

shih meant to go back to ancient China, and there is no doubt that his attempt at making the farms square smacks of the ancient *chingtien* system. His opponents seemed to have meant by the phrase the ways of the kings only a few generations back. At any rate, Premier Wang set about giving new interpretations of the classics, and reformed the competitive examination system so that the candidates would not be "composing poems in time of national emergency," but writing essays finding solutions for the pressing problems of the day. By allying himself with the influential families and by this reformed system of competitive examination, Wang An-shih gradually built up his "new party". It must be pointed out to his credit that he did not resort to the mean tactics of sending his opponents to the distant places like criminals, a practice quite common among both the new and old parties after Wang's time. The officials who opposed him were demoted in rank and given "good positions" in the provinces. In other words, he dealt with his opponents gently but firmly.

On the other hand, his opponents fought and defeated him with one of the tools he so much scorned at. It happened that there was a drought. One of his enemies painted a pitiable picture of the famine refugees and presented it to the emperor, and it was suggested that the new regime, displeasing to the gods, was responsible for the drought, which in turn was responsible for the suffering of the innocent folks. That was, of course, a ruse, but the emperor's faith in the new regime was shaken. He issued edicts cancelling the reforms and it rained! When the leaders of the new party succeeded in convincing the emperor of the folly of abolishing the reforms, he then re-instituted them, only the opposition was so strong that he had to remove Wang from the premiership, though it was awarded to him again on the following year.

Wang An-shih's strong conviction of the workability of his reforms was born of experience. He was, at the age of 27, appointed magistrate of Chin District (Ningpo). For

four years during his tenure of office, he tried out the schemes of granting government loans to the farmers and of building dykes for irrigation purposes, etc. After his term of magistracy, he served as an official and even as a judge at different places. In 1058, at the age of 36, he presented a memorial to Emperor Jen Tsung on the state affairs and the necessity of reforms, but without any result. Two years later he memorialized the emperor once more and with the same result. With the ascension of the new emperor, Shen Tsung, to the throne in 1068, the career of Wang An-shih took a bright turn. In the first year of Shen Chung's reign Wang was invited to discuss the state affairs with him, and in the following year was made prime minister, a post which enabled him to carry out reforms. He remained in that post for about seven years with the brief exception of less than one year in 1074-75 as already mentioned. When he was finally relieved of his duty in 1076, his reforms were carried on by his supporters. In 1080, he was honored with the title Ching Kuo Kung (荆國公). Born in 1021 in Linch'uan, Kiangsi, he died at the age of 66 in 1086, to see in that last year of his life most of his reforms abolished by the Empress Dowager and the new prime minister.

Wang An-shih was one of the most misunderstood persons in the Chinese history. Even Chu Hsi, the great commentators of the Chinese classics criticized him, with the full force of traditional political philosophy, for devoting his talent and energy to improve the government finances and the fighting strength of the troops! However, towering above such misunderstandings emerged the man, a stark realist, original, courageous, eloquent, self-confident, and with the pugnacity of a bulldog. Great statesman as he was, equally great was he as a man of letters. His contemporaries often denied him statesmanship, but none ever denied the literary excellence of his writing. As a statesman he is again coming to his own. The greatest tribute to him was paid by Liang Chi-chao, who painted a full length portrait of him as Carlyle did of Cromwell.

Wang An-shih's Reform Measures

(Contributed)

THE rise of Wang An-shih to power dated from 1069, that is, the second year of Shen Tsung's (神宗) reign. From then to 1076 he succeeded in putting his ideas into concrete form in a number of measures which were known as New Laws. These measures were designed to meet the present needs of the day, which were threefold, namely financial reconstruction, national defence, and educational reform. In the following a brief outline will be given of the measures proposed by him:*

I. Economic Reforms.

(a) The Agricultural Loans Measure or "The Grain Sprout Money Measure." (青苗法). In the times of the Sung dynasty, the farmers were dependent upon the money-

lenders for loans and as a rule, exorbitant interest was charged by the latter for the money lent. It was with the main object of relieving the rural people of this burden that the Agricultural Loans Measure was framed.

Briefly put, the scheme comprised the conversion of the stores of grain in the government granaries into a capital fund, which was to be available for distribution to the people at the rate of two per cent per month or twenty-four per cent per annum. These loans were to be distributed in the spring and to be repaid in the summer and autumn. The rate of interest charged seems enormous to us now, but it was a very much lower rate than what was charged by the monopolists, against whom the measure was directed.

(b) The Public Services Act (募役法). The main idea of this act which is known in Chinese as "Mu Yu Fa" was that certain services which had hitherto been rendered by the people to the officials as part of their obligation to the

*For the analyses of some of the reform measures, and also for many quotations used in this article, the writer is indebted to Dr. H. R. Williamson, author of "Wang An-shih," published by Probsthain, London.

State, should now be paid for by the government out of taxation rates.

The actual measures of the Act were as follows:

1. The people were to be divided into ten classes, five in the upper category and five in the lower, according to their property and financial classifications.
2. City residents of the first five classes should be assessed for the public services tax, others being exempt.
3. Country residents of the first three classes should likewise be assessed, others being exempt.
4. The tax should be paid twice a year, once in summer and once in autumn.
5. In the case of a family holding property in two counties, the tax should be paid in both if the resident is of the higher classification, but only in one if of the middle class.
6. Members of one family living in separate districts should only be called upon to pay the tax according to the classification as modified by such separation.
7. Members of official families, families with no male member, monks, priests and minors under twenty years of age, would be assessed for the tax, but at half rate.
8. The money received from these various sources was to be devoted to the employment of members of the first three classes on the various public services, salaries being paid proportionately to the nature of the task. (The service demanded of these three classes would, of course, be of the more important type).

(c) Economical Transport And Distribution Measure (均輸法). This measure was designed to save expenses on the transport of grain from the provinces to the capital, and at the same time to ensure that the supplies would be more equitably distributed throughout the country. Grain was a common substitute for tax-money in those days and great expense was involved in conveying it from local centers to the capital, where great quantities were required for the military. Other commodities, too, such as silk and cotton, were accepted in lieu of cash for taxation purposes, and the measure applied equally to these.

The memorial submitted by Wang An-shih to the throne urging the adoption of this measure reads in part as follows:—

"At present there is constant anxiety about the state of national finance. Those who administer them are bigoted in their adherence to the old faulty methods. There is utter lack of co-operation between the capital and the provinces, and no means whereby surplus in one district and dearth in another might be mutually adjusted....

"In view of this, we, your ministers, suggest that the Transport Officer of the Sixth Circuit should supervise the land tax, and also the trade taxes from the monopolies in tea, salt and alum, and as the greater proportion of military and civil expenditure is derived from these sources, that he should be granted a sum as working capital, partly in cash and partly in goods, which will enable him to meet every exigency of supply and demand for the government services. This fund will enable him, as he is conversant

with local conditions, to adapt his demands to them, and to exercise his discretion in purchasing and selling according to circumstances.

"He will be able to buy the goods that will be required by the government in the cheapest market and as near to the capital or other distributing centres as possible.

"He should, therefore, be authorised to sell any goods that may be in stock in the granaries or warehouses so as to have in hand a sum that will meet the regular payment of the court for the current year.

"In this way the control of prices and the collection and distribution of the nation's resources, will come into the hands of the government. Dearth and surplus will be mutually adjusted. Transport will be more economically managed, and much expenses and trouble will be saved. This will tend to eliminate taxation, and the farming classes will be proportionately relieved. In these ways it is conceivable that both the government revenue will be adequate provided for and the resources and the livelihood of the people suffer no serious injury."

(d) State Trade And Barter Measure (市易法). The main object of this measure was to relieve the small farmers, artisans and traders of surplus stocks, which were to be purchased by the government at fixed prices. Exchanges of goods could be effected through the agency of the Government Bureau established for this purpose, and loans could be contracted either of goods or money at fixed rates of interest.

As the result of the promulgation of this measure, the Central Trade and Barter Bureau was organised at the capital Kaifengfu. Six branches of the Bureau were later set up in Ch'infeng and Liangche circuits, and at Chienchow (黔州), Ch'engt'u (成都), Kwangchow (廣州) and Yünchow (鄆州). Later each prefectural city had a local Bureau of this type. In this way the measure which had been initiated first at the capital was extended to the whole country:

(e) Sundry Economic Reforms.

1. Land Reclamation and River Conservancy Work (農田水利法). In 1069 a commission of eight men was appointed to travel through the country for the purpose of exploring, among other things, the possibilities of land reclamation and river control. In the summer of the same year, reclamation work, as suggested by these commissioners, were carried out, and from 1070 to 1076, more than 361,178 "Ching" (頃) of land was reclaimed.

Extensive projects for deepening and directing river channels were undertaken in connection with the Chang River (漳河), the Yellow River, and the Pien River (汴河). Later, all these projects were successfully carried out.

2. Land Survey and Classification. Under Wang An-shih's administration, the land throughout the country was classified according to a survey taken of its value. On the basis of this classification new measures of land tax were devised. An act was also enacted by order of Wang An-shih, that waste land, salty land from which the people could derive no food, hill and forest land, marshy land, roads, ditches, cemeteries, etc., were not to be taxed.

3. Trade Tax. This is referred to in the Sung historians as "Mien Hang Chien" (免行錢). In the words

of the historians, "formerly there existed in the capital a 'hang' (行), or trade center, for every kind of goods, from which the officials drew the necessary supplies and through which the government trade tax had been collected. But this system resulted in the small traders suffering considerable loss." The main idea of Wang An-shih's measure of trade tax was, therefore, to eliminate the practice whereby small traders had passed their goods through "hang", paid the taxes and then either receive permission to sell or left them at discretion in the "hang." The new measure provides that an agreement should be made on the basis of the profits made by these various "hangs," whereby all traders should pay a money tax on all transactions (directed to the government), to meet the expenses of the officials required (for the operation of the New System) and also to make up for the deficit caused by the laws of the goods formerly handed to the officials by the different "hangs." It was expected that in this way the small traders would receive better and fairer treatment.

II. Military Reforms.

(a) The Militia Act (保甲法). The Militia Act in its essence and objective partook of the nature of a conscription measure, and was designed to meet the need of the country for radical and extensive military reform.

The details of the measure as at first promulgated were the following:

1. Ten families to form a platoon or "pao" (保).
2. Fifty families to form a company or "ta pao" (大保).
3. Ten companies to form a regiment, or "tu pao" (都保).
4. Units of less than ten families to be attached to a neighbouring platoon.
5. Each platoon and company to be officered by a resident property owner with a requisite ability. Each regiment to have a commander and a vice-commander who had the respect of the men. All officers were to be recruited locally.
6. Each family in which there were two or more ablebodied males, must provide one for the platoon. If there were more than two males in the family other members who had the strength and spirit for the work might also enroll. In the wealthier families, if only one male were available, he should also be enrolled, provided he was physically fit and had the right spirit.
7. Bows and cross-bows would be provided by the government when the Militia were in attendance at the drill grounds. But it was permitted to practice at other times with any weapons not prohibited by the law. It was planned to give military instruction to all who enrolled.
8. Each company was required to provide five men who would act as night watchmen in relays. Captors of thieves and of stolen goods, when reported, would be suitably rewarded.
9. If within the bounds of any Militia unit, cases of robbery, murder, incendiarism, adultery, kidnapping, practising forbidden rites, manufacturing of poison drugs, etc., occurred, and the matter was not reported by the nearest unit, penalties would be inflicted. Nothing which did not come under the purview of the law was to be reported.

10. If more than three robbers should have taken shelter within the bounds of any Militia unit for a period of more than three days, and the matter was not reported by a neighbouring unit, even though they could prove they were ignorant of the matter, the neighbouring unit would be penalised for such slackness.

(b) Mounts for the Militia (保馬法). Horses were scarce during the Sung dynasty, and with the purpose of increasing the number of the mounts that would be available, not only for the regular army, but also for the Militia, the "Militia Mounts Measures" was put into operation. Any member of the Militia who was willing to keep a horse was provided with one at the expense of the government. Every year the animals were to be subjected to inspection and any unsatisfactory animal was to be replaced. Should the horse die, it was to be replaced at the expense of the individual owner or unit, if they were of the first, second, or third grades of resident, but only half the cost of replacement would be demanded from those who were of the fourth or lower grades. (For the division of people into grades, see above: I. b.)

(c) Distribution of the Regular Forces. Since the establishment of the Sung dynasty a policy of concentration of forces had always been followed by the successive administrations. This gave rise to many evils. For one thing, the soldiers at the capital were not called upon for any public work, and because drill was very irregularly conducted, they tended to become lazy and arrogant. For another, the country was involved in enormous expenses by having to transport grain and supplies to the army from the distant parts of the Empire.

So under the date of the twelfth month of 1070, we find that the histories records the introduction of a measure by Wang An-shih for redistributing the regular forces at different centres throughout the Empire. Control of all these forces were still to be invested in the Emperor, but it was hoped that by this means the evils which had been attendant upon the old system would be avoided.

(d) The Arsenal Board. Prompted by a suggestion from Wang An-shih, a National Armament Board was ordered to be established by the Emperor, which was to control the manufacture of arms throughout the country. The aim of this, was, of course, to prepare for emergency by centralising the manufacture of weapons.

III. Educational Reforms.

1. The Educational reforms of Wang An-shih were of three kinds. First, reforms were introduced by him in the National University. Not only was a department of medicine set up in the University, but also professors of law were installed. These, it must be remembered, are revolutionary measures, because formerly the only subjects taught at the University were the classics. A military academy was also established by Wang An-shih in 1072, and in the previous year he also ordered the establishment of additional higher schools throughout the Empire.

2. Under Wang An-shih's administration, the examination system which had previously been in operation, was thoroughly re-organised. Tests designed for the purpose of examining the students' knowledge of the various

schools of philosophical and political thought were used. Candidates for the civil service in particular were tested for instance in the knowledge of documents and memorials.

3. New Commentaries on the Confucian classics were written by Wang An-shih and candidates were required to use them for the preparation of State examinations.

Wang An-shih And His Critics

By T. K. CHUAN (全增嘏)

NEXT to Wang Mang (王莽), Wang An-shih is probably the most misunderstood person in Chinese history. Both of them were reformers, and reformers, as a rule, are apt to arouse resentment and criticism on the part of those who are by nature conservative. In the case of Wang An-shih, he was sorely abused not only by his contemporaries but also by the historians and scholars after him. He was held in contempt by the intellectual and moral smugs of his time, because of such extreme utterances of his as "extraordinary phenomena in nature are not to be feared", "opinions of others are not worth considering", and "the example of our ancestors need not necessarily be followed." In attempting to break with tradition and to cut out a new path for himself, Wang An-shih was in fact fighting a battle against the world. He was slandered by his enemies, and estranged from his friends, all because he had the courage to introduce laws and institutions which were departures from the old order.

The opponents that Wang An-shih had to deal with while he was still living were all orthodox Confucianists. But, despite their profession of moral rectitude, many of them were not above the vice of petty perjury. In order to defame Wang An-shih, they stooped even to forgeries and fabrications. The most notorious of these forgeries is an essay entitled "On the Detection Of Villainy" (辨奸論) commonly attributed to Su Hsün (蘇洵), the father of Su Tung-p'o (蘇東坡). This essay, which is to be found in practically every anthology of Chinese prose, is said to have been written by Su Hsün before Wang An-shih came to be entrusted with affairs of state by Shen Tsung (神宗), the Sung emperor. Su Hsün was credited with having discerned the rogue in An-shih, even when he met the latter only for the first time. The central argument of the essay reads in translation as follows. "It is in our nature to clean our faces when dirty, and to wash our clothes when soiled. But here is a person, who is dressed like a prisoner and a captive, and eats the food fit only for dogs and swines. With ruffled hair and a face like a mourner, he talks constantly of poetry and the classics. Surely, such a person could not be considered as behaving in the way that Nature meant him to! Persons who try to differ purposely from Nature must in fact be big scoundrels like Suh Tyau (豎刁), Yi Ya (易牙) or Kai Feng (開方)."

The authenticity of this essay had never been questioned until the Tsing dynasty, when Li Fu (李紱) pointed out that it couldn't have been genuine, because it was not listed among the collection of Su Hsün's works, reprinted in the Ming dynasty (明刊嘉靖集). The authorities generally cited to support the claim that it was actually penned by Su, however, are Chang Fang-ping (張方平), who was supposed to have written the memorial for Su Hsün's tomb-stone, and Shao Peh-wen (邵伯溫), who is

known for his collection of anecdotes called *Wen Chien Lu* (邵氏聞見錄). But the curious thing to note about them is that the wording they both used in telling the way that the essay had come to be written is exactly the same. Granted that Shao was quoting Chang, he should at least have mentioned the latter's name. The very fact that he didn't, however, makes it look rather suspicious, as if Shao were the man who had forged both documents. That such must have in fact been the case is the judgement of Tsai Shang-hsiang (蔡上翔), who produced a critical biography of Wang An-shih in 1804 (王荊公年譜考略). According to Tsai, Peh-wen, like his father Kang-chieh (邵節康), was opposed to the reforms of Wang An-shih; and it was he who faked not only Su Hsün's essay on the detection of villainy and Chang Fang-ping's memorial, but also the memoir and the diary of Ssu-ma Kwang (涑水記聞; 溫公日錄), in both of which the character of Wang An-shih was drawn in the most unfavorable light. (Ssu-ma Kwang also disagreed with Wang An-shih, but he at least was a gentleman. In fact, the following passage from a letter of his to Lü Hui-ssu (呂誨叔) definitely shows that he couldn't have had indulged in personal attacks upon Wang An-shih: "Wang An-shih in literary ability and purity of character possessed many points of excellence above his fellows, but he was not a practical man, and he was too fond of pursuing wrong ideas. . . . But just as we have corrected the defective features of his policy, he has passed away. (*Fickle folk will doubtless find innumerable pretext for reviling him, but, in my opinion, the Court ought to honor him with special courtesy, and so tend to repress such baseless talk.*)"

That Wang An-shih was untidy in appearance might of course have been true, but one doubts whether he was really so bad as he was described. In fact, the slanderous statements with regard to his alleged unhygienic habits are all based upon a story, which points, if anything, only to his tremendous energy and devotion to books. The story goes that when An Shih was serving under Han Chih (韓琦), later better known as Han Wei Kung (韓魏公), in Yangchow, he was accustomed to read far on into the night and get up so late and so hurriedly that he had no time to wash before going to the office. Be that as it might, to argue from it, as Su Hsün was supposed to have done, that he was therefore a villain at heart is, to say the least, unwarrantable, if not indeed downright illogical. Such reasoning is, one may go one step further to say, not only logically untrue but also morally unsound, because the motive behind it is one of malice only. But, however it may be, it is, as an example of Confucian criticism of Wang An-shih, truly one of the best of its kind.

One of the best of its kind, I said, because other similar examples could also be found. For instance, when Lü Hui