons to study in a school near the gate of the city. The teacher gave them new names based on their father's occupation. Their new names were Nung En and Nung Wen. Nung meant one whose wealth was from the earth.

Chapter 18

After seven years of excellent harvests, there was not the right proportion between rain and sun. It rained a lot, so low fields were flooded. Only houses located on hills survived. That was the case of Wang Lung's house. He had enough food and money. Silver was hidden in different places of his new house.

Because the waters did not recede, Wang Lung had to wait. He became ill-tempered and directed his anger against O-lan. He said to her roughly, "You do not look like a woman of a rich man who has a lot of land and laborers working it." She thought he was complaining to her for not having more babies after she had given birth to the boy and girl together. Wang Lung continued, "You are not attractive. Your feet are big." She



excused herself saying that because she was sold as a slave, she did not have her mother to bind her feet. However, she thought to bind her younger daughter's feet. Then Wang Lung said he would go to town to get some news.

In town, he went to the old tea shop where everybody knew that he was a rich man. But, now he felt that the old tea shop was not an appropriate place for him. So, he went to the new great tea shop, the House of Flowers. It was a glamorous building of two stories. Although he did not like it because it was a place of gambling, play, and evil women, he entered in. While he was drinking tea, he observed the pictures of pretty women. Then he went home.

Several times, he went to the new tea shop. One night, he met Cuckoo there, the slave who received the jewels as payment for the Hwang's land. She offered to call whichever girl he would choose from the pictures there. Although he said he was not interested in any of them, from that night he began to think of them. He chose a woman slender like bamboo. She had a face as small as a kitten's face. "She is like a flower on a quince tree," he said. This thought made him happy. It was as if hot wine entered into his body making him stronger.



Chapter 19

Because the waters did not recede, Wang Lung continued going to the great tea shop. Wang Lung avoided O-lan's eyes. He did not drink tea prepared by her. One day at twilight, he went to his bedroom, put on his black satin coat and went to the great tea shop. He hesitated and waited at the threshold. Then Cuckoo appeared. It was her job to get clients for the women of the house. When she saw Wang Lung, she shrugged her shoulders and said, "It is only Wang Lung, the farmer." Wang Lung was angry and answered, "May I not come into the house. I want to do what other men do." Cuckoo said, "OK. What girl do you want?" Wang Lung chose the girl like bamboo. Cuckoo said, "You want Lotus. Follow me." Then they both went up through the stairs.

On the second floor, there were the women's rooms side by side in a large hall. Some girls appeared and commented, "Oh, he smells of fields and of garlic." Wang Lung was hurt by those words. However, he was comforted by the silver in his girdle.

Cuckoo opened one of the doors. Inside was a woman with skin white as milk. Her feet were tiny enough to fit into shoes as small as a man's finger. She was his dream woman. As she passed her hand over his arm, he felt fire inside his body. He only could say a few words indicating that he did not know what to do, so Lotus taught him everything.



Wang Lung began to be sick of thinking of Lotus. Although he was with her every night, he felt unsatisfied. Wang Lung began to change towards his wife, sons, father, and even towards the land. The waters receded and Ching wanted to know what to do. Wang Lung's answer was that he did not want to be disturbed. Now he did not eat garlic as he used to do. He cut his braid, bathed daily, wore perfume on his body and oil on his hair. One day O-lan said he reminded her of the men in the House of Hwang. Wang Lung felt proud. In addition, Wang Lung's clothes were made by tailors in town and for the first time he bought a pair of shoes. To avoid O-lan's inquiring looks, he kept his new clothes in the great tea shop and dressed up there.

Wang Lung did what Lotus desired. One day she wanted a golden pin for her hair and Wang Lung bought it for her. Now Wang Lung's life was Lotus, so he asked O-lan to give him the two small pearls she had in her breasts. O-lan became sad because she thought to use those pearls as earrings or to give them to her daughter at her wedding. She began crying and said nothing. She continued washing her husband's clothes.

Chapter 20

One summer day, Wang Lung's family was at the table having breakfast. Suddenly, Wang Lung's uncle appeared. Wang Lung invited him to eat and rest. The next day, his uncle was at home again, this time with his



wife and his son. Wang Lung knew he had to take care of his uncle and his family for the rest of his life. He did nothing because he was a respected person known in town. As a respectable person, he had to take care of his family.

After a few days at home, the uncle's wife talked to O-lan. The uncle's wife had noticed that Wang Lung behaved in a different way and how much his lifestyle had changed. In addition, she explained to O-lan that rich men were accustomed to have other women than their wives. It was normal because they had enough money. O-lan felt sad.

Wang Lung had heard what his uncle's wife had said. He talked to her. She did not reproach him. So he asked her to help him. He wanted to buy Lotus and bring her to the house. He wanted to have Lotus only for him. The uncle's wife accepted. She needed some information such as who was Lotus's manager and where to find that person. Wang Lung gave the required information. The fat woman began the business. Cuckoo accepted under the price of a hundred pieces of silver for Lotus. From then on, Wang Lung decided to sleep alone in another room. Since that night, O-lan slept alone.

Because some time had to pass before Lotus could come to Wang Lung's house, during this time Wang Lung ordered his servants to build three rooms and a pool. He and the fat woman decorated them with red curtains and flowering beddings. Even golden fish were put in the pool.



O-lan complained to Wang Lung about his decision of having another woman at home. Indeed, O-lan had been an excellent wife, mother, and fellow at work. She had accompanied Wang Lung in good and bad times. The only reason for having Lotus at home was Wang Lung's lust.

When the business was completed, Lotus came to her new house. That day only Wang Lung was at home. He had sent the laborers to work in a distant plot. O-lan went with the two younger children to a place only she knew. And the old man, Wang Lung's father, slept in his room.

Lotus rode a closed sedan chair moved by some town men. Cuckoo came walking. After she greeted Wang Lung, Cuckoo helped Lotus to get down and to walk to the house. Lotus could only totter because of her bound feet.

Wang Lung showed her the way to her rooms, her courts. He passed the whole day and night with Lotus. The next morning, Lotus explained to Wang Lung that Cuckoo would be her servant and he had to pay her abundantly because she was taking care of her instead of a group of girls as she used to do in the House of Flowers.

From that day, Wang Lung would go to Lotus's room whenever he wanted. However, she was with him only at the time she decided. Afterwards, Wang Lung had to leave her room. But, now he felt satisfied.



Chapter 21

It was said that when more than one woman lived in a house, problems would appear. Wang Lung did not think what would happen when his beloved Lotus and her servant Cuckoo lived in his house. Although the first days nothing happened, difficulties between O-lan and Cuckoo broke out.

Cuckoo and O-lan lived in the House of Hwang. However, Cuckoo had been in the Lord's chamber while O-lan was a kitchen slave. Cuckoo always bothered O-lan. Cuckoo went to the kitchen a score of times asking for the tea or for food for the Lord. In addition, Cuckoo always complained that the tea or the food was too cold, or too hot, or badly cooked. Those comments made O-lan angry. And now Cuckoo lived in the same house. So O-lan asked Wang Lung what that woman slave was doing in his house. Wang Lung was ashamed and said nothing. O-lan cried and only said, "It is a bitter thing in my house, and I have no mother's house to go back to any where" (Buck, 2004, p. 203).

Since Wang Lung would do nothing, O-lan found a way to maintain Cuckoo apart from her. One morning, O-lan boiled enough water for the old man and for Wang Lung. The cauldron was empty when Cuckoo went to the kitchen for boiled water for her Mistress. Cuckoo complained to Wang Lung. Because he did not want his love to become angry, Wang Lung went to talk to O-lan. She only said, "I am not a slave of slaves in this house, at least"



(Buck, 2004, p. 204). Wang Lung answered, “It is not for the servant but for the mistress.” O-lan only said, “And to that one you gave my two pearls.” Wang Lung was speechless and ashamed.

The only way to end the quarrel between O-lan and Cuckoo was to build a new kitchen and buy a new cauldron where Cuckoo could cook whatever she wanted. She, indeed, cooked what she pleased, but this was expensive food prepared with ingredients brought from the south. Although Wang Lung did not agree with this waste of money, he said nothing to Cuckoo because he knew she would complain to Lotus and she to him.

Another problem appeared. Because the uncle’s wife liked Cuckoo’s food, she frequently ate in Lotus’s inner room. The three women became friends, but Wang Lung disagreed with that friendship. When he asked Lotus to avoid his uncle’s wife, she said that she was alone in that house, because there was only the first wife O-lan who hated her and the children who bothered, too. So, she was pleased with the uncle’s wife. Wang Lung forgave her and from then on he said nothing when the wife of his uncle was in the inner courts.

Now the problems surged from Wang Lung’s father. Accidentally, he went to the inner court and saw Wang Lung with Lotus. He shouted, “There is a harlot in the house” (Buck, 2004, p. 207). Although Wang Lung tried to calm his father, the old man continued shouting that there was a harlot in the house.



Finally, the children became a bother to Lotus. They, in one way or another, found a way to be in the inner house. One day, the elder sons brought the elder girl, the poor fool who could not talk, to Lotus's room. They wanted their sister to see the gold fish. Then the girl laughed aloud and Lotus was frightened. Wang Lung came because of the noise. He asked his children never to go to that room where Lotus did not love them. The thorns put inside his heart by Lotus made Wang Lung's love for her diminish.

Summer passed and autumn began. One day, Wang Lung looked through the door. He noticed the waters had receded and the land was ready for plowing. He felt the call of the earth, his true love. Immediately, he called Ching to begin the task.

Chapter 22

The good earth had healed Wang Lung's love sickness. Now his thought and actions focused on the earth: the seeds, the oxen, the hoes... At noon and at night, he ate what O-lan prepared –wheat, corn, cabbage, and bread with garlic. Then he went to the inner court. Although Lotus disliked garlic, she could say nothing to Wang Lung because he could eat whatever he pleased. He went to bed with her. When he felt satisfied, he continued with the many things he had to do. From that time, Lotus and O-lan's roles were perfectly defined. Lotus was the woman for pleasure and



sex while O-lan was the woman for work –the one who kept the house clean, who prepared the meals, who took care of Wang Lung and his father.

People in town thought of Lotus as a desirable toy, a toy which only rich men could possess. For people in town, Wang Lung was no more their fellow; he was a respected person, a person they looked for advice.

Harvests were excellent for Wang Lung. However, he waited until winter to sell the grain because of the high prices he would receive. This time he took his eldest son with him. His eldest son would read and write the necessary information on the deed of sale of the grain and upon the receipt of money. People who were there said that the lad was a smart boy. Wang Lung was proud of him.

Wang Lung thought his eldest son needed a wife and he began to look for a special woman for him, not a common daughter of a farmer.

Wang Lung was focused on this task when the eldest son changed his behavior. He became melancholic, sometimes he cried, and on other occasions he said nothing. Wang Lung went to see a doctor, but the problem was not solved. The eldest son did not want to study. Although he went to school, he escaped and wandered through the town.

Wang Lung decided to beat his son. However, O-lan said that beating was not the solution. When she lived in the House of Hwang, the young



lords behaved as her eldest son. The solution was to get slaves for them. Wang Lung could not understand the relation between the young lords and his eldest son. O-lan explained to Wang Lung that the eldest son was as the young lords –they had a lot of leisure time and became melancholic. On the other hand, when Wang Lung was a lad, he had to work the whole day, so he did not have time for melancholy or crying. If he was melancholic or he cried, he would not have something to eat, so he had to work. But, his son had a lot of time.

Wang Lung decided to marry his son soon. Then he went to look for sexual satisfaction in the inner court.

Chapter 23

Wang Lung was so distracted by his eldest son's behavior that Lotus told him that she preferred to return to the great tea shop. Then Wang Lung told her about his problem. She paid attention and she suggested he find the daughter of a rich man who loved her a lot. She clapped her hands and Cuckoo appeared. Cuckoo gave the man's name –Liu, the grain dealer. Wang Lung liked the idea of marrying his son to the daughter of the buyer of his grain. Cuckoo offered to be the matchmaker.

Wang Lung wanted to think more about the matter and asked for more time. However, he changed his mind soon because his son, led by the



uncle's son, had been going to the whore who lived in the House of Hwang. Wang Lung went to the woman and offered to pay her twice her fee if she sent Wang Lung's son home each time he went to her. She only laughed. Then Wang Lung asked Cuckoo to begin the business with the rich grain merchant Liu.

Wang Lung wanted his uncle and his family to leave his home because his uncle's son had led his son to bad women. The uncle said nothing, but he showed Wang Lung a red wig. Then Wang Lung said nothing and went to Lotus' court. Now he knew his uncle belonged to a band of dangerous thieves—"The Redheads." Robberies occurred here and there, but thieves had never stolen from his house. Wang Lung thought it was because of the protection of Heaven. However, now he knew the truth-his house was safe because one of the thieves lived with them.

Wang Lung's problems did not cease. Cuckoo had talked to Liu, the merchant of grain. He agreed to marry his daughter to Wang Lung's son. But they had to wait for three years because she was very young now, only fourteen.

Another matter was waiting for Wang Lung –locusts. Locusts from the south had come to the northern fields and were destroying the crops. Wang Lung joined with other farmers to think of a way to stop the locusts. For some of the farmers, the solution was to do nothing because they believed it was Heaven who had sent the locusts. Wang Lung thought



differently. He with other farmers went to the fields and set fire to some areas. Other farmers dug moats which were filled with water from the wells. These farmers worked the whole day and the whole night for seven days. Suddenly the sky became dark –locusts had arrived. Wang Lung beat and trampled them. His laborers flailed them, so they went to the fire, kindled, and died. Then they floated in the water of the moats the farmers had dug. A lot of locusts died. However, those which survived destroyed everything they found. Wang Lung was a lucky person. His best field had survived. Now he felt better.

While he worked with the other framers to kill the locusts, he had time to think and he realized the best solution was to wait. The earth had healed him again.

Chapter 24

Wang Lung was willing to wait three years to solve his son's problem. However, he was shocked when one day his eldest son said he wanted to go to the south to study what he thought was necessary that the old teacher of the town had not taught him. Wang Lung did not agree. His eldest son was angry.



Days passed. Wang Lung went to the inner court and talked to Lotus. She commented that she knew his son wanted to go to the south to study. Wang Lung said that it was not her business but his.

After a while, the eldest son stopped being angry. To the contrary, he looked content and read in his room. Wang Lung thought the problem had ended. He was wrong.

One night he went to the inner court. However, Lotus did not want to be with him. Wang Lung went to the middle room to drink tea. There was O-lan who said the eldest son had been going to the inner court when Wang was not at home. Wang Lung thought that it was a foolish thing. Then he pondered how Lotus knew the eldest son wanted to go to the south, or why she had sent Wang away from her bed, or why his son was content.

After some days of hesitation, Wang Lung went to the fields as he was accustomed, and, making sure everybody heard him, he said, "I am going to the field nearby town." Then he took the way to the town. When he was half way, he stopped and pondered. After that, he made a decision –he needed to prove if what O-lan had said was true.

Secretly, Wang Lung went to his home, and he could hear his eldest son in the inner court. Wang Lung took a bamboo stick and entered there. His son and Lotus were there. Wang Lung beat them until blood appeared from his son's head.



While Wang Lung took a breath, his son went to his room and Lotus to hers. Wang Lung went to talk to Lotus. He complained to her for being a “whore.” She had been with the father and with the son. Lotus only replied that he was her only man; the son was nothing to her. Then Wang Lung went to his son’s room. He ordered his son to prepare his luggage because he was going to the south.

Chapter 25

When the eldest son had gone to the south, Wang Lung felt some relief. He realized that because of his troubles and the working of the land, he had not paid attention to the future of the rest of his children. So now he would reserve some of his time for his other children.

He began with his second son. He would take him out of school and take him to the grain market where he could learn how to manage the grain business. He asked Cuckoo to go to make an appointment with Liu, the merchant of grain. When Cuckoo returned, she informed Wang Lung that he could go to Liu’s house at noon. Although it was the first time Wang Lung had gone to that house, he could find the place easily. A woman servant led him to Liu. Both men bowed and spoke of things related with the grain business. Then Wang Lung asked Liu if he needed a servant at the grain market, and said his second son could help Liu. Indeed, Liu needed help. The only condition was that the person could read and write. Wang Lung



answered proudly saying that his sons were scholars. Liu explained to Wang Lung that the first three years the boy would be an apprentice and after that, his wage would be a piece of silver the first year, two the second, and three the third, plus what he could get from the clients. And since Wang Lung's son and Liu's daughter were engaged, they were one single family, so Wang Lung did not have to pay the fee for his second son to be an apprentice. Wang Lung asked if Liu had a son of ten. After laughing, Liu said that he did have a son of ten. Wang Lung was thinking of his daughter of nine, but it would have to be another time to carry out that business. Wang Lung said good-bye.

When Wang Lung got home, he greeted his third daughter. He noticed she had cried. When he asked about the cause, she explained she felt pain because her mother had bound her feet. O-lan had explained to her daughter that after a time of pain, she would be a happy wife. Her husband would love her a lot because of her bound feet. The mother had said that because of her big feet, she had not been loved by her husband –your father. When Wang Lung heard that he felt remorse. However, he told his daughter he had got a husband for her. He immediately ordered Cuckoo to begin the business for his second daughter and Liu's son.

Now Wang Lung thought of his third son -He would work the land. "And how about my first daughter? What would happen to her?," Wang Lung pondered. Then he decided that because she never spoke, she would stay with him.



When his children's lives were defined, Wang Lung thought of O-lan. She had been a faithful wife and an excellent mother. He had noticed she was no longer the healthy woman she used to be. Now she moaned when she got up. Also, she moved slowly. One day, Wang Lung observed his wife, and when she was sweeping the floor, she felt pain and complained. He ordered her to go to bed and rest. He went to town for a doctor. After the doctor examined O-lan, he said she was gravely ill. Her complete recovery would cost a lot of money. Wang Lung would have to sell his land to get the money. Worst of all, there was no warranty of complete recovery. O-lan could die. Wang Lung paid ten silver coins to the doctor. Then he went to the kitchen, where O-lan had passed most of the time, and he cried a lot.

Chapter 26

During the winter months, O-lan lay in bed dying little by little. Then her family could understand everything she had done daily to keep them comfortable. Now they had to do the chores: light the fire, boil water, prepare breakfast, sweep the house, wash the clothes, etc. The eldest girl filled her mother's vacuum with her grandfather. The old man did not understand what had happened to O-lan. So Wang Lung led him to O-lan's room. When he realized O-lan was dying, the old man cried bitterly. Wang Lung himself took care of the oldest girl because one night, they had left her out, and she had cried at dawn shivering with cold.



Wang Lung ordered Ching to organize the activities related to the earth because he himself would take care of O-lan. In the coldest days, he put nearby O-lan a pot with lit charcoal. When O-lan realized it, she said that was a waste. However, Wang Lung answered that it was necessary. He even thought of selling his land to have the money for O-lan's recovery. Nevertheless, she told Wang Lung not to do it because she would die anyway, but the earth had to continue providing for the family.

Because Wang Lung felt O-lan would die, he bought two coffins, one for O-lan and one for his father –he was very old. O-lan felt pleased because her husband was paying attention to his wife's necessities. Sometimes O-lan remembered her family and she said repeatedly, "My mother, my father." On other occasions, she said, "I know I am ugly and can not be loved." These words made Wang Lung ponder. He decided to take care of O-lan all the time. He even did not go to the inner court.

One day, O-lan wanted to talk to Cuckoo. When she was before her, O-lan said to Cuckoo, "You are beautiful and for a long time you were in the Old Lord's courts. However, you were and are a slave. Although I am not a beautiful woman but an ugly one, I have been a wife and I have taken care of the sons of my husband."

O-lan asked Wang Lung not to allow Cuckoo or Lotus to enter in her room or touch her clothes when she died.



Because of the proximity of the New Year, O-lan improved for a while. She wanted to prepare the cakes and the meals for the festivities. But, she did not want Cuckoo to help her. She wanted be helped by her daughter-in-law. Liu, the merchant of grain, agreed to O-lan's desire when he understood that she would die soon. In addition, his daughter was sixteen, an age at which women were allowed to be visited by their future husbands.

Liu's daughter came to Wang Lung's house. She was accompanied by her servant. Liu's daughter was a beautiful girl. She took care of O-lan and O-lan was pleased to have a woman at her side while she was dying.

Then O-lan told Wang Lung her last desire. She wanted to see her eldest son's wedding. Wang Lung made the necessary arrangements. First, he sent a man to the south to explain to the eldest son that his mother was dying and that it was her desire to see his wedding. Now the eldest son knew he had to be in the village in the north in three days. Second, Wang Lung gave silver to Cuckoo to prepare the food for the wedding as was the tradition in the house of a rich man –a lot of good delicacies. Third, he invited whoever he met in the village, in town, and in the grain market. He also invited his uncle's family.

In three days, the eldest son came dressed as the custom in the south –in a dark red robe and black velvet. The father and son hugged each other and the bad things that had happened between them were forgotten. O-lan was pleased to see her eldest son after two years and a half.



On the wedding day, the daughter-in-law was prepared by Cuckoo, Lotus, and the uncle's wife. They bathed and perfumed her. They also changed the bandage of her bound feet and dressed her in the accustomed red garments, crown, and veil.

When the bride was ready, the ceremony began. She entered the room where the guests were and bowed to Wang Lung and his father. Then the eldest son entered. They both went to O-lan's room. She was pleased to see her son's wedding. She wanted them to use her room after her death. After O-lan's words, there took place the ceremony of the wine and the rice. The uncle's wife brought two bowls of hot wine and two bowls of rice. The spouses drank from their own bowls and after that, they mingled their wines and drank again representing that now they were one and not two. The same was done with the rice meaning that now their life was one because they were married. O-lan was pleased.

The eldest son and his wife went to the room where the guests were, and after bowing, the party began. Everybody enjoyed it.

When the guests had left the house, O-lan talked to the newly-wed. She asked her son to take care of his father and his grandfather. Then O-lan asked her daughter-in-law to take care of her husband, her husband's father, the grandfather, and the poor fool in the house. Then O-lan said something like that although she was an ugly woman, she was a wife. Wang Lung entered. O-lan could not recognize him. After shuddering, she died.



The uncle's wife bathed and dressed O-lan. Then the corpse was placed in the coffin. Wang Lung asked a geomancer for a lucky day for the burial. The lucky day would be in three months.

However, death was surrounding Wang Lung's house. In the morning, the old man was found dead in his bed. Wang Lung had to prepare the burial for two –O-lan and his father.

After three months, Wang Lung hired priests for chanting. He also gave white robes to everybody in the house because white is the color of mourning in China. In addition, he hired sedan chairs for the members of his family because he was a rich man and his family could not walk to the place of burying. Wang Lung had chosen an appropriate place on a hill of his land. Ching had dug two graves and between them there was a place for Wang Lung when he died.

After the burial ceremony, Wang Lung preferred to walk to his house. He felt remorse because he had taken the two pearls from O-lan, and he had given them to Lotus. He cried realizing that things in his house would be different from now on.



Chapter 27

Because Wang Lung was busy with his son's wedding, and his burial of the dead, he did not realize that a terrible flood was coming. It rained day and night. People gave money to the new magistrate to mend the dykes. However, he did nothing. His father had invested the money of the family to buy the position for him. So, the magistrate spent the money for his personal interests.

When people went to complain, the magistrate jumped into the waters and drowned. People were starving everywhere. Although Wang Lung had some grain for his family, he husbanded the most he could. Then his uncle's wife complained to her husband because she liked delicacies. The uncle talked to Wang Lung and asked for silver. Due to the fact that Wang Lung knew his house was secure because his uncle belonged to the Red beards band of robbers, he gave the money to his uncle. When the eldest son realized that his father gave money to the uncle repeatedly, he complained to his father. Then Wang Lung had to tell his son of the danger of doing anything against the uncle.

The eldest son felt uncomfortable because the uncle's son was peering at his wife. He wanted the uncle, his wife, and his son to leave. He thought one way was to give them opium. But opium was expensive. So Wang Lung did not agree with his son's plan.



However, he changed his mind when his uncle's son seized Wang Lung's third daughter who had become a pretty girl. The eldest son advised his father to take the maiden to her fiancé. Liu, the grain merchant, accepted. The wedding would be after the next harvest.

When Wang Lung bought tobacco for himself, he asked for opium. The clerk explained to him that because it was illegal, he had to go to the back of the store. "How much is it?" Wang Lung asked. "A piece of silver the ounce," answered the clerk. "Give me six ounces," Wang Lung said and then he went home.

Chapter 28

When Wang Lung was before his uncle, he said to him, "Here is some opium that I bought for my father to relieve his pains. But now he is dead, and because I do not need opium, I think it is a good idea to give it to you, my dear uncle." The uncle was happy, and bought a pipe for the opium. The uncle and his wife passed the whole day smoking opium. These two never bothered Wang Lung again.

Because the famine had obligated many people to go to the south to beg, when they returned to their land, they had nothing more than a desire: to plow their land. They went to borrow some money from Wang Lung. Wang Lung accepted under the payment of high interests. Those who could not



pay the interests could give part of their land to Wang Lung. Others, who did not have land, sold their daughters. Wang Lung thought of servants for him and his sons. He bought six slaves in total.

Wang Lung wanted his youngest son to learn how to work the land. So he took his son to the fields and he was content because his son would continue the land labor after Wang Lung died.

However, Wang Lung did not have peace because of the son of his uncle. The eldest son insisted that the uncle's son was a bad man who was watching with lust the slaves of his father, and his own wife. Wang Lung searched for a solution. The eldest son wanted to live in town in the inner courts of the House of Hwang. Wang Lung did not respond, but he thought of the idea.

One day, Wang Lung went to town and visited his second son at the grain market. He asked his son about the idea of the eldest brother. The second son agreed because he wanted to live in town with his wife, too. Wang Lung was astonished because he had never paid attention to his second son. "What kind of maid do you want as wife?" Wang Lung asked. The second son answered, "I do not want a daughter of a rich family because that maiden would spend a lot of money. I want a maiden of the village, one who cooks well, who can make clothes, and who does not waste money." Wang Lung said that he would order Ching to look for such a maiden. Then he went to the old House of Hwang. The inner courts were locked. The



gate-woman told him that if he did not want to rent the rooms, he should go away. Wang Lung said that he would rent the inner rooms if they pleased him. The woman unlocked the gates and Wang Lung went through the corridors and into the great hall where the Old Mistress used to smoke her opium. Wang Lung made a decision -he would rent the House of Hwang.

Chapter 29

The first people who moved to the old House of Hwang were Lotus, Cuckoo, and Lotus's slaves. Now the inner court in Wang Lung's house would be occupied by the uncle, his wife, and his son. Ching and the laborers moved to the outer courts, and Wang Lung, the third son, and the poor fool were in the middle rooms. Wang Lung ordered his eldest son to arrange a court for him because he planned to move there before his grandson was born.

Because Wang Lung was old, he slept during the day and felt weary. Therefore, some plots of his land were rented. Half of the harvests would be for him because he was the landowner; the other half would be for the laborer who farmed the land.

When the time of the grandson's birth was near, Wang Lung moved to the house in town. But, he daily went to the fields early in the morning and returned at night. One day, when Wang Lung returned, he found the slaves



moving here and there. Cuckoo said they could wait for a long time because the maiden was a narrow woman.

Wang Lung went to the temple in town; if the maiden gave birth to a son, he would buy a new red robe for the goddess. At his return, Lotus told him that he was grandfather of a male baby. Then his eldest son came and said that it was necessary to hire a woman who would nurse the baby because his wife did not want to spoil her beauty. Although Wang Lung felt reluctant, he accepted. Wang Lung remembered how O-lan gave birth alone and nursed the children with the abundant milk of her breasts.

When the baby was a month old, Wang Lung's eldest son prepared a feast. Wealthy guests were invited and given scarlet eggs. Then the eldest son suggested his father to have the tables of ancestors that great families had because there were three generations living under the same roof. Wang Lung agreed and it was done.

Then a laborer gave bad news –Ching was dying. Wang Lung went to the earthen house. A new laborer was hired and Ching was teaching him how to use the threshing machine. Then an accident happened and Ching was badly injured. Wang Lung beat the new laborer. Ching was his faithful friend and now he was dying.

When Ching died, Wang Lung bought a coffin of good quality and hired priests for the funeral. Ching was buried in the enclosure Wang Lung



had reserved for his dead. Wang Lung ordered that he be buried beside Ching. He also ordered his sons to keep mourning for Ching. Although the eldest son was reluctant because Ching was a high servant, he mourned Ching to please his father.

Chapter 30

Wang Lung thought that everything was done and he at least would have peace. He was wrong. His eldest son came to complain because the wedding of the second son was near and a lot of arrangements had to be made in the inner courts. In addition, the people living in the outer courts had to go away because these courts would be for Wang Lung sons' and his families. Wang Lung agreed under the condition of not being disturbed. So his eldest son came and asked for silver and Wang Lung gave it easily as he received it from the tenants.

However, the second son thought his elder brother was wasting money for his own pride. Indeed, he and his wife always wanted more. The second son spoke with his father because that silver was his inheritance, too. Wang Lung offered to speak with his eldest son.

When Wang Lung talked to the eldest son a new thing appeared. The third son wanted to study. However, Wang Lung considered it was not necessary because his third son would take care of the land after he died.



But, the eldest son explained that his youngest brother did not want that for his life. In addition, the eldest son reminded his father that he would help in the management of the house and the second son was doing well at the grain market. So the third son could study.

The third son was silent as his mother had been. He only answered his father's questions with one word –“Aye” (yes). “Do you want to study,” asked the father. “Aye,” answered the son. Wang Lung was angry. But, as always, when he was calm, he did what his sons wanted and the third son would have a tutor and then he would go to study in the south.

Wang Lung had peace only with his daughters –the poor fool who lived with him needed only something to eat and a piece of cloth to play with. The third daughter was married to Liu's son and did not live in Wang Lung's house. Another person who gave Wang Lung peace was his first grandson. Wang Lung was delighted with his laughter.

In five years, Wang Lung had five grandsons and four granddaughters and his house was full of their laughing and creeping.

The winter was cold as it had never been before. The old uncle was dying. Wang Lung went to visit him and his wife in the earthen house. He bought two coffins for them and they felt pleased. Wang Lung had taken care of his uncle and his wife as his own son had never cared for them. The



old woman asked Wang Lung that when they died, he would find a wife for their son and Wang Lung promised to do what she asked.

When the old man died, the old woman went to live in the town house. Day after day, she was pleased with her opium pipe and became as shriveled and yellow as the Old Mistress of the fallen House of Hwang.

Chapter 31

All his life Wang Lung had heard of war, but he had never seen it. One spring morning, he was with his beloved grandson when ranks of men in gray coats stood in front of the house. Although most of them were only lads, their behavior was of coarse, that of wild and fierce men. Wang Lung ordered a servant to lock the gates. Suddenly, Wang Lung heard a voice saying, "I am the son of your uncle." Wang Lung saw his uncle's son; that is, his cousin. Wang Lung could not stop his cousin and his fellow comrades from entering. Wang Lung could only call his eldest son for help.

The eldest son did not know how to act –to be courteous or angry. But, because all of the men had knives with them, the son decided to be courteous. He greeted his relative and ordered the slaves to prepare a meal for him and his comrades. He wanted them to be satisfied before they continued their march. Wang Lung and his son were shocked when the



uncle's son said that they would stay there for some days until they received the signal to continue the march.

The second son arrived and advised his father and his elder brother to do what the soldiers wanted. He had seen how one soldier had killed a man when he protested.

Wang Lung's family members moved to the inner courts. The soldiers would occupy the outer courts.

Although the soldiers destroyed the tables, cut the trees, and killed the gold fish, the worst problem was the uncle's son because he was looking for a woman for his lust. Cuckoo suggested Wang Lung give him the slave he wanted. The uncle's son chose Pear Blossom, Lotus's slave. The poor girl did not want that destiny. When Wang Lung saw her anguish, he ordered Cuckoo to tell the uncle's son that that slave had a bad disease, so he had to choose another one. Then one of the slaves offered herself and went with Cuckoo to see the uncle's son.

A moon passed. Soldiers were called to march. The slave was pregnant. The uncle's son left the house asking Wang Lung to take care of his woman and son.



Chapter 32

For the first time, Wang Lung and the two elder sons agreed -The house had to be mended because the soldiers had destroyed everything.

The slave who was pregnant with the uncle's son's child gave birth to a girl. Wang Lung was content because if she had given birth to a boy, she could demand to be part of the family. However, because Wang Lung was a just man, he promised her the room and the bed where the old woman stayed. However, while the old woman lived, the slave had to take care of her, and when the old woman died, the slave had to place her in her coffin. The slave did not want to live alone after the old woman died. She asked Wang Lung to find a good man for her.

When the old woman died, the slave asked Wang Lung to fulfill his promise. He only thought of the lad who had injured Ching. Wang Lung called for him. When the man came, Wang Lung made a ceremony as the Lord of Hwang used to do. Man and woman stood before Wang Lung. Then Wang Lung said to the man, "Man, here is a woman for you if you accept her." The man was grateful because as he was poor he could only get a slave as a wife. Finally, Wang Lung said, "It will be done."

Wang Lung waited for peace, but peace never came. The wives of his sons hated each other. The pretext was the children who went to the other wife's court. The real cause was that when the uncle's son was in the house,



he called the wife of the eldest son a piece of cold fish because she did not accept his indecent looks and words. Conversely, the wife of the second son talked to and laughed with the uncle's son. So he called her red meat.

The hatred went beyond the wives to the sons. The eldest son hated the second son because he was the only person who knew the amount of money entering and leaving the house. On the other hand, the second son hated the eldest son because he and his wife wasted the money, the inheritance of all of them.

In addition, Lotus was jealous because Wang Lung had protected Pear Blossom, her slave. Although the slave did what Lotus needed, even before she asked for it, Lotus continued being angry with her. Wang Lung said he only had taken care of Pear Blossom the same as he would protect his poor fool. But Lotus answered that at the age he was, a man looked for girls for his pleasure. Wang Lung thought it was better to wait until Lotus was calm. Indeed, Wang Lung did not think of Pear Blossom as a woman but as a daughter. However, after this conversation with Lotus, he began to change his mind.

After that, another pain came to Wang Lung. The third son said that he had decided what to do with his life. He wanted to be a soldier and to go to a war. Wang Lung was shocked. Then he tried to ponder his son's decision. "We are going to wed you," said the father. "If you do that, I will go away," answered the son. "I mean if you want a slave," continued the father.



“I can find women anywhere. I am looking for glory. I have dreams,” replied the son. “The only beautiful slave in our house is the pale one who stayed in the inner court, Pear Blossom,” continued the son. When Wang Lung heard that, he got jealous. He ordered his son to keep off the slaves. “You begin,” answered the son and went out.

Chapter 33

Now Wang Lung thought of Pear Blossom all the time. One day, he stayed alone in his own court. His blood was hot. He desired to go to his fields, and he took off out his socks and shoes, and felt the land under his feet. But he could not do that because he was not a farmer anymore but a landowner. The night came and Wang Lung continued alone in his court. Suddenly, Pear Blossom crept into the gates. When the slave was before him, Wan Lung said, “I am an old man.” Pear Blossom answered that old men were kind. Wang Lung advised her to look for a young man. However, she answered she did not like young men because they were fierce. Then Pear Blossom clasped Wang Lung’s feet. Wang Lung led her to his court and stayed with her the whole night.

Although Wang Lung decided to keep this in secret, Cuckoo had seen when Pear Blossom left Wang Lung’s court at dawn. Cuckoo talked to Wang Lung and Wang Lung offered her money if she could tell Lotus to take the news in a calm way. Lotus knew about the affair, but Cuckoo reminded her



of the foreign clock and the ruby ring she wanted. Lotus offered to be calm if Wang Lung fulfilled her wishes. In addition, he had to look for a new slave for her.

Now Wang Lung felt half ashamed and half proud. He was a man although most people wanted to see him as a grandfather. Now each son went to his court to talk to him.

First, the second son came talking of the land, the grain, the prices, and of the possibility of a drought. While he talked, he looked everywhere to verify the news he had heard. Then Wang Lung ordered Pear Blossom to bring tea for him and for his son. The two men drank tea and talked of the land. Then the second son went out.

Wang Lung felt scared of his eldest son's reaction. However, when the eldest son came, and Wang Lung looked into his eyes, he could find a young man afraid of his own wife. The son only said, "I could not believe what I heard." Wang Lung only answered, "Why not? It is my own house" (Buck, 2004, p. 345). The son replied, "Father, since you are a rich man, you can do what you like." The father answered, "Well, I think it is normal for a man to have more than one wife." Wang Lung knew well that his eldest son was a lusty man and someday he would look for another woman besides his wife. The eldest son went out, too.



At night, Wang Lung's court was illuminated by the light of candles. However, Wang Lung could not see at first that his third son was inside the court. The young man stood before his father and announced, "I will be a soldier." Now Wang Lung felt afraid of this son. Then the third son looked at Pear Blossom. She only covered her face with her hands. The third son continued, "I will go." After saying that, the son left the room. Nobody knew where the third son had gone.

Chapter 34

After a time, the love between the man and the girl changed into love between a father and a daughter. Wang Lung was fond of Pear Blossom, but passionless. Pear Blossom lived in Wang Lung's court. She was helpful to him and to the poor fool. Indeed, the poor fool had been taken care of by Wang Lung, her father, and by O-lan, her mother. Nevertheless, as a way to be grateful, Pear Blossom also took care of the poor fool. Wang Lung felt relieved because now he was sure there would be a person who would take care of his poor fool after he died. However, he gave Pear Blossom a package of poison because after Pear Blossom there was no other person who could take care of the poor fool. The wives of Wang Lung's sons were busy taking care of their own children. On the other hand, the sons did not pay attention to such things.



Wang Lung worried about Pear Blossom because she was a young woman and he an old man. When Wang Lung said these things to Pear Blossom, her answer was that she preferred to live there safely. She explained that she hated every man even her father who had sold her after a famine. She had heard only bad things about young men, so she felt secure with Wang Lung.

For the first time in many years, Wang Lung felt peace.

Wang Lung, now an old man, seldom visited Lotus's court. When he went there, he met the two women who gossiped. Lotus and Cuckoo were friends and no more mistress and servant. They were pleased with the food, the wine, and the silver Wang Lung gave them when they asked for it.

In addition, Wang Lung seldom visited his sons' courts. When he went there, he was invited to drink tea. Now, he had eleven grandsons and eight granddaughters. Wang Lung enjoyed talking to them.

Cuckoo always knew what happened around. She informed Wang Lung that the eldest son had wearied of his wife's constant complaints. He often went to the tea shops. Cuckoo also told Wang Lung that the third son was a military official in the south, in the Revolution.



During the day, Wang Lung stayed warm from the heat of sun's rays. At night, Wang Lung kept his body warm because Pear Blossom shared the bed with him.

Wang Lung used to visit his land every spring. One day he went and visited the enclosure where his dead were buried. He talked to himself, "I will be the next. I have to buy a coffin." He returned to the town and asked his eldest son to do this. The coffin, of superior quality, was placed in Wang Lung's room. He looked at it everyday and he felt comforted.

Wang Lung's last desire was to live in the earthen house in his land. He, the poor fool, Pear Blossom, and some servants went there. Wang Lung left the house in town for the family he had founded.

Now Wang Lung only paid attention to something to eat, something to drink, and to his land. He used to sit against the wall of the house and look at his land.

His sons went to visit him each day or every other day. The eldest son was an officer in town among the rich people and had a new wife. The second son was forming a great grain market by himself.

One day, the two sons came. After greeting their father, they went to see the land. Wang Lung followed them although they did not notice him. The two sons talked about selling the land and sharing the money equally



between them. The second son needed the money to ship rice using the railroad. Wang Lung cried out. The sons tried to calm him. But Wang Lung only repeated that if a person sold the land, it would be the end of the family. The two sons held their father and assured him that the land would not be sold. However, when they looked at each other over their father's head, they smiled because they had decided to sell the land.

3.2.5 Analysis: The Peasant Man



Picture 58: Wang Lung, actor Paul Muni, *The Good Earth*, the movie, 1937.

Source: <http://www.allstarpics.net/pictures/0653707/the-good-earth-pics.html>

First aspect: The good earth

For a poor peasant, earth was everything. Earth provided him with shelter, food, money, and an eternal place for his bones. Wang Lung's



house was made of good earth and straw. He built an oven using good earth. Even his ancestors had made the temple of the god of the earth and the god and his goddess themselves with good earth. In the second part of the novel, Wang Lung chose a plot of land for his dead. It did not matter that this was a plot of good earth to be used for land labor. Wang Lung needed a place where his ancestors, he, and his descendants could rest forever.

Second aspect: Land labor

For poor peasants, life was very hard. Most of them were illiterate; only a few of them could read and write. They worked their own small plots of land or they worked the plots of landowners having to give part of the harvests to them. Evidently, land labor demanded great physical effort because poor peasants had only a few tools for working: hoes, rakes, and wooden plows. They always had an ox as their work companion. Their labor depended on natural phenomena such as rains and sun. Good harvests were the result of hard land labor and an adequate balance of rain and sun. In these cases, peasants got enough grain for themselves and even an excess to be sold. Although land labor was not appreciated, society survived because of it –everybody needs food. However, when there were floods or droughts, there was no harvest and peasants starved. Poor families sometimes sold their daughters to be servants of the rich people who had enough supplement of grains to cope with natural disasters.



In the first part of *The Good Earth*, Wang Lung was a poor peasant laboring on his land. He struggled daily and got excellent harvests. He got food for his family and even something else to be sold. The money of the grain sales was used to acquire more land. When there was a great drought, poor Wang Lung had no money and went to the south with his family to survive. Although sometimes he thought of selling his daughter to get money to return to the land in the north, he never did that.

In the second part of *The Good Earth*, Wang Lung became a landowner and rented some land plots to poor peasants who gave him part of the harvests because he was the owner of the land. When there was a great flood, he felt secure because he had stored enough grain for his family and for selling. Then he could even buy some daughters of poor peasants who needed money to get food for the rest of their families.

Third aspect: Chinese family

Family took an important place in Chinese society. It was said that sometimes more than a hundred relatives lived together under the rule of the oldest male. However, this happened only in the case of families of rich rural landowners, wealthy merchants, and government officials. In the case of common people, under the same roof normally lived parents and children and eventually, in addition, grandparents, uncles and aunts. How could all relatives live in harmony in the same house? We can reply by saying that



relationships within families were extremely formal in traditional China. Confucius stressed filial piety that indicated that children had to respect and honor their parents. According to Confucius' teachings, children had to serve and nourish their parents when they were alive, and sacrifice to them when they died. Children had to live in a moral way. Doing so, they were honoring their parents. Children also had to take care of their parents, especially when they were elderly. Confucius also said that China could become a civil and organized society if people respected the five basic relationships in life: between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, older brother and younger brother, and friend and friend.

In the whole novel, Wang Lung and his wife observed filial piety towards Wang Lung's father and his uncle's family. However, Wang Lung's sons did not practice filial piety towards their father. None of them wanted to continue with the land labor. Furthermore, the first son did not respect his father's concubine. As a consequence, his father ordered him to go to the south for three years.

Fourth aspect: Concubinage and foot binding

When Wang Lung became a wealthy landowner, he decided to take a concubine only because of her beauty -he was captivated by Lotus's slenderness and bound feet. When his wife complained about his decision he said nothing because he knew he did not have a justifiable reason for

taking a concubine. Wang Lung did not sleep with his wife anymore. He only paid attention to her when he realized she was gravely sick, and he appreciated his wife's faithfulness when there was nothing for doing.

3.2.6 Analysis: The Peasant Woman



Picture 59: O-lan, actress Luise Rainer, *The Good Earth*, the movie, 1937.

Source: <http://www.allstarpics.net/pictures/0653707/the-good-earth-pics.html>

In general, in Chinese society, women were subjugated to men; any social position was held by the men. While men had to do the work outside home, the women were responsible for the house. In every house there was a head wife; that is, the woman who decided each member's duties, the amount of money required to cover household needs, the kind of education for the children, and even the fate of other women living under the same roof.



Women also had to deal with marriage matching. Normally, an aunt or a matchmaker - an elderly woman of the village - was the person responsible for the formalities concerning the union of two families.

Women could have other opportunities and roles depending on the social position of their husbands. For example, women of the Court had the possibility to learn to write and to read. Mothers of future emperors, for instance, could rule the country in place of their sons. These women were given formal titles and positions such as Empress Dowager and had a place in Chinese history.

As you can infer, Chinese women of upper status had more advantages than others from lower status. The question would be: What happened to the wives and daughters of peasants? Peasant wives had additional responsibilities. They were responsible for the household, and in addition, they helped their husbands with the farm labor. In the case of daughters, we must remember that in ancient Chinese culture, sons were “big happiness” while daughters were only “small happiness.” Consequently, daughters of poor peasants were considered as objects to be used in extreme situations such as during a famine; the girls could be sold as slaves or concubines and the money would be used for the welfare of the rest of the family. Now we could wonder: Did women’s rights improve after the fall of the Chinese dynasties? Although women’s rights improved during the Republic years, the advantages were relegated to big cities. Therefore,



peasant women did not have right to formal education. They continued being possessions of their husbands.

In traditional China, marriage could end in divorce for three major causes:

1. For personal incompatibility; in that case, the husband wrote a divorce note.
2. When one spouse committed a serious crime against the other, or against his/her clan, the marriage was annulled.
3. The husband unilaterally asked for divorce if his wife had one of the following seven undesirable features: 1) Loquacity; 2) An incurable disease 3) Theft; 4) Adultery; 5) Lack of filial pity toward her parents-in-law; 6) Jealousy; and, 7) Barrenness.

A wife had the possibility of making use of three exceptions to evade this unilateral divorce, even if one of the seven causes existed.

1. If the wife did not have a family to return to.
2. If she had observed a full three-year mourning for a parent-in-law.
3. If her husband was poor when they married, and now was rich.



We must mention that this unilateral divorce law favouring husbands was enforced from the Tang dynasty (618 -907) to 1930 after which it was abolished when the new Civil Code of the Republic of China was passed.

With all the above information, we now can analyze O-lan as a peasant wife. From the first, Wang Lung despised her because of her wide feet. However, on the same day, he was proud of having O-lan as his wife because she was humble and a decent woman who preferred to stay in the kitchen instead of being in the celebration with other men. In addition, she cooked well and Wang Lung's family and neighbours congratulated him for his wife. When Wang Lung was a poor peasant, he realized he was a lucky man for having O-lan by his side. She took care of the household and helped him in the land labor. She delivered her children alone. In daily life and in difficulties was she who gave practical solutions as the making of the clothes and shoes for the family, or the making of a hut with mats when the family had to go to the south during a great famine.

If Wang Lung wanted to divorce O-lan, he would make use of the second cause: his wife had an incurable disease. Nevertheless, in that situation, Wang Lung was by O-lan's side taking care of her until she died. Indeed, O-lan did not have the undesirable characteristics that husbands could argue to get a divorce. Conversely, she was a silent and decent woman who had three sons and three daughters. She took care of her father-in-law. He appreciated his daughter-in-law. Although he did not comprehend perfectly what was happening to her, he realized something



wrong was occurring because she was in bed and not attending to the household. These two, father and daughter-in-law helped each other and died the same day.

3.3 TRANSITION TO THE NEW WORLD

Although the point, “The New World,” is developed in the next chapter; that is, in Chapter 4: “THE NEW CHINESE WOMAN ACCORDING TO PEARL S. BUCK,” we mention that *The Good Earth* reflected the Chinese sentiment for a republic. Here, we must remember that the change from the dynastic system into a republic was a consequence of external and internal affairs. China began to have contact with the West from the fourteenth century. For Western countries, China was a treasure, so Western powers wanted to take it over. Western people devised strategies to put China in difficulties. Chinese authorities had to sign inequitable treaties which were profitable for the Western nations only. Domestic affairs were not good at all. The population was discontent because authorities ruled in favor of the nobility. Chinese people did not believe any more in the dynastic system. Conversely, they began to think of a republic.

In the paragraphs below, we demonstrate the influence of historic Chinese events in the novel *The Good Earth*.



In **Chapter 12**, the author gives readers two examples of what Chinese people thought of the foreigners. In general, common population thought that foreigners were bad people who lived in China but understood nothing of what was happening there.

1. Wang Lung heard a young man encouraging people to have a revolution in China. The young man also asked people to do something against the hated foreigners.
2. To drag or to beg from a foreigner was a good thing because they gave silver coins rather than copper pence. But, this did not mean foreigners had good hearts. They did that because they were ignorant of the life in the city.

In **Chapter 13**, the author showed the readers that Chinese society was divided into two different groups, according to their economic status: The group of those who had enough money (the wealthy) and the group of those who worked the whole day to get some money (the poor).

Wang Lung realized that in the city there were two groups of people. In one group were those who had enough money to buy elegant satin and velvet clothes and to buy delicatessen food. The other group included those who worked the whole day long and got only some pence for a bowl of rice and sometimes, cabbage. These people had to sew rags to have something to cover their bodies.



In **Chapter 14**, the author gives examples of the instability in China. She writes about the capitalists, soldiers, and wealthy people running away from the country, and poor people assaulting the house of an important rich person. Below, there is an explanation for each aspect.

1. The author makes sure the readers understand what Chinese people thought of capitalists by the explanation given to Wang Lung by a young teacher who was handing to people a paper showing a thin yellow man stabbed by a fat man. The young teacher said that the common people were the dead man and the rich capitalists, who had seized everything, were the fat man. The solution was in the hands of the rich who should give a part of what they had to the poor, so everybody would have something.
2. The author mentions that there are soldiers who were looking for people who would bring the bedding, the guns, and the ammunition.
3. Common people such as Wang Lung suffer the consequences of the war. He realized that people were afraid. Rich men brought their possessions on horses to the river's edge where ships took them to other places. In addition, other wealthy people had been led to the firewagon.
4. Wang Lung and O-lan took part in the assaulting of the house of a rich man. On that occasion, they got gold and jewels. In this way, they were



doing what the young teacher had said; that is, taking what the rich had more than enough of.

In **Chapter 31**, the author reinforces the fact that the common population suffers from the war in the country. Wang Lung was living in the city, in the old House of Hwang. One day, he and his grandson heard soldiers approaching. Wang Lung ordered a servant to lock the gates. Suddenly, Wang Lung heard a soldier saying that he was the son of Wang Lung's uncle. Wang Lung saw his nephew. Wang Lung could not stop his nephew and his fellow comrades from entering. The soldiers stayed there until they were called to march again.

As you can see, around 1911, Chinese people wanted a new China where everybody had the same rights. Some changes took place in the Republican years. Women were given the chance to obtain formal education. However, when Communists came to power in China, in 1949, Mao Tse-tung was the one who changed the status of Chinese women. He devised ways to eliminate the distinctions between men and women in China. He did so because he wanted to transform China into an equitable nation, and the only way to reach his aim was to have an equitable society. Because women were at the bottom of Chinese society, it was necessary to give them rights related to property, to allow them to choose a marriage partner, to divorce, etc.; that is, rights to decide about the course of their lives. Although Pearl S. Buck did not agree with Communism, she agreed about changing Chinese women's status. She admired and respected



Chinese people, but she regretted the way women were treated in the former tradition of that Asiatic country. Consequently, she worked in pro of women when she lived in the United States while Mao Tse-tung did the same in China.



CHAPTER 4

THE NEW CHINESE WOMAN ACCORDING TO PEARL S. BUCK

Pearl S. Buck understood the secondary status women had had traditionally in society because of her sad and disappointing experiences with her father, her first husband, and the male Chinese society.

At home, Pearl noticed her mother was neglected by her husband, Absalom, who paid attention to missionary labor only. To him, his wife was merely an instrument for his labor. Carie helped him by playing the organ, singing, talking, and advising Chinese women. Although she enjoyed her duty, Carie felt loneliness. In addition, Absalom did not play an active role in the children's upbringing. He was outside the home most of the time. Carie was the one who paid attention to the children's education, especially in the training of her daughters, Pearl and Grace.

When Pearl married Lossing Buck, first she thought of her wifely duties. Indeed, she helped Lossing in different ways by being an interpreter, a typist, and a research assistant. However, she felt lonely because Lossing was immersed in his job all the time. Then she tried to fill her vacuum with her daughter Carol. Nevertheless Carol had a mental disease, and Pearl could not have other children.



Because Pearl needed money for Carol's care, she began writing in earnest. Necessity helped Pearl find her identity as a talented woman who wanted to convey her experiences in China, where women were at the bottom of society. She knew about female infanticide, foot binding, and concubinage.

Fortunately, Pearl could understand that women are important in society through her studies at Randolph-Macon Woman's College where women were trained to be useful citizens.

In the following chapter, there is an explanation of the secondary role women have had throughout history. The focus is on Pearl's efforts to make women realize their new role in contemporary society, their commitment to a world where equality of races and genders is the base for living together as men and women, helping each other for the common welfare.

4.1 POSITION OF WOMEN IN CHINESE HISTORY

The first ideas of Chinese women's status can be found in *The Book of Changes* or *I Ching* in Chinese. This book is one of the most important books in the world's literature, and it was written by the legendary emperor Fu Xi, the first of the mythical Three Sovereigns. It is said that three thousand years of Chinese tradition are based on this book. Indeed,

Confucianism and Taoism, two branches of Chinese philosophy, have their common roots in it.

According to *The Book of Changes*, the functioning of the cosmos is regulated by yin and yang that are two complementary but opposite principles which are always merging one into the other. Yin represents the negative principle, or the feminine, while yang refers to the positive principle, or the masculine. There is a mutual dependence between yin and yang relationships, and the harmony is based on hierarchical difference. In general, yin qualities were considered inferior to yang qualities, but unity of opposites was always the cultural ideal.



Picture 60: The yin yang symbol

Source: <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/cosmos/bgov/cosmos.htm>



Chinese cosmology explained any situation in the human or natural world by the yin and yang principles. For example, the natural subordination of yin to yang justified the social hierarchies of gender and age, the duty of the wife to honor her husband, and the obedience of younger generations to older ones.

The Book of Changes is one of the Five Classics of Chinese Literature. The other ones are *The Classic of Poetry*, *The Classic of Rites*, *The Classic of History*, and *The Spring and Autumn Annals*. The Five Classics together with the Four Books are the basis of Confucianism. We mention this aspect because the Four Books and the Five Classics had to be studied by Confucian scholars who wished to become government officials. All political issues were based on them.

Since Confucianism was the dominant philosophy in China from the ancient era until 1949 when the Communists reached the power, the idea of Chinese women's inferior status prevailed for three millennia.

Examples of the subjugation of women to men in China are found by the thousands. Some of them are listed in the following paragraphs.

- *The Classic of Poetry* consists of a collection of poems, songs, hymns, and eulogies. In this book, which is traditionally credited as a compilation from Confucius, the sexual inequality in China is reflected in the following song that enforces the superiority of the male and the inferiority of the



female. “When a baby boy was born, he was laid on the bed and given jade to play with, and when a baby girl was born, she was laid on the floor and given a tile to play with” (Gao, 2000, p.30).

Because a boy is more valuable than a girl, he is given a precious green mineral such as jade, while a girl is given a tile, a useful ceramic item, but less valuable than jade. In this way began the idea of “big happiness” when a boy was born and of “small happiness” when a girl was born.

- *The Classic of Rites* is a book that describes ancient rites and court ceremonies which encouraged and taught feminine virtues desirable from the male point of view: “quietness, obedience, good manners, personal neatness, industry, ability to cook, to spin, and to sew, respect for the husband’s parents, kindness to the husband’s brothers, and courtesy to the husband’s friends” (Gao, 2000, p.31).

A woman was trained to be a good wife. She had to know how to run the household. In addition, she had to honor her husband, her husband’s parents and his friends.

- During the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – 219 A.D.), the codes of feminine ethics known as the *Three Obediences and Four Virtues* were developed. “The Three Obediences require women to obey the father before the marriage, obey the husband after marriage, and obey the first



son after the death of the husband. The Four Virtues are (sexual morality, proper speech, modest manner, and diligent work” (Gao, 2000, p.31).

- In the case of widows, they could remarry in the Han Dynasty. However, during the Song Dynasty (420 – 478), the remarrying of widows was considered a moral crime. As a consequence, the chastity of widows was the rule during the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1643).
- *The Biographies of Virtuous Women* is a collection of stories of Chinese women who chose to end their lives after their husbands' deaths in order to guard their chastity and purity.

In sum, Confucianism enforced the doctrine of women as instruments for men to have comfort and sexual satisfaction, to have a servant for the whole family, and to guarantee the continuity of family lineage. Indeed, if a woman failed in giving birth to boys, she was regarded to have committed the worst moral crime. Then a husband could divorce her or could take a concubine. In addition, under Confucianism, women did not have legal and property rights. Women were the property of their fathers or husbands. After her marriage, a woman became nameless. She was addressed by the role she played in the family. For instance, if she was married to the Wang family, she could be called in three different ways according to her age: 1) if she was young, she would be called the daughter-in-law of the Wang family; 2) once she reached her thirties, she would be called the big sister-in-law of



the Wang family; and finally, 3) from her forties, she would be called the big mother of the Wang family. In other words, her given name and her maiden name were completely forgotten.

Because of the influence of Western ideas and of the critical political situation in China at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, Confucianism was losing power. Reformers such as Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei promoted the idea of female equality and proposed important changes to enforce it. The Four May movement under the slogan “Down with Confucianism” struggled to reform the family system, marriage, divorce, chastity, suicide, suffrage, and the education of women. In 1919, the first group of girls was admitted to the Peking National University. At the same time, coeducation was adopted in almost all colleges. Educated women enrolled in the political and military fronts of the country.

Women’s status in China was altering little by little. However, since 1949 women’s condition in China has drastically changed since the Communist government took over China’s mainland. Below we develop this theme.

4.2 WOMEN UNDER MAO’S REGIME

The long time oppression of Chinese women did not end in a few days. It took around a century of endless struggle not only for women but also for the Chinese society as a whole to get women’s emancipation.



The effective liberation of Chinese women was achieved because the Communist movement, since its birth, listed among its goals the achievement of female emancipation and equality between men and women. Consequently, the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, with Mao Tse-tung as its President, ended for women the three thousand years of feudal oppression and enslavement as well as the history of being trampled and bullied by foreign aggressors.

From his youth, Mao was against Confucianism. Consequently, he did not agree with feudal marriage. In 1919, he wrote an article in which he declared his opposition to women's oppression in China. In this article he analyzed the causes of Miss Chao's suicide. According to him, Miss Chao decided to end her life because of three reasons: 1) Chinese society; 2) the Chao family; and 3) the Wu family, her husband's family. Mao considered that Miss Chao was inside a cage made by these three factors. She tried to live inside that cage, but it was impossible and she committed suicide. For Mao, if at least one of those factors had disappeared, Miss Chao would not have had to die. Miss Chao loved another man. However, according to the tradition of arranged marriages, she had to marry the man chosen by her parents. She could not explain her feelings to either her family or her future husband's family. She could not go away because she would be considered a dishonorable person. There was no way out of the situation, and she preferred to end her life. In other words, Miss Chao was a martyr who died defending the freedom to choose her own love. Mao concluded that the two families had committed a crime, but it was because of a society which



enforced arranged marriages, which caused the negation of the individual will, and the absence of freedom to choose one's own mate. Mao asked people to join against the evils of Chinese society because they could injure not only women but men as well.

The ideas in the following paragraphs are a summary of Chapter 31 of *The Little Red Book* which contains Mao's ideas about women's role to build the new Chinese society. In the 1960s, *The Little Red Book* became the ultimate authority for political correctness. Around 5 billion copies of this book were printed in Mao's attempt to transform Chinese society. Every citizen had to own, to read, and to carry it at all times, especially during the Cultural Revolution.



Picture 61: *The Little Red Book*

Source: <http://www.terebess.hu/english/mao.html>

By 1927, Mao referred to the oppression of Chinese women as feudal patriarchy. He concluded that in China, a man was usually the subject of the domination of three systems of authority: political authority, family authority,



and religious authority. However, in the case of women, in addition to these three systems of authority, they were under the domination of men; that is, under the authority of their husbands. As a result, these four authorities - political, family, religious and masculine - are the embodiment of the whole feudal-patriarchal ideology and system.

In 1945, Mao demanded freedom of marriage and equality for men and for women while China was on the verge of revolution.

In 1955, Mao, now President of the People's Republic of China, reinforced his idea of giving Chinese women their place at the same level of men in society. He said that it was necessary that women join productive activity to build a great socialist society in which women and men would receive the same salary for the same work. In sum, he thought that the new Chinese society had to be based on a genuine equality of sexes.

The government of the People's Republic of China planned and executed a series of programs to fulfill its goal of building a socialist society in which men and women had the same rights. In the following paragraphs, we summarize those strategies which enabled Mao to raise women's status in China.



1. Land Reform

In feudal China, 70% of the rural population - poor farmers and farm laborers – owned only 10% of the land. Under these circumstances, women had no right to own any land. In contrast, since the beginning of the People's Republic of China, the government applied the land reform distributing the land of landowners among the rural population according to the number of members of a family. Therefore, in New China rural women got land for themselves. This action allowed for a balance between the millennial unequal economical situation of women and their masculine counterparts.

2. Universal balloting

In 1953, the People's Republic of China promulgated the Electoral Law which granted women the same rights to vote and to stand for elections as men. In December of that year, elections were held to define the members of the First National People's Congress. That was the first large-scale ballot in China's history. More than 90% of Chinese women cast their vote. 12% of the members of the First National People's Congress were women deputies, representatives from ethnic minorities.



3. The movement out of the home

The building of the new socialist Chinese society required the work of its women to increase the labor front. To liberate women from their household, the government implemented communal kitchens and nurseries. As a result, in New China, women played an active role in social productive labor, providing them with an independent source of income.

4. Illiteracy eradication campaign

Because in feudal China, around 90% of women were illiterate, the government of the People's Republic of China launched a gradual campaign throughout the country to raise the cultural level of the whole population. The campaign had three upsurges in 1952, 1956, and 1958. In rural and urban areas, men and women had the chance to attend literacy classes, popular evening schools, and workers' spare-time schools. In sum, with this educative campaign, Mao helped to end the long period of ignorance and backwardness in which Chinese women had lived because of a patriarchal society.



5. Publicity and implementation of the Marriage Law

In 1950, the People's Republic of China promulgated the Marriage Law abolishing the feudal marriage system. In other words, arranged and forced marriage, male superiority and female inferiority, and disregard for the interests of children could not be allowed in China anymore. Conversely, the government promoted new practices that implied freedom for both men and women in marriage: monogamy, sexual equality, and protection of the legitimate rights of women and children. After a period of publicity and implementation of the marriage law, numerous arranged engagements were annulled, and maltreatment against wives was reduced. Men and women had the right to choose their partners freely.

6. Ban of prostitution

Brothels, prostitution, and whoring were commonplace in feudal China. However, in the People's Republic of China, prostitution was outlawed. Brothels were closed and prostitutes were relocated in places where they could be educated, have their thinking reformed, receive treatment for venereal diseases, and be provided with guidance to help them start normal lives to support themselves through their own work.



Through these six headlines, Mao could raise women's status in China. Women's rights were recognized enabling them to participate actively in the building of the New China.

4.3 THE NEW WOMAN

In chapter III, we analyzed the novel *The Good Earth* in which Pearl S. Buck explained to us the status of Chinese women who for three thousand years had been given a secondary role. However, Pearl thought that O-lan was not only an example of what was happening in China, but around the world. In the author's opinion, women have been given a secondary role in society throughout history.

Pearl presented her point of view concerning women's status in society in her novels, but also in her essays, such as *America's Medieval Women* and *Of Men and Women*.

America's Medieval Women was published in 1938 in Harper's magazine. Pearl explained the title indicating that American middle-class women had a position of comfortable serfdom in contemporary America. Indeed, they had privileges, such as education and well-furnished homes, but they did not have equality. They were denied access to the world of work and adventure and opportunity. She also thought that the United States was a backward country because, although Americans used innovative



machinery, human relations were based on patterns of attitudes and of beliefs they had inherited from the dark ages. She commented that there still were men who insisted on the intellectual inferiority of their wives; so talented women had to conceal their intelligence to attract men. In addition, when a woman was interested in things outside home, society blamed her while indicating that this woman was neglecting her home. Because Pearl had a crowded schedule full of writing, lecturing, traveling, fundraising, and organizing, she was labeled as an inadequate homemaker. Although *America's Medieval Women* had some adversaries, Pearl continued insisting that women had to be given their freedom, and men had to accept the idea of equality.

In 1939, Pearl published *America's Gunpowder Women*, in Harper's magazine. This new essay continued the argument she had made in *America's Medieval Women* around a year before. Pearl made readers aware that American women were a privileged but frustrated group. Since they were excluded from adult responsibilities, treated as ornamental, and confined to domestic chores, they were threatened with becoming dangerously combustible. Consequently, American women had two options: either they would play a larger role in the nation's public life or they would inevitably explode.

Of Men and Women is a collection of nine essays on the relations between the sexes on the eve of American entry into World War II. It was



published in 1941 by The John Day Company. Below, we show you the contents of the book.

1. The discord
2. The home in China and America
3. The American man
4. The American woman
5. Monogamy
6. Women as angels
7. Woman and war
8. The education of men and women for each other
9. Women and Freedom

Through the book, Pearl developed as a major theme the dependence of American democracy on the equality and full freedom of women. In her opinion, although there was no any important difference between men and women, women did not have the same status as men. Pearl thought that women needed to demand the same opportunities and responsibilities as men in the home, the workplace, the universities, and the political arena. While men participated actively in what Pearl called “the engine rooms” of society, women’s scope was reduced to domestic tasks wasting their wide potential. Women had the opportunity to study and to prepare for productive activity. However, they felt discouraged when they looked for a job and realized their chances were minimal in comparison with men’s possibilities.



In Pearls words: “A man is educated and turned out to work. But a woman is educated – and turned out to grass” (Conn, 1996, p. 246).

In this part, we cite Margaret Fuller (1810-1850) because she was a distinguished literary and social critic and pioneering feminist who shared Pearls’ point of view about American women’s status. In 1845, Margaret Fuller published *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* which was a manifesto for the women’s rights movement. She described the oppression of the female sex throughout history and advocated equal status for women. After assessing the personal, social, professional, and political status of American women, she called for all professions to be open to women.

Pearl, just as Margaret Fuller, considered the status of women in society was the result of tradition. Both authors called for a change.



Picture 62: Margaret Fuller

Source: <http://www.enotes.com/nineteenth-century-criticism/fuller-margaret>



Pearl was an authority for women readers. Eric Swenson, vice-president of W. W. Company, asked her to comment about a book he was about to publish. The book was entitled *The Feminine Mystique*. It was written by Betty Friedan (1921 -2006) after an extensive survey research. Pearl accepted. After reading the book, she concluded that the author comprehended perfectly the problem of the American women – the absurd feminine mystique; that is, the false belief system according to which American women found identity and meaning in their lives through their husbands and children.

Betty's analysis was the following: During World War II, American women were encouraged to work in military industries. They began to work outside the home. However, after the war, American women were driven from the workplace. They returned to their domestic roles helped by the new, modern appliances that saved time for them. In addition, their husbands desired babies. Nevertheless, many American women were bored. They began to feel that their lives needed more than to run a household, to please their husbands, and to raise children. They felt unhappy and they questioned their limited role in society. In order to combat their boredom and discontent, American women "needed to assert themselves as independent, active, contributing adults, the equal partners of men in the doings of modern society" (Conn, 1996, p. 350). In other words, women would find identity and meaning in their lives by being active citizens just as men.



Picture 63: Betty Friedan, 1964

Source:http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/849281/betty_friedan_peoples_eclectic_vol_pg2.html

The *Feminine Mystique* was published in 1963 and became one of the major influences of feminism in the last half of the twentieth century.

Although their writings appeared in different years, Pearl and Betty had two things in common with regard to the role of American women in modern society. First, both authors agreed that American women had to be highly educated and had to contribute actively with their knowledge in their society. Second, American women had to realize that their roles must not be reduced to being wives and mothers only.

In contrast to the old woman, the medieval woman in contemporary society, the new woman could be defined in the following terms:

- ❖ A woman who needs education.
- ❖ A woman who looks for equal rights.



- ❖ A woman who wants equal pay and work opportunities.
- ❖ A woman who decides on the number of children she wants.
- ❖ A woman who participates in politics.

The new woman would be an adult citizen, an active person working for and in a better, democratic, and free society.

Below, we develop each headline.

4.3.1 A woman who needs education

Pearl was an educated person. We must remember that her education was always her mother's concern, and she was even Pearl's first teacher during her childhood. After that, Pearl's instruction continued under a Chinese intellectual named Mr. Kung who instructed her in reading and writing Chinese, and in Confucian philosophy and manners. Then Pearl was sent to Miss Jewell's School in Shanghai. Afterward, in the United States, Pearl was enrolled in Randolph-Macon Woman's College where she graduated with the philosophy of being independent and useful for society. Years later, she went to Cornell graduate school to get her master's degree in English.



Pearl also had experience as a teacher because, while she lived in Nanjing, she had the opportunity to teach English at both Nanjing University and the Chinese-governed National University.

All this background made Pearl believe that education was important for the whole society, but especially for people belonging to minority groups in order to improve their living conditions and to prepare them to defend their rights. In addition, she said that a better understanding among people of different cultures was the result of education. Furthermore, she offered her help to people building educational programs. The aspects here are developed in the paragraphs below.

Because her daughter, Carol, had a mental disease, Pearl was involved in the education of retarded children. From the time she was nine years old until her death, Carol stayed in the Vineland Training School whose official opening was on March 1, 1888.

Here we tell you a little about this important institution for retarded people. The information below was taken from the website of this institution (THE VINELAND TRAINING SCHOOL, <http://www.vineland.org/history/trainingschool/fastfacts/fastfacts.html>).

- This Training School changed its name 4 times. Its original name was “The New Jersey Home for the Education and Care of Feebleminded Children” (1888). It was then changed to “The New Jersey Training



School” (1893), then to “The Training School at Vineland” (1911), then to “The American Institute for Mental Studies” (1965). Finally, the historic name “The Training School at Vineland” was restored in 1988.

- In 1906, the Training School’s Psychological Research Laboratory was founded, and it was the first facility in America specifically dedicated to the study of mental deficiency.
- The institution established the Vineland Social Maturity Scale which measures a child’s ability to adapt to his or her surroundings. That scale was adopted by the US Government for military use in 1941.
- The Training Center’s research staff acted as an advisor to the Chilean government on special education in 1929.

As mentioned in Chapter I, Pearl maintained her involvement with Vineland in different ways. 1) She helped in raising funds for research on retardation; 2) she served as chairman of Vineland’s board for many years; 3) she analyzed Vineland’s instructional programs to define the best methodologies for retarded children; and 5) she worked as a teacher because to Pearl, a good education was the basis for an excellent human being in the future.

In the following paragraph, we transcribe an excerpt from the official website of The Vineland Training School about Pearl S. Buck institution (THE



VINELAND TRAINING SCHOOL,
<http://www.vineland.org/history/trainingschool/people/buck.htm>).

In 1950, Pearl S. Buck, a nationally famous author whose feeble-minded child attended the Training School, published an article in *Ladies Home Journal* and *Reader's Digest*, which recounted the tale of her feeble-minded daughter and her experience at Vineland. The article, entitled "The Child Who Never Grew," went on to be published in 13 languages and gave the school considerable publicity.

Pearl also believed that education was indispensable for a better understanding among people of different countries and different cultures. She thought that education would help to eradicate the existing prejudice. Because she concluded that the schools could not and would not provide the education Americans would need in the post war world, Pearl founded the East and West Association to help Americans understand Asians. The project was focused on common people. The program consisted of different projects which reached millions of Americans. One of the projects was lecture courses including films, music, art exhibits, and dramatic readings. Another project was "The Chinese Living Theatre." The organization also produced color cartoon supplements on Asia life that were distributed by two newspaper syndicates.



While we collect information for this part, we find that there is a book entitled *Pearl S. Buck and the East and West Association: The Trajectory and Fate of “Critical Internationalism,” 1940-1950* whose author is Robert Shaffer. In the abstract of the book it is indicated that

The East and West Association was formed during World War II with the aim of aiding the Allied war effort in Asia by helping Americans understand the culture and concerns of the people of China and India. Led by the novelist and political activist Pearl S. Buck, the association soon developed what the author calls a “critical internationalism” perspective, working against colonialism and racism in Asia and in the United States during World War II and expanding that work to include a critique of the Cold War in the following years. While the association did not have a major impact on United States policy during the 1940s, its efforts provided one model of how to mobilize United States public opinion on international affairs, and an analysis of its perspectives can help historians and activists distinguish between very different types of “internationalisms.”

In our opinion, it is important to know that Pearl S. Buck’s work is the object of study because of the importance and consequences that it had and the new implications it could have in future years.



Pearl also helped other people involved in mass education projects such as in the case of James Yen (1893 -1990) founder of the Mass Education Movement. Below is summarized the most outstanding aspects of his education and of his campaign in order to eradicate illiteracy in his country, China. In addition, his relationship with Pearl concerning education is explained.



Picture 64: James Yen

Source: <http://www.rmaf.org.ph/Awardees/Biography/BiographyYenYCJ.htm>

James Yen was a Chinese educator who devoted his life to the education of common people in China and later in the Philippines. Upon his graduation from Yale in 1918, Dr. Yen went to France to work as a volunteer for the Y.M.C.A. along with 20,000 illiterate Chinese laborers who had gone there to dig trenches. While writing letters home for them by day and translating news for them at night, he developed a basic Chinese vocabulary of about 1,300 characters. In 1920, he returned to the United States and got his master's degree in History and Politics in Princeton University. In 1921,



Yen returned to China to head a national mass literacy campaign. For this purpose, he reduced the Chinese vocabulary of forty thousand characters to the 1,300 most commonly used characters, and published four readers, which sold for a total of twelve cents. In 1923, Yen and leading intellectuals formed the National Association of Mass Education Movements (MEM). The association organized campaigns across the country which coordinated volunteer teachers and local leaders to offer classes in any available location, in order to attract students who could not pay high tuition. Among the volunteer teachers was Mao Tse-tung. These campaigns attracted more than five million students and served as a model for even more widespread schools.

Yen developed a program of Rural Reconstruction aimed at combating the four interrelated problems of village life: Poverty, disease, ignorance, and misgovernment. Yen developed techniques for rural development that did not depend on central government control, violent revolution, or large infusions of foreign money.

Yen financed his educative project basically with American contributions. For instance, in 1927 John D. Rockefeller Jr. made a personal gift of \$100,000. As another example, after World War II he was instrumental in getting the United States to spend \$27.5 million for rural reconstruction in China.



Because of his charismatic speaking style and forceful personality, Yen caught the attention of many groups in China as well as many foreign friends among which were Pearl Buck and Richard Walsh. James Yen addressed several lectures to the East and West Association. Richard led MEM's American operation while Pearl propagandized for the movement and helped Yen raise money. Pearl included James Yen in one of the books of the series ***Tell The People: Talks With James Yen About the Mass Education Movement.***

In sum, Pearl believed that education could change human beings' lives by making them better people. Consequently, she devised educational programs and joined with other people efforts' focused on education of minority groups or on mass educational projects.

4.3.2 A woman who looks for equal rights

During the 1930s and 1940's, Pearl dealt with different affairs. Aside from the civil rights for African-Americans, she focused on women.

In June, 1940, she published the article *Women: A Minority Group* in *Opportunity Magazine*. She pointed out that women around the world occupied the status of a minority group despite their numbers because every society had consigned women to a second-class humanity.



On another occasion, Pearl wrote warning of the consequences of relegating women to medieval servitude because of their sex. She explained that in various states there still were laws discriminating against women for being women. As a result, women continued in their struggle to have the Constitution of the United States applied in the same way for women as for men. Differences could be observed in lower wages for women although women were doing the same labor as men. In addition, there was discrimination toward married women working. In sum, in American society women withstood prejudice in different fields, such as in professions, in business, in government, and, even, in art.

However, Pearl did not advocate revolution because a revolution always left people debased and conditions worse than before, as she had experienced in the revolutions that took place in China while she lived there. Instead, she demanded change. For this reason, she was forceful in advocating women's rights, and she joined with several activist women, such as Alma Lutz, secretary of the National Woman's Party (NWP).

Alma Lutz enlisted Pearl in the support of the Equal Rights Amendment. Pearl accepted the duty on the following terms: A society had to make laws "that apply equally to all its citizens and not to male and female separately. Even rules that seem to discriminate in favor of women are ultimately destructive of democracy. What women need is not special treatment, but an unequivocally equal place with men before the law" (Conn, 1996, p. 235).



In 1828, women began to organize to get the right to vote. This group was known as the suffragettes and was led by Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified, giving women the right to vote.

In the same year, the National Woman's Party and its leader, Alice Paul, decided that a constitutional amendment granting equal rights to women was the next step in liberating women. That was the birth of the Equal Rights Amendment, simply called ERA.



Picture 65: Alice Paul

Source: <http://ladieslotto.blogspot.com/2010/03/herstory-alice-paul.html>

Putting the ERA in the Constitution was first proposed in the United States Congress in December 1923. However, the ERA had as opponents many women's organizations because it would have eliminated protective legislation which for years reformers had sought for female industrial workers. But Paul was determined that women should be treated as



individuals under the law just as men were, not as a class subject to mass governmental regulation.

Here we have transcribed the Original Equal Rights Amendment, introduced in Congress in 1923, written by Alice Paul:

- Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction.
- Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

The call for ERA became more insistent during the late 1960s from groups like the National Organization for Women (NOW) which is now the largest organization of feminist activists in the United States. Since its founding in 1966, NOW's goal has been to take action to bring equality to all women. In 1967, NOW adopted as its goal the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA).

In 1971, the Equal Rights Amendment was modified in the following terms:

Section 1. Equality of Rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.



Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

Both houses of Congress finally passed the amendment in 1972 and sent it to the states for ratification.

The ERA would have been added to the Constitution, if three fourths of the states had ratified it by 1979. However, by 1979, thirty-five of the thirty-eight needed states ratified the amendment and the deadline for ratification was extended to 1982.

In sum, the amendment ultimately failed because no other states ratified it. Women's organizations are still advocating for passage of the ERA.

4.3.3 A woman who wants equal pay and work opportunities

When we analyze humanity's history, we find that women generally have had fewer legal rights and career opportunities than men. In societies around the world, wifehood and motherhood were taken as natural women's professions. Consequently, women's place was relegated to the home. However, in the twentieth century, women in most nations won the right to vote and increased their educational and job opportunities because of the efforts of brave women. Among them was Pearl S. Buck.



We already know that in the 1930s and 1940s, Pearl supported women's equality. She joined the National Woman's Party to get the passing of the Equality Right Amendment, sometimes called the Lucretia Mott amendment. Now, we focus on equal pay and work opportunities.

Pearl thought that women had less employment opportunities. In the United States, girls and boys attended schools which qualified both of them to work. Nevertheless, when they went to find a job, it was easier for men to get one than for women. In general, society did not take women seriously. For Pearl, this issue was of significant importance because all human beings have the right to earn a living.

In 1936, an assessment of public opinion had indicated that over 80% of the public opposed work for married women unless their husbands could not support them. This was the result of a mistaken belief that married women would not be permanent workers. However, married women generally continued on their jobs for many years and were not a transient, temporary, or undependable work force.

These circumstances were evidences that women did not have the same opportunities in the workplace as men in American society.

Pearl had decided to educate her own sons and daughters in sexual equality. She also wanted them to have equal job opportunities no matter what their gender. Therefore, she supported the ERA as the sole form to get



the Constitution of the United States to apply the law in the same way for women as for men.

Job opportunities have to be complemented with reasonable wages. However, traditionally women have earned lower salaries than men for doing the same work. Fortunately, during the 1960s the economic status of women improved because several federal laws were passed. For instance, the Equal Pay Act (EPA) requires employers to pay men and women equally for doing the same work - equal pay for equal work. The Equal Pay Act, which was passed in 1963, protects both women and men from sex discrimination in pay rates. However, the EPA was passed to help rectify the wage disparity experienced by women workers. In practice, this law has almost always been applied to situations where women are paid less than men for doing similar jobs. Another federal law in favor of women was passed in 1964 –Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. This law prohibits discrimination in all aspects of employment, including hiring, firing, promotion, and other. In addition, Title VII broadly prohibits other forms of discrimination, including those based on race, color, religion, and national origin.

Although the Equal Rights Amendment still waits for its ratification, some improvements have been made in favor of women, such as the Equal Pay Act and the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. The important point is that women today enjoy better lives because of the efforts of women who made their living a series of attempts to make society aware that women are human



beings just as men and must have rights the same as men. Pearl S. Buck was one of those women.

4.3.4 A woman who decides on the number of children she wants

Along with civil rights for African-Americans and women, Pearl worked in support of family planning in the 1930s and 1940s.

Pearl was identified with birth control because she knew the consequences that overpopulation brought to a nation and to its women.

Birth control was the beginning of a long friendship with Margaret Sanger (1879-1966) who devoted her life to legalizing birth control and making it universally available for women. Pearl congratulated Margaret Sanger for talking about birth control in the light of science and common knowledge instead of in secret and obscene ways as many generations had done.



Picture 66: Margaret Sanger

Source: <http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/hpolscrv/sanger.htm>

In 1933, Pearl gave a lecture on, “Birth Control Comes of Age.” She concluded that it was impossible to have a rational discussion of contraception because of America’s sexual prudery.

In 1935, Pearl attended a dinner in honor of Margaret Sanger. When she addressed the audience, Pearl assured the audience that birth control would free women from one more sign of servitude and from a second-class status.

Pearl had witnessed the poverty and maternal suffering associated with uncontrolled pregnancies and births in China. Consequently, she sought for a contraceptive that would be safe, reliable, cheap, and easy to be used by poor Chinese women. Sanger was looking for such a contraceptive for



women in general, something like an aspirin; so she set out on the mission to find a medical expert and a sponsor. In 1951, she met Gregory Pincus, a medical expert in human reproduction. Soon after, she found a sponsor for the research: International Harvester heiress Katharine McCormick. Their collaboration would lead to the FDA approval of Enovid, the first oral contraceptive, in 1960. With the advent of the Pill, Sanger accomplished her life-long goal of bringing safe and effective contraception to the masses.

Concluding, Pearl always struggled for women's causes in order to improve their lives. With birth control, women around the world would plan their family in a safe way. In addition, women would take care of their health as well as that of their families.

4.3.5 A woman who participates in politics

In order to develop this point, firstly we review two definitions that *The Free on Line Dictionary* indicates for Politics:

1. "Politics is the art or science of government or governing, especially the governing of a political entity, such as a nation, and the administration and control of its internal and external affairs."
2. "Politics is the complex or aggregate of relationships of people in society, especially those relationships involving authority or power."



Taking into account the above definitions, we declare that although Pearl S. Buck was not a politician, she took active participation in the political life of the United States because she identified herself with the defense of rights of minority groups, such as women, children in general, children with mental handicaps, and Amerasian children; also, African-Americans and Chinese immigrants. The discussions of the strategies used by Pearl to help these four groups have been explained, respectively, in this chapter (the first) and in Chapter 1 (the latter three).

We have included this point, *A Woman Who Decides about Politics*, because, as Pearl explained in a symposium called, *Woman's Next Step*, women's emancipation has to be carried out by women; that is, social status change in women's favor would never come from men. In Pearl words: "Women might as well realize that if there is going to be any modernization of their medieval position the struggle will have to be carried on largely" (Conn, 1996, p. 242). As a result, women also have to participate in the political arena as politicians or as spokespeople exposing the point of view of a group, an organization, a state, a nation, or the world.

We have explained Pearl's participation in American domestic politics. Now we dedicate some paragraphs to her interest in international affairs. Pearl had understood that there were elementary connections between the nation's domestic behavior and its foreign policies.



Pearl disagreed with war. To her, war was always the worst course, and always failed to achieve its objectives. She said that war was a male sport, so she urged women to get involved in efforts to end war. She, as always, practiced what she preached. She stayed close to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) for around twenty-five years. On one occasion, she signed the "Peoples' Mandate;" that is, a petition circulated by this women's organization with the purpose of demanding an end to the arms race and the establishment of a world treaty on disarmament. She also propagandized the Mandate on NBC's International Broadcast.

Pearl thought that democracy was connected with race and gender. In other words, inequality of genders and races meant no democracy. Conversely, inequality of genders and races meant colonialism, and imperialism.

At the Tenth Biennial Convention of the National Woman's Party, she gave a talk on "The Place of Woman in Democracy." She said that democracies that denied the full partnership to their female citizens were betraying their promise. She thought that, in Europe, Fascism enforced the subjugation of women as confined to the kitchen and the nursery.

During World War II, Pearl continually talked about racial discrimination. To her, racism was a synonym of the undemocratic. In 1941, in Asia magazine, she published a manifesto titled, "Warning to Free



Nations.” She referred to “democratic” nations as the United States and Great Britain that asked their citizens to fight for democracy although some of them suffered racism. In the United States, around twelve million African-Americans did not take active participation in the life of the nation because of race prejudice. Indians were pressed into the service of a government that maintained India as a British colony.

Pearl disagreed with an eventual alliance between the United States and Great Britain after World War II. She thought that if Franklin Roosevelt supported Churchill on colonialism in India, three-fourths of the world would believe Americans were imperialists because they would be agreeing to the rule of the few over the many; that is, the United States would be supporting the superiority of one race over another.

Pearl tried, in different ways, to get the American president to support for Indian independence. She even wrote several times to Eleanor Roosevelt. However, Pearl was skeptical because she suspected that Franklin Roosevelt, as many other Western leaders, was afraid of the falling of the white man’s world. Although Roosevelt sent a personal delegate to encourage Churchill to make concessions to the Indian Congress party, he pulled back because Churchill rejected the proposal. To Pearl, it seemed that Roosevelt needed Churchill more than he needed the Indians.

After around two centuries of British domination, India gained its independence on August 15, 1947. This goal was the result of indefatigable



efforts of two Indian leaders: Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1949) and Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964). Gandhi became the international symbol of a free India. He lived a spiritual and ascetic life of prayer, fasting, and meditation. In 1934 Gandhi formally resigned from politics, being replaced as leader of the Congress party by Jawaharlal Nehru. Gandhi traveled through India, teaching non-violence. It was on the eve of the 15th of August, 1947, that India's tricolor flag was unfurled by Jawaharlal Nehru who was named the first Prime Minister of India. He declared that "At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new...India discovers herself again" (indobase, <http://festivals.indobase.com/indian-independence-day/index.html>).

Pearl said that Gandhi was a great leader who was successful in guiding the largest colonized nation in the world to independence. She commented that Gandhi's leadership involved genius, talent, and integrity.

Pearl and Richard were lifelong friends of Jawaharlal Nehru and his sister Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit. Their friendship started because of Asia magazine. Nehru published several articles there. Pearl thought that Nehru was a genuine great leader, a visionary and revolutionist who opposed British colonialism with courage and integrity.

In this last part, we refer to China and Pearl's points of view of Chinese politics after she left the Asiatic country in 1934. She could give



political judgments of what was happening in China because of her experiences after living there for forty-four years and of exchanging correspondence with friends residing in China. For example, she did not agree with Chiang Kai-shek's regime. Although he was a Nationalist, his government was incompetent and corrupt.

The Sino-Japanese War began in 1937 and was part of World War II. The United States did not agree with the Japanese invasion of China and from 1938 sent aid to the Nationalists. The United States declared neutrality at the beginning of World War II. However, American neutrality was helping Japan. That was the reason for the American Committee for Non-Participation in Japanese Aggression which lobbied Congress and tried to shape public opinion to restrict shipments of American oil, steel, and other industrial products to Japan. Powerful American Corporations did not want to stop their lucrative and legal business with Japan, and trade was protected behind the wall of American neutrality. Pearl gave a radio talk to this committee. She suggested that American neutrality was placing the United States on the Japanese side of the conflict.

After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the United States entered the war. Then the United States and China became allies. American advice required the Nationalist armies to help the British to keep the Burma Road open. However, Chiang Kai-shek refused. In 1944, Japan carried out Operation Ichigo which was a victory and showed the corruption and incompetence of the Nationalist army.



In August 1945, the United States decided to bomb the Japanese islands of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to put a swift end to the Second World War and consequently, to the Sino-Japanese War. In China there began a civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists.

At the beginning, the Nationalists had great advantages. They had control of the main Chinese cities, including Manchuria. Their armies were numerous. They had doubled the Communist soldiers. They also had the support of an air force and a small navy. However, the Communists gained popular support because they promised peasants the landlords' land and the possibility of participating in the decision of the government if they helped the CCP by paying taxes, by supplying military and conscription service, and by giving food to the People's Liberation Army. Consequently, people gave their support to the Communists who secured an end to the war in a short time. On October 1, 1949, Mao Tse-tung announced the foundation of the People's Republic of China. Pearl explained that Chinese had accepted Communism because the CCP had given practical aid that permitted poor Chinese to improve their living conditions.

After World War II, disputes between the Soviet Union and the Western democracies, particularly over the Soviet takeover of East European states, led Winston Churchill to announce that an "iron curtain" was descending through the middle of Europe. The iron curtain was the Western policy toward the Soviet Union for around forty years. The Cold War was a period of East-West competition, tension, and conflict, characterized by



mutual perceptions of hostile intention between military-political alliances or blocs.

Pearl urged the American government to change its policy toward China by finding mechanisms for accommodation. However, both nations remained frozen during the Cold War. The bad relations even worsened in the second half of the 1960s as a result of the excess of the Cultural Revolution in China and of America's intervention in Vietnam and China's support for Communist North Vietnam.

Relations between China and the United States changed as a result of Richard Nixon's intervention. It was an irony because he had built his entire political career as a Communist fighter. However, he changed his mind in 1967, when, as a presidential candidate, he declared in the magazine *Foreign Affairs*, that the United States could not afford to leave China outside the family of nations. When he was president in 1969, Nixon gave high priority to China looking for an "opening." He sent his national security advisor, Henry Kissinger, on a secret mission to Peking in 1971 in order to meet with Premier Zhou Enlai. Kissinger's goal was to arrange a China visit for his president, and he returned to Washington triumphant. On July 15, Nixon spoke to the nation, announcing that he would visit China the following year. In February, 1972, Nixon flew to Peking to join Mao in one of the century's most famous handshakes. China had finally entered the world stage. Within a few weeks, Nixon was in Moscow to negotiate the first step in a Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, (SALT). In this way was born the era of



searching for accommodation between the superpowers, and an effort to reduce the danger of nuclear war. Other leaders would follow, but Nixon opened the door.



Picture 67: Mao Tse Tung and Richard Nixon, China, February, 1972

Source: <http://foreign.nixonfoundation.org/>

Although relations between the United States and China had improved, Pearl could not travel to the Asiatic country because she had been declared persona non grata by the Communist regime - Pearl had always maintained an anti-Communist position.

In conclusion, Pearl has given us the example of how the new woman must be to contribute positively and actively to build a better society. She exposed her thoughts about discrimination of gender and race through speeches, articles, and novels, to make the public understand these social issues and to urge people to struggle to change the social status quo. Some battles were won, such as the recognition of civil rights of African-Americans and the liberation of India. Other battles were put on standby, such as the



Equal Rights Amendment. However, Pearl's influence in American politics is undeniable because she helped Americans understand Asiatic people and international affairs.



CONCLUSIONS

At the end of our investigation, we can declare that Pearl S. Buck was a prolific writer who explored the different literary genres and produced writings of fiction, non-fiction, biographies, autobiographies, translations, plays, and poetry. In addition, her writing was addressed not only to an adult audience but also to children. Examples of her writings for children are *The Young Revolutionist* and *The Big Wave*. Furthermore, her writing was focused on entertaining people and on informing them about controversial and international issues that affected the society.

Consequently, when we mention Pearl S. Buck, we refer not only to a magnificent writer but also to a woman who dedicated her adult life to defending the rights of minority groups through her novels, essays, and articles in important newspapers of America and Asia. For example, because she had a daughter with a mental illness, she knew of the stigma society had towards mentally retarded people. Her essay, *The Child Who Never Grew*, helped parents of children with mental illnesses to liberate themselves from the sense of shame attached to retardation.

Pearl also founded organizations to help minority groups. For example, the East and West Association which helped Americans understand Asian people, in general, and the Chinese, in particular. As another example, she founded Welcome House, the first international agency for adoption whose aim was to find homes for Amerasian children. These



children were abandoned by their American fathers and were not accepted by their Asian relatives. Pearl tried to give Amerasian children opportunities which society denied them because of their illegitimacy.

Pearl loved China, her first real world. She never forgot her home there. When Chinese people were dying because of the internal civil war, she joined the China Famine Relief organization to get funds. After that, Pearl and her second husband, Richard, formed the China Emergency Relief Committee (CERC) to raise one million dollars in six months. The money was invested in hospital and medical supplies, food and clothing, and the care of orphans. In addition, Pearl focused on the abolition of the Chinese Exclusion Act that had impeded the migration of Chinese people to the United States since 1882. Pearl and Richard responded by setting up the Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion (CCRCE). On October 22, 1943, the prohibition of Chinese immigration was abolished.

Because Pearl S. Buck lived in China in a period of transition from the Imperial era to the Republic, she knew first-hand of the external and internal affairs taking place in Chinese society. She knew that Chinese authorities had to sign inequitable treaties which were profitable for the Western nations only. For common Chinese people, the “foreigners” were bad people who lived in China but understood nothing of what was happening there. She also knew that the Chinese population was discontent because authorities ruled in favor of the nobility; that is, the wealthy people. As a result, Chinese people did not believe any more in the dynastic system. Conversely, they



began to think of a republic and war was commonplace in China from 1911 to 1949 when the Communists reached the power. These affairs are found in her novel *The Good Earth* which was translated into German, French, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian, by 1933, because its plot, which is related to peasants, is universal.

In addition, in *The Good Earth* the author wrote about some Chinese traditions. For example, in the novel it is mentioned that red is the color for happiness and white for death and mourning. In addition, the readers could understand that concubinage was legal in China and foot binding was a way to maintain male superiority and female inferiority.

The status quo in China changed when Communists came to power in China in 1949. Mao Tse-tung was the one who changed the status of Chinese women. He devised ways to eliminate the distinctions between men and women in China. He did so because he wanted to transform China into an equitable nation, and the only way to reach his aim was to have an equitable society. Because women were at the bottom of Chinese society, Mao granted them rights enabling women to participate actively in the building of the New China.

Pearl S. Buck understood the secondary status women had had traditionally in society because of her sad and disappointing experiences with her father, her first husband, and the male Chinese society. She presented her point of view concerning women's status in society in her novels such as



The Good Earth, but also in her essays, such as *America's Medieval Women* and *Of Men and Women*.

In Pearl S. Buck's opinion, the new woman would be an adult citizen, an active person working for and in a better, democratic, and free society. The transition from the old woman to the new one required efforts in five headlines: education, equal rights, equal pay and work opportunities, birth control, and participation in politics. Pearl S. Buck herself was the first new woman who practiced what she preached. For instance, she helped people who were involved in educational projects. As another example, she worked in favor of the Equal Rights Amendment. She also struggled for equal work opportunities for Americans no matter what their gender. In addition, she joined Margaret Sanger in favor of birth control as a way to give women the possibility to decide about the number of children they could take care of and educate. Finally, although she was not a politician, Pearl took an active participation in American Politics.

Pearl S. Buck became a public personality because of her writing. *The Good Earth* was the best selling book in 1931 and 1932. As a consequence, Pearl won a Pulitzer Prize. In November, 1935, the American Academy of Arts and Letters awarded Pearl the prestigious Howells Medal. In 1938, Pearl won the Nobel Prize of Literature. She was the first American woman to win the Swedish award.



Pearl S. Buck, making use of her popularity, influenced public opinion around the world in favor of a better society without discrimination and without prejudice. She received over three hundred awards for her humanitarian efforts on behalf of improved race relations worldwide.

Such a person as Pearl S. Buck is difficult to forget and is worthy of being imitated.



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CHAPTER 1

THE LIFE OF PEARL S. BUCK

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HOW ARE THE TWO WORLDS, THE OLD AND THE NEW, REFLECTED IN HER NOVELS?

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THE NEW CHINESE WOMAN ACCORDING TO PEARL S. BUCK

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APPENDIX

A COMPLETE LIST OF PEARL BUCK'S WORKS

Fiction

- *East Wind: West Wind* (1930)
- *The Good Earth* (1931)
- *Sons* (1933)
- *The Young Revolutionist*
- *All Men Are Brothers*
- *The First Wife and Other Stories*
- *The Mother* (1933)
- *A House Divided* (1935)
- *This Proud Heart* (1938)
- *Stories for Little Children*
- *The Big Wave* (1938)
- *The Patriot* (1939)
- *Other Gods: An American Legend* (1940)
- *Today and Forever: Stories of China*
- *The Chinese Children Next Door*
- *The Water-Buffalo Children*
- *China Sky* (1941)
- *Dragon Seed* (1942)



- *Twenty-seven Stories*
- *The Dragon Fish*
- *The Townsman: A "John Sedges" Novel **
- *China Flight*
- *Yu Lan: Flying Boy of China*
- *Far and Near: Stories of Japan, China, and America*
- *The Promise* (1943)
- *Portrait of a Marriage* (1945)
- *The Big Wave* (1946)
- *Pavilion of Women* (1946)
- *The Angry Wife* (1947) (as John Sedges)
- *Peony* (1948)
- *A Long Love* (1949) (as John Sedges)
- *Kinfolk*
- *One Bright Day*
- *God's Men* (1951)
- *The Hidden Flower* (1952)
- *Bright Procession*
- *Christmas Miniature*
- *American Triptych: Three "John Sedges" Novels*
- *Come, My Beloved* (1953)
- *Voices in the House* (1953) (as John Sedges)
- *Imperial Woman* (1956)
- *Letter from Peking* (1957)



- *Command the Morning* (1959)
- *The Christmas Ghost*
- *Fourteen Stories*
- *Hearts Come Home and Other Stories*
- *Satan Never Sleeps* (1962)
- *The Living Reed* (1963)
- *Escape at Midnight and Other Stories*
- *Fairy Tales of the Orient*
- *The Big Fight*
- *The Little Fox in the Middle*
- *The Water-Buffalo Children and the Dragon Fish*
- *The Beech Tree and Johnny Jack and His Beginnings*
- *Death in the Castle* (1965)
- *The Time is Noon* (1966)
- *Matthew, Mark, Luke and John* (1967)
- *The New Year* (1968)
- *The Good Deed and Other Stories of Asia, Past and Present*
- *The Chinese Story Teller*
- *Once Upon a Christmas*
- *A Gift for the Children*
- *Mrs. Starling's Problem*
- *The Three Daughters of Madame Liang* (1969)
- *Mandala* (1970)
- *The Goddess Abides* (1972)



- *All Under Heaven* (1973)
- *The Rainbow* (1974)
- *East and West: Stories*
- *Secrets of the Heart: Stories*
- *The Lovers and Other Stories*
- *Mrs. Stoner and the Sea and Other Works*
- *The Woman Who Was Changed and Other Stories*
- *The Old Demon*
- *Little Red*

Note: *The Good Earth, Sons, and A House Divided* were released together in 1935 as *The House of Earth trilogy*.

The Townsman was written under the pen name, John Sedges.

Biographies

- *The Exile* (1936)
- *Fighting Angel* (1936)

Note: *The Exile* and *Fighting Angel* were sold under the title of *The Flesh and the Spirit*.



Autobiographies

- *My Several Worlds* (1954)
- *A Bridge For Passing* (1962)

Non-Fiction

- *East and West and the Novel: Sources of the Early Chinese Novel*
- *Is There a Case for Foreign Missions? (pamphlet)*
- *The Exile*
- *Fighting Angel: Portrait of a Soul*
- *The Chinese Novel*
- *Of Men and Women* (1941)
- *When the Fun Begins*
- *American Unity and Asia*
- *Pearl Buck Speaks for Democracy*
- *What America Means to Me*
- *The Spirit and The Flesh*
- *China in Black and White: An Album of Woodcuts*
- *Tell the People: Mass Education in China*
- *Talk About Russia with Masha Scott*
- *How It Happens: Talk About the German People*
- *American Argument*



- *The Child Who Never Grew* (1950)
- *The Man Who Changed China: The Story of Sun Yat-sen*
- *My Several Worlds: A Personal Record*
- *Friend to Friend: A Candid Exchange Between Pearl S. Buck and Carlos P. Romulo*
- *The Delights of Learning*
- *A Bridge for Passing*
- *Welcome Child*
- *The Joy of Children*
- *Children for Adoption*
- *My Mother's House*
- *The People of Japan* (1966)
- *For Spacious Skies: Journal in Dialogue* (1966)
- *To My Daughters, With Love*
- *The Kennedy Women: A Personal Appraisal* (1970)
- *China As I See It* (1970)
- *The Story Bible* (1971)
- *Pearl Buck's America*
- *Pearl S. Buck's Oriental Cookbook* (1972)
- *China Past and Present*
- *A Community Success Story: The Founding of the Pearl Buck Center*
- *Pearl Buck's Book of Christmas*



Stories

- *The Old Demon*
- *The Good Deed*
- *The Enemy*

Plays

- *Flight into China*
- *Sun Yat-Sen: A Play*
- *The First Wife*
- *A Desert Incident*
- *Christine*
- *The Guide*

Poetry

- *Words of Love*

Awards

- Pulitzer Prize for the Novel (1932)
- Nobel Prize in Literature (1938)