

Seeking path to save china



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The 1911 Revolution led to the fall of the two-hundred-year-old Qing dynasty, and ended three thousand years of feudal system in China.

However, revolution did not create a new strong, centralized China because of lack of leadership and competitions among warlords. The conflict between Yuan's Beiyang Government and Sun Yat-sen's Canton government was also caused by the power competition. Foreign powers were still maintaining imperialism in China, moreover, they continued increasing their influence by supporting warlords. Japan imposed " 21 demands" in 1915 that was the biggest humiliation to vulnerable Yuan Shikai government and Chinese nationality. The May Fourth movement started under this state of affairs. Many intellectuals were seeking the path to save China. Chen Duxiu, May Fourth movement main student leader and one of founders of Chinese Communist Party, represented many returning foreign study students and new thought youth. Influenced by social Darwinism and being enthusiastic about French revolution, he believed that in order to create a new modern society, people must abandon all the traditional ideas at first. Chen considered that Confucianism was the root of the China's weakness because Confucianism simply stood for reaction and acceptance, which resulted in the lack of resistance and the willingness to fight among Chinese people. He realized that Confucianism was the giant obstruction for Chinese reform. In his " The Way of Confucius and Modern Life", he illustrated the incompatibilities between Confucianism and modern life through individual independence. He pointed out that, " Confucius lived in a feudal age, the ethics he promoted is the ethics of the feudal age." and it did not match the society that people live in at the time. Chen said in 1915, " The basic task is to import the foundation of western society, that is, the new belief in equality

and human rights. We must be thoroughly aware of the incompatibility between Confucianism and new belief, the new society, and the new state" *[1], emphasized that in order to strengthen China, China need to adopt not only western knowledge; but also the base of western standard human value. He suggested that while learning western technology and science, people should also evaluate themselves with western standard, not with the old Confucian standard. He also opposed assassination, strikes and unorganized insurrection. Chen Duxiu's idea was the most radical among all the intellectuals and was more accepted by young students. He is also the first person that raises human rights and equality in Chinese modern history. However, his thoughts sometimes appeared too excessive. He challenged Confucianism from beginning to end. It was very encouraging and attracted many youth, but it was unnecessary and disregarded the older generation that could not accept the complete disposing of Confucianism at the same time. In fact, this part of people usually has more power to change the society financially and politically. Completely denying Confucianism, which was the most sincere Chinese ethic standard and highest moral pursue for thousands of years, extremely depreciated Chinese civilization, also having a negative influence of May Fourth movement. This resulted in Chinese racial low self-esteem throughout the whole 20 century. Hushi, studied at Cornell University and gained a PhD degree from Columbia, was influenced by pragmatist philosopher John Dewey. He believed that all change should be gradually. Hu understood that his generation carried two different cultures - Chinese traditional culture and new Chinese society - that cannot be merged in a short period of time. He was against Chen Duxiu and some other radical intellectuals. As he wrote, " We are delighted with ourselves, we

congratulate ourselves, because we are talking about fundamental " solutions." Putting it bluntly, this is dream talk." Hu criticized that some radical intellectuals talked too many theoretical ideas but ignored practical problems. As for Confucianism, Hu considered it was not compatible with modern society any more. He said, " 'three ideas five relationships' (san gang wu lun) was considered truth before. It was useful in feudal society, yet, everything has already changed right now and ancient undoubted concepts become nonsense" *[3] Hushi and Chen Duxiu had some commons. Besides they both oppose Confucianism, they also work together to advocate writing in vernacular cadences of ordinary speech instead of classical literature; encourage " writing as speaking". Literacy revolution during May Fourth movement was the largest and important literature improvement in Chinese modern history. Hushi was not very active in political movement. Just like what he said when he came back from United States, " No politics for me in 20 years", Hushi kept his political ideas down during May Fourth movement but mainly deal with literacy revolution and argue for science against Chinese traditional philosophy. Consequently, he did not fully develop his ideas, so that his idea of using culture revolution as the proper realm of change was overly idealistic. Cultural change could not be fulfilled without change in social institutions. Unlike Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao and some other Marxism supporters, Hushi was more in favor of achieving revolution by aristocracy. ... Liang Shuming, a prominent neo-Confucianism, philosopher and social activist in modern China, had never studied abroad. He was influenced by Buddhism and Henri Bergson. After studying Chinese, Indian and western civilization, Liang classified world civilization into three. He used Schopenhauer's concept of " the will" as the basis of his division.

The first was western civilization since the Renaissance. This civilization was based on what he called "the Will" going forward to seek satisfaction. It emphasized rationality, knowledge and the conquest of nature. The second was the Chinese way where the will did not go forward or backward but sideways. This way led to adjustment with circumstances rather than change. In Indian civilization Liang saw a case of atrophied will. This was the third way in which, spiritual life and religion were fully developed but material conditions remained abject. Liang criticized that western civilization as a dead end because here men had become slaves to machines and had no spiritual lives. Furthermore, Liang point out that western culture will eventually transform into Chinese form. While most of the intellectuals were attacking Confucianism, Liang held to defend Confucianism. He argued that the ideal morality is intuition *[4] and it is one of the main thoughts that Confucianism promotes. He proposed that people should think inside themselves (lixing) and learn self-control. Liang agreed with acknowledge western technology and democracy, nonetheless; he oppose blind westernization. He advocated a combination of eastern and western civilization ethos as the way forward. Similar to Hushi, Liang criticized some radical intellectuals neglected practical problems too. He wrote, "In the Chinese metaphysics transmitted from very ancient times, there is a principal issue permeating all learning, no matter how great or trivial, profound or shallow. This is a set of ideas referring to that which changes, not the static. What they talk about is simply abstract rules of change, not problems concerning concrete things." *[5] Moreover, Liang first posted that according to Chinese condition, revolution should start from rural area and emphasized rural education, contruction and activation. This idea later

greatly affected Chinese Communist Party revolution direction.

(book) Compare to May Fourth Intellectuals, Zhang Zhidong was more conservative on his ideas. His reforming term of "Ti Yong", which means Chinese learning central principal, western learning for practical use, still believe that Chinese traditional moral and philosophical values are suitable for the changing. He explained that Confucianism