

# DEMOCRACY

## LECTURE I

### LESSON I

**D**EMOCRACY is government by the people. With this form of government the sovereign powers of a state are in the hands of the people. Some think that politics are mysteries. They are difficult to understand. But it is not so. Our soldiers often say that they should not know politics. They are wrong. Although they should not interfere with government, yet they should understand politics. Politics are public affairs, plain and simple. When these affairs are managed by the people, it is government by the people, or democracy.

Power is used to maintain one's existence. Two things are essential for human existence: protection and subsistence. These, however, are alike wanted by other animals. So in prehistoric times men had to struggle with other animals for existence.

The length of the prehistoric period is unknown. Geologists place it at two million years, because the stone strata formed before that time show no traces of man. A couple of millions of years in the eyes of the geologist is a short span of time, since it took innumerable years for the earth from the state of a nebulous material to reach a state inhabitable by men.

The earth and the sun originally belonged to the same nebula. As the sun contracted, the outer parts of the nebula formed into planets. The earliest rock, according to the geologist, was formed some twenty million years ago. This shows that millions of years must have passed before human beings appeared on the earth.

The civilization of mankind did not begin until two hundred thousand years ago. Earlier than that there was scarcely any difference between men and beasts. This is why we have the modern evolutionary theory of the origin of man. Mankind progressed gradually during the last two hundred thousand years and has now reached the stage of democracy.

Democracy made its first appearance in Greece and Rome two thousand years ago, but it soon went out of existence. Modern democracy began one hundred and fifty years ago. It has since become stronger and stronger every year.

There have been three principal forms of government since history began. The rule by divine right, or theocracy, came first; then autocracy; and finally democracy. Before the age of theocracy there was no social organization. Man at that time had to fight the beasts for existence. Each sought his own food and protection. The beginning of mankind is believed by some to be confined to a few places on the earth; but geologists tell us that human beings began to exist all over the world at about the same time, because traces of primitive men are found everywhere.

Ordinarily, when we want to study ancient facts we read history. The written history of China, however, covers only five or six thousand years, and that of Egypt about ten thousand years. Foreigners in their study of history do not depend upon books alone. Only in primary and middle schools do they use books; in colleges they do not entirely depend upon books, but go to original sources of information. They study stones, birds, beasts, and savages in order to know the conditions of their ancestors. They write down their findings afterwards for the benefit of mankind.

There are two ways of learning: one by observation, as in sciences; and the other by reasoning, as in philosophy. Human progress comes through these two methods of study. The primitive men fighting with beasts used only their bodily strength.

Here and there a few score of men joined together to fight and kill the beasts. These gatherings are natural. They would not kill one another because they had the beasts as their common foes, and when the beasts were killed, they separated.

## LESSON II

**I**T WAS not until the man-eating beasts were nearly all killed that men began to live together with tamed animals. This marked the beginning of the nomadic period. It was the beginning of human civilization. The Mongols and the Arabs still live in this manner. At this stage of civilization, what kind of struggle did men have? They had entered the second period of fighting with nature.

To avoid bad weather, men chose first the best places to live, such as the Nile valley in Egypt and Mesopotamia in Asia, both of which have fertile soil for farming and no rain throughout the year. The Nile of Egypt floods twice a year. After the flood a layer of rich soil is deposited on both banks suitable for farming and pasturing. The river also yields a rich supply of fish. This made living easy and men were able to prosper. But soon these places were too small for the growing population. Some had to move away and find other places to live. Elsewhere the weather was not so good as that of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

In the Yellow River valley was the origin of Chinese civilization. The river has caused many floods, and in winter there is severe coldness. Our ancestors moved to this place from Mesopotamia, where civilization began probably ten thousand years earlier than in China. After killing the beasts around this valley, they built houses and made clothes to avoid the effects of weather. This was a wide step of progress in civilization. Perils of fire, floods, wind, and lightning, however, visited them, killed men and animals, and destroyed houses. These natural elements were too mysterious for the ancient people to understand; and no means for their control could be found.

But later on, wise men came and devised means to avoid these perils. Emperor Yü, for instance, relieved the people of the sufferings from floods. Emperor Yu-ch'ao taught people to build houses on trees to avoid rains and floods. Thus civilization gradually advanced.

As the population then was sparse, it was easy to seek food. The only struggle our ancestors had was against nature. Since bodily strength had no use in the fight against nature, some clever people designed systems of worship. Since they were unable to cope with nature, they prayed to Heaven for blessing. Whether their prayers were answered or not, the worship, after all, was

a method to keep up their courage, and make them obedient to their leader. Even to-day we have rulers by divine right. The chief of the negroes in Africa, and the Living Buddha in Tibet and Mongolia are examples. Their duties are two : prayer and fighting.

Monarchy was overthrown in China in 1911 and we have now no king ; but in Japan the emperor still rules by divine right. A few hundred years ago monarchy in Japan was upset by militarists ; but sixty years ago Emperor Meiji effected a reform, overturned the Tokugawa régime, and restored the Tenno. At present both monarchical and divine powers are used for the rule of Japan.

The pope was formerly the head of both the government and the church. After his political powers were taken away, he still retained his religious authority. All European nations formerly under the pope now still respect him in religious matters.

Before men could control nature there was pure theocracy. After that autocracy arose. Strong militarists and great politicians took away the powers of the pope, and made themselves popes and emperors. At this stage of civilization there came a struggle between men. At first, both divine and monarchical powers were used ; but as the monarchical power advanced, the divine power declined. At the time of Louis XIV,

the Ch'in Shih Huang of France, the monarchical power in Europe reached its peak. He concentrated all powers in his own hands and claimed, "I am the state."

The development of sciences and the advancement of human knowledge gradually made men conscious of the intolerable abuses of autocracy. People rose against those emperors who did not know how to rule. Then came revolutions. In the last hundred years revolutionary ideas have rapidly developed and wars for democracy have been waged. So the present is a time of struggles between monarchs and citizens.

### LESSON III

**W**HY should we oppose monarchy and advocate democracy? It is because of the development of civilization and human knowledge. When we were children we had to depend upon our parents; but when we are grown up we should be independent. A few Chinese scholars are still in favor of autocracy. The old officialdom has tried once and again to restore monarchy. Owing to this difference of opinion, the Republic has been sailing on a rough sea.

Fundamentally speaking, both autocracy and democracy are for the purpose of managing national affairs for the benefit of the people;

but as the political situations of ages vary, the systems of rule also have to be different.

Some say the democratic form of government does not fit China because the standard of her people is too low. Goodnow, an American adviser to Yuan Shih-kai, proposed monarchy for China for the reason that the minds of our people were undeveloped, and our civilization was lower than that of Western nations. Yuan took advantage of his words, overturned the Republic, and made himself emperor. Democracy is unknown in Chinese history. Even during the past years of the Republic there has been no democracy. Autocracy has been the only form of government for more than four thousand years. Was autocracy beneficial to China? Its advantages and disadvantages were about equal.

Taking into consideration the talent and the ability of our people, we find, however, that democracy is more suitable. Both Confucius and Mencius advocated democracy. Confucius advocated a cosmopolitan world of democracy. He said, "When the great doctrine prevails, the world will belong to the public." He also praised Emperors Yao and Shun because, though they were emperors, they enforced democracy.

Mencius said, "The people are most valuable, the land and grain gods next, and the emperor least important." Again he said, "Heaven sees



as the people see; and heaven hears as the people hear." Again, "We have heard of the execution of Ch'ou, a tyrant; but not of the assassination of an emperor."

Even as early as that, our people knew that the emperor was unnecessary, and only temporary. So we call those who rendered good services to the people wise kings and those who were bad and cruel tyrants. Democracy was thought of by the Chinese two thousand years ago; but, as Utopia, conceived of by Western writers, it could not then be realized.

Foreigners frequently take the Chinese to be similar to the African and South Sea savages. They naturally object to China's adoption of a democratic form of government. They do not study the history and the actual conditions in China, so they are apt to make wrong conclusions. A few of our students in Europe and America hold this same wrong view because they blindly follow the opinions of foreigners.

According to what I see, our civilization began much earlier than that of Europe and America. Discussions of democracy were found thousands of years ago, but they were unable to be carried out. Now a number of republics have been established in the West and democracy has been tried with success for one hundred and fifty years. Moreover, the form of government agrees with

the thoughts of our ancestors. In order to follow the political trend of the world, and to effect permanent peace at home we should adopt democracy.

Modern democracy has not enjoyed fair weather all the way during the last century and a half. It met with failures in some countries. It made its first appearance in England about the end of our Ming dynasty. A revolution led by Cromwell resulted in the execution of Charles I. This was the first time that a king was judged by a court and served the punishment of death. The death of Charles I, however, did not end monarchy in England, for the English people at that time did not take to democracy, so they welcomed Charles II to the throne of England. This occurred more than two hundred years ago.

About a century later the Americans revolted against England and became an independent nation, known as the United States of America. This was the first republic established in modern times on the basis of democracy.

Less than a decade later a revolution broke out in France. It came in this way: Louis XIV was disliked by the French people for his absolute autocracy. His successors were even worse. The situation was no longer tolerable. So the people rose against Louis XVI and killed him. Like Charles I of England he was also sentenced to death

by a court. The execution of the French emperor aroused monarchical Europe to pour revenge upon the French people, and after wars for over a decade it succeeded in smothering the French revolution and restoring the monarchy in France.

## LESSON IV

**J**EAN JACQUE ROUSSEAU, a French philosopher, who advocated extreme democracy, greatly awakened European thought. His most important work is "The Social Contract," in which he claims that democracy is a natural privilege of every citizen. Historically speaking, Rousseau was wrong in this claim, because democracy is not a child of nature but of political evolution. Owing to the unsolid ground upon which he based his theory, he has been attacked by those who have opposed democracy.

In any branch of human knowledge facts precede sciences. Strategy is now a science, but facts went long before it. In China we have "The Thirteen Chapters," which is a book on strategy written more than two thousand years ago. These chapters certainly could not have been written without a study of the past facts. Firing in a prostrate position immediately after the appearance of the enemy, for instance, was a stratagem introduced after the use of smokeless powder.

During the Boer War the English army suffered heavy losses because the Boers fired in a prostrate position, while the English stood erect. The Boers learned the stratagem from the African natives, who originated it. This point of strategy is now well known. So it proves that facts always precede science.

Although Rousseau made a mistake in building his arguments on a wrong basis, yet his statement certainly agreed with the facts at that time. The tide of democracy had arrived. This was why, in spite of his weak argument, his philosophy was warmly accepted.

As we are now in the period of democracy, we should not fail to make a study of it. We should not say that because Rousseau's "The Social Contract" was not well written, and Cromwell's revolution failed to end monarchy in England, democracy is of no good. Although it took France more than eighty years to establish a republic, yet the American Revolution lasted only for eight years. Although revolution for over two centuries still finds England with a king, yet the world is certainly moving towards democracy.

Thirty years ago, when we began our revolutionary movement, many, including foreigners, objected to our proposal for democracy. But we firmly decided that this was the only form of government that would give China permanent

peace. There were yet at that time a number of powerful emperors in Europe. The Russian czar, the German and Austrian kaisers, were all powerful monarchs. So they asked how China could have a republic. Yuan Shih-kai accordingly made himself emperor; and Chang Hsun restored the Manchu régime. But where are the czar and the kaisers now? They are gone and gone forever. Russia, Germany, and Austria are now all republics.

The current of the world moves towards democracy. It is impossible for China to go against the tide. People often asked what possibility the revolutionists had in fighting the powerful Manchu dynasty. But in 1911 the Manchu dynasty fell before the revolutionists like a broken reed before the wind. As the Yellow and Yangtze rivers, flowing in zigzags northward and southward, will finally move eastward to the sea, so the world current of democracy may meet with oppositions and temporary failures, yet at last it must have its way. Yuan Shih-kai, with all his power, and Chang Hsun, with his brutal and fearful army, were soon swept away.

The militarists in the North are still trying to oppose the current. They should know, however, that although their armies are stronger and better equipped than the Southern armies, yet finally they will be overcome and be gone forever, even though they may fortunately stand for a short time.

Mongolia has risen against the Living Buddha. This is the last day of theocracy. When the time comes, no one can help it. Autocracy is rapidly dying out. In England the power of the government lies really in the political parties, so England is a democracy with a king as a nominal head. The current shows that not only theocracy is out of date but autocracy also is giving place to democracy. Democracy began with Greece and Rome. It was revived one hundred and fifty years ago, and now there is a long future ahead of it. We have adopted this form of government, first, for the reason of going in with the political current of the world; and second, for shortening the possible civil wars at home.

## LESSON V

**M**EN with great ambitions have always aspired to the throne. When Liu Pang saw Ch'in Shih Huang come out with royal splendors, he sighed, "A great man should be like that!" Hsiang Yu remarked, "He can be replaced!" When we first started the revolutionary movement six or seven out of every ten men who joined us had the ambition to become an emperor. Most of them were afterwards converted, however, and believe now in democracy. But there are yet one or two who still cherish their monarchical ambitions.

Because of the desire to avoid bloodshed through competing for the throne, we made democracy our aim from the very beginning of the revolutionary movement. The tragic end of the Taiping revolution gives us a good warning.

Hung Shiu-chuan began his campaign from Kwangsi and soon had more than one half of China in his hands. He made Nanking his capital. Why did he fail? There were several reasons. The first reason, as some believe, was due to his lack of diplomacy. Great Britain sent Ambassador Sir Henry Pottinger to Nanking with an intention to conclude a pact with Hung Shiu-chuan. The Heavenly Prince, as Hung called himself, required the ambassador to kneel down before him. This Sir Pottinger would not do and he went to Peking to get the consent of the Manchu government to send Major Charles George Gordon with the "Ever-Victorious Army" to take Soochow. Consequently Hung failed. A second reason, as some suggest, was the unnecessary delay in his expedition northward. He stopped at Nanking and failed to push his campaign through to Peking immediately.

In my opinion, however, the greatest cause of his failure lay in the struggle among his own men for the throne. First, we see Yang Shiu-ching's struggle for power with Hung Shiu-chuan. As Hung was made emperor, Yang also wanted to

become an emperor. Yang had a well-trained army of sixty or seventy thousand strong. Because of his ambition for the crown, Wei Chang-hui defeated Yang and killed him. His army was destroyed. Wei, having risen in power, in turn tried to rival Hung. Then Hung's troops killed Wei. Shih Ta-k'ai, hearing of the trouble, went to Nanking from Kiangsi with the hope of stopping these suicidal wars; but he was himself suspected of possessing the ambition to become emperor, so he was obliged to escape for his life, and went with his army to Szechwan. There he was later defeated by the army of the Manchu government. So because of the competition for the throne the four Taiping armies of Hung Shiu-chuan, Yang Shiu-ching, Wei Chang-hui, and Shih Ta-k'ai were successively destroyed, and the Taiping forces were greatly weakened. The whole cause of failure, therefore, lay in the monarchical ambition of Yang Shiu-ching.

At the time of the Taiping revolution, democracy was unknown. Five princes were appointed at the beginning of the campaign. After the revolt of Yang Shiu-ching, Hung thought that he would not appoint any more princes. But the successive achievements of Li Shiu-cheng and Chen Yu-cheng compelled him to make them princes. Fearing that they might follow the steps of Yang Shiu-ching, he appointed thirty or forty princes at



the same time with a view to making these men equal in rank and title so that they might give a mutual check to one another. This crippled Li and Chen, because they could no longer move the troops of their former subordinates, who held now an equal rank and title. Thus Hung Shiu-chuan failed at last.

## LESSON VI

WHY did Chen Chun-ming revolt in Canton in the eleventh year of the Republic? Many thought that he wanted to get possession of Kwangtung and Kwangsi. But it was not that. Before Chen revolted, I wanted to have a northern expedition and told him plainly my reasons. But he would not agree. Finally I thought that he was anxious to get Kwangtung and Kwangsi and the expedition might affect his future position, so I told him frankly that if we succeeded in the northern expedition we would give him the two provinces. If we failed he could still get the provinces by coming to terms with the northern government. Even if he should submit himself to the northern government, we would not blame him. But he still had something in his mind that he would not divulge.

When the expeditionary forces reached Kanchow in Kiangsi, he revolted. He wanted to be the

emperor. The existence of the revolutionary army interfered with his ambition. That was why he revolted.

Here is another proof of Chen's ambition. He frequently told others of a dream he had when he was young—that he held the sun under one arm and the moon under another. He wrote a poem about the dream and showed it to everybody. One line runs as follows :

Holding under arms of mine the moon and sun,  
To my youthful dream no justice yet is done.

The name he gave himself was also for the hope of fulfilling the dream. Except Teng K'eng, whom he murdered long ago, none of the men under him was a revolutionist. His ambition has not died even now.

There are a few others who had the same ambition, but I cannot tell whether or not they have changed their minds. What I want is to have everybody understand democracy. When they do so their monarchical ambitions will die out forever. With the existence of this ambition, civil wars will continue in China and no peace can be expected. This is the reason why we want a republic, and why we make the citizens the sovereign of China. When the sovereign power of the state is in the hands of the people, dynastic wars can be avoided.

The history of China shows that most disorders in this country can be traced to the same cause of striving for the throne. The government of Ch'in Shih Huang was hated by the people. When Cheng Chih and Wu Kuang rose against Ch'in, the whole nation joined them. This was a war of democracy. But when Liu Pang and Hsiang Yü came into conflict, it became a war of monarchies, because they fought each other for the crown. Since the Han and Tang dynasties all wars were fought for monarchical ambitions. Even now, when the Republic has been in existence for thirteen years, we have yet Chen Chun-ming, Tsao Kun, Lu Yung-ting, and others who are one and all throne aspirants. Fortunately the lesser militarists now do not make themselves princes and feudal lords. Historically, this is already a step towards progress in our civil wars.