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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Shen Pu-hai: A Chinese Political Philosopher of the Fourth Century B.C.  
by Herrlee G. Creel

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the LDP and a "reactive process—one of three linkage processes identified by Rosenau," and states that such a process "was certainly conceivable in the LDP's China policy" (p. 12).

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PING-TI HO. *The Cradle of the East: An Inquiry into the Indigenous Origins of Techniques and Ideas of Neolithic and Early Historic China, 5000–1000 B.C.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1976. Pp. xxi, 440. \$20.00.

There was a time in the not too distant past when, on the basis of a modicum of evidence and more than a bit of Western cultural chauvinism, it was claimed that civilization originated in the Fertile Crescent and spread from there to all corners of Eurasia and, perhaps, even to all parts of the earth.

More evidence is now available. In *The Cradle of the East*, Ping-ti Ho, one of the foremost students of his country's history, has marshaled these new findings brilliantly to demonstrate the independent origins of the characteristic features of Chinese culture. He discusses the indigenous evolution of the domesticated plants and animals basic to Chinese agriculture, the features of the loess soil region of North China (which caused its early neolithic inhabitants to live in large, permanent settlements where field agriculture greatly overshadowed the marginal returns from animal husbandry), and the unique technology and style of pottery and bronze wares. The author also establishes the neolithic origins and autochthonous development of Chinese numbers, written words and language, of ancestral worship, divination procedures, and fundamental forms of social and political organization.

Here are the dry bones of archeology and textual analysis turned into a vital reconstruction of the past. Pollen grains help establish the neolithic climate of the loess area. Kiln types and mineral deposits tell of metallurgical capabilities, and pottery markings reveal early numerals. Documentary evidence is added to material finds to show the comparatively late use of beeswax and thus of *cire-perdue* casting, and the introduction of irrigation techniques only well into historic times.

Some cultural borrowings from the outside appear and are investigated. Ho shows all to be of comparatively late date, coming after basic patterns of Chinese life had been fixed. Overall, his wide-ranging integration of materials from many sources presents a clear picture of Chinese chronological development, centers of cultural growth, and the gradual emergence of contacts with peoples on the periphery of the Chinese world.

The book is not without faults. Little attention has been paid to the work of recent Japanese scholars. Even more seriously, some evidence, particularly that drawn from traditional texts, seems to have been forced into the general mold of Ho's conclusions. To me, the argument for humanism and rationalism in early Chou times, based on evidence from late Chou and Han sources written when Chinese scholars were, indeed, humanistic and rationalistic, is especially weak.

On the whole, however, he makes comprehensive and convincing case for China's cultural autonomy. In his words, "Chinese civilization was just as pristine as the Mesopotamian and in terms of originality could claim equal primacy" (p. 368).

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HERRLEE G. CREEL. *Shen Pu-hai: A Chinese Political Philosopher of the Fourth Century B.C.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1975. Pp. ix, 446. \$14.50.

To the present reviewer, the most fascinating and heuristically significant aspect of Herrlee G. Creel's masterful study of Shen Pu-hai (d. 337 B.C.), the innovative administrative philosopher of ancient China, is not only his unusual interpretive method but also the scholarly procedure by which his claims are articulated. It is not very informative simply to note that the dean of Sinology has once more made quite a few highly controversial observations, even though some of them are truly exceptional. One of the main theses of the book, that Shen Pu-hai's political thought is a kind of administrative philosophy which was neither influenced by Taoism nor swayed by Legalism, is itself a candidate for critical re-examination.

Creel's painstaking effort at the reconstruction of Shen's thought by an exhaustive research on the Shen Pu-hai fragments again demonstrates that Creel is not, in his own words, a "normal" Sinologist. The extraordinary quality of the book is best shown in Appendix C where twenty-seven fragments are translated with detailed annotations. Although some readings, notably 4 and 20, seem debatable, the overall performance is definitely a *tour de force*. It is not far-fetched to suggest that each word appears to have been carefully weighed to determine its value in an integrated structure of meaning against which the relative importance of each fragment is assigned. Even in the debatable readings, other interpretive possibilities are noted and the author's choices explained. Creel's independent-mindedness and conscientiousness are also manifested in his brief comment on the reconstructions of the Shen-tzu (Appendix B) and in his lengthy justification for the authenticity of the Shen Pu-hai fragments (Appendix A).

Methodologically, the subject matter is telescoped into a universe of its own, the surrounding world transformed into background whose varying degrees of relevance depend upon the angles and distances the observer chooses for his focused investigations. Thus, Shen Pu-hai, to whom the authoritative *Historical Records* (*Shih-chi*) devotes a total of sixty-eight Chinese characters, is strategically enlarged to the stature of the most original administrative thinker in pre-Ch'in China. The shape of Shen's political thought, Creel argues, was mainly determined by Shen's attempt to "devise a method by which the ruler might maintain control on the basis of nothing more than administrative technique and applied psychology." Creel further asserts that a close analysis of the available material indicates that Shen was probably the originator of the following administrative insights: (1) the principal emphasis for government should be placed upon rational organization and technique in a spirit of moral detachment, (2) the important function of the ruler is merely to preside over his ministers, not to do anything, (3) since no large-scale administration is possible without categorization, a system of names describing administrative methods are necessary, and (4) the use of tallies as a means of authentication should be implemented as an integral part of the technique to bestow office according to the capacity of the candidate and to demand actual performance in accordance with the title.

To convince us that these salient features of Shen's thought really have far-reaching theoretical and practical implications, Creel interlaces his interpretation with supporting quotations from modern Western authorities on bureaucratic and administrative theories, such as Peter Blau, Lyman Bryson, S. N. Eisenstadt, Robert Merton, and Herbert Simon. He also cites references from Machiavelli, Francesco Guicciardini, and Max Weber to show that Shen did address himself to some of the perennial concerns in the art of large-scale government. An implicit consequence of this trans-temporal and cross-cultural analysis is the demand for a more refined understanding of Fa-chia (commonly and, according to Creel, wrongly rendered as the Legalist School). If Creel's interpretive position can be maintained, Fa-chia will have to be differentiated into the Legalism of Lord Shang and the antilegalist administrative philosophy of Shen Pu-hai. As a result, Shen Tao, another important architect of Fa-chia in traditional scholarship will be relegated to the background, and Han Fei will be characterized as a somewhat muddleheaded synthesizer of the Legalist wing of Fa-chia.

Questions of perspective arise from Creel's attempt to establish the significance of Shen Pu-hai. To be sure, Creel admits that "to measure the

influence of the thought of Shen Pu-hai before the Han dynasty began, in 206 B.C., is difficult; after that time it becomes impossible." But almost one hundred pages are devoted to a comprehensive search for Shen's influence on traditional Chinese political theory and practice. From the perspective of historical significance it seems that Creel's *Problematik* mainly lies in his concerted effort to make Shen's administrative philosophy pure. This quest for purity appears to have seriously restricted the symbolic resources which Shen may have actually tapped to formulate his realistic vision of the principles of government. The newly discovered Fa-chia texts, *Ching-fa*, *Shih-ta ching*, *Ch'eng*, and *Tao-yuan* may lead to reevaluation of Shen's historical moment as well as his intellectual message.

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MICHAEL LOEWE. *Crisis and Conflict in Han China, 104 BC to AD 9*. London: George Allen and Unwin; distributed by Rowman and Littlefield, Totowa, N.J. 1975. Pp. 340. \$20.00.

This book is a collection of nine essays dealing with various aspects of Han China during the first century B.C. From a fresh point of view, the author discerns in the historical developments of the Former Han period two basic attitudes which he labels, respectively, as the Modernist and the Reformist. The Modernists promoted policies with a view mainly to strengthening the power and wealth of the state as well as the authority of the throne, whereas the Reformists were concerned basically with the lessening of hardships in people's lives. The Modernists are so called because they derived their tradition from the immediate past of the Legalist Ch'in empire. On the other hand, the Reformists took as their model the idealized remote past of the "benevolent government" of the Chou dynasty. Nowhere is the contrast between these two attitudes more clearly shown than in the "Grand Inquest" of 81 B.C., a debate on government monopolies of salt and iron (pp. 91-112). In this debate, the Modernists stood firmly for state control of these major industries while the Reformists of Confucian persuasion criticized the government for competing with the people for profit.

In terms of schools of political thought in Han China, these two contrasting attitudes correspond very closely to what have been traditionally called Confucianism and Legalism. But the author's new characterizations are more descriptive of the realities of the time than the traditional labels. For, as a result of the Han syncretism in ideas, neither Confucianism nor Legalism could be found in its pure form. In this connection it may be pointed out that