LECTURE II

Lesson VII

FREEDOM and democracy are often spoken of together by foreigners. What foreigners have fought for during the last two or three centuries was freedom. The slogan of the French Revolution was liberty, equality, and fraternity. These originated from the theory of democracy; and it in turn prospered on account of those terms. So in discussing democracy we shall first consider these three terms.

Following the incoming tide of revolutionary ideas to China, our educated class has become well acquainted with the term "freedom," though it is still unknown to the masses. Foreigners in criticizing the Chinese frequently make two contradictory comments. One is that the Chinese are as loose as the sand, and the other is that the Chinese do not understand what freedom is. Do we really enjoy no freedom? Yes, we do, and too much of it. The grains of sand are individually very free. If they should be mixed with water and cement they would harden into stone. The concrete would be a solid body, but the freedom of the

individual grains of sand would be lost. This is like our people. We enjoy too much individual freedom, though the term is unknown to most of us.

During the fight of foreign nations for freedom, they so exalted this right that they made it sacred and adopted the slogan of "Give me liberty or give me death." This slogan has also been introduced into China. At first a few persons rallied to it with much enthusiasm, but as the masses did not understand it there was no result.

In the fight for freedom the Western nations shed much blood and sacrificed many lives. They gained freedom and called the result democracy. Democracy, as we have seen, made its first appearance in Greece and Rome, so the term is derived from two old Greek words, meaning "people" and "strength." The democracy of Greece and Rome, however, was an aristocratic democracy, since two thirds of their population consisted of slaves who had no freedom at all.

Following the fall of Greece and Rome, democracy died and the term was forgotten, but it was revived two hundred years ago, and was recently introduced into China. Europeans, however, can appreciate freedom better. They appreciate it as much as our people appreciate the idea of wealth. Tell a Chinese that he can get rich and he will welcome the idea at once. This is similar to a foreigner's desire for freedom.

Why do the Chinese desire wealth? Because they are so poverty-stricken that they suffer a great deal. If there is a way to get rich, they will struggle for it by all means. Americans fought for freedom a century and a half ago. They were so oppressed that they desired liberty, as much as our people now desire wealth.

Absolute monarchy was carried out to the extreme two or three hundred years ago in Europe. European civilization then was about the same as that of our Chow dynasty. The end of the Chow dynasty was concurrent with the Roman Empire. This great empire existed from the end of the Chow dynasty up to the Han dynasty. Rome was at first a republic, but was later changed into a monarchy. After her fall, feudal states rivaled one another in Europe in a way similar to the rivalry of the feudal lords in China during the Eastern Chow dynasty; only the feudalism of Europe was more absolute.

The Ch'in dynasty lasted for only a short time, because it meted out heavy capital punishment for any criticism of the government. From that time the government was always lenient to the people. Besides paying taxes, the people had practically nothing to do with government affairs. But the situation was much worse in Europe. So Europeans welcomed any proposition for getting freedom.

Lesson VIII

THE only fear of Chinese emperors was the loss of the throne. They did their utmost to suppress rebellions. The punishment for a rebel was the execution not only of the convict but of all his relatives to the ninth degree of relationship. The purpose of this extremely severe punishment was simply for the protection of the throne. If the people did not try to rob his throne the emperor would leave them alone without attempting to interfere with their actions.

During the past thirteen years of the Republic, no constructive work has yet been possible because of political chaos; and the people have not yet come to realize their relationship with their country. Under the Manchu régime, what relationship had the people with the government? In each province there were the governor, the taotai, the prefects, the magistrates, and the miscellaneous subordinate officials; so the people were greatly separated from the emperor. Their only obligation was to pay taxes. Except for paying taxes the people had nothing to do with the government, and except for collecting taxes the government did nothing for the people.

The Chinese people did not suffer as much as did Europeans from monarchical government; but their sufferings from foreign political and

economic pressure have been great. As a consequence, our people are now poverty-stricken. These sufferings not being a direct consequence of autocracy, the people have not hated their emperors as much as Europeans did.

Europeans wanted three kinds of liberty: freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and freedom of locomotion. An example of the restrictions Europe had may be seen from the regulations of the Dutch government in Java concerning the movements of the Chinese. Java was formerly a tributary state to China. Since it was taken over by the Dutch, the Chinese, whether student, merchant, or laborer, arriving at Java, have been required to be first lodged in a small house wherein a most severe medical examination must be undergone, finger prints made, and the body measured before they are permitted to land. After landing, the address of the residence must be reported. For subsequent removals, a street pass has to be applied for. No Chinese is allowed to walk on the street after 9 P.M. without a special pass and a lantern. All these restrictions most likely were those formerly prevalent in Europe and are now applied to Java by the Dutch.

Then there were restrictions in trade, work, and faith. For instance, a person living in a certain place, no matter whether he was willing or not, must believe in the religion of that place. The

situation became so intolerable that people were willing to sacrifice everything for freedom. After they got it, through much bloodshed and the sacrifice of many lives, they considered it sacred, and even up to now they value it highly.

Since European revolution was a fight for freedom, why should we use the Three Principles as our slogan, instead of following what Europeans did by appealing to freedom? There is a reason for it. The watchword of the French revolution was "liberty," but that of the United States was "independence." It was after careful consideration that we selected the Three Principles for our slogan.

Why was freedom a good watchword for the French Revolution but is not good for ours? It is because an effective watchword must have the power of arousing and moving the people. Unless the need of a thing is strongly felt, people will not support a demand for it with enthusiasm. Europeans were in desperate need of liberty, so the appeal for freedom at once aroused them; the Chinese do not feel much the need for liberty, so they will not respond to an appeal for freedom with their whole hearts.

Since what our people now desperately need is wealth, then why do we not use "getting rich" as our slogan? The Three Principles, in fact, include the principle of getting rich. The Russian

revolution adopted as its watchword "communism," which was very similar to an appeal to getting rich. But what we propose is not to get rich only. Getting rich is only a part of our program.

Lesson IX

EUROPEANS think that China's civilization is too low and our political ideas too elementary. Even freedom we do not understand. Since they fought a bitter fight before getting freedom, naturally they appreciate its value. But why should Europeans at the same time criticize our people for lacking cohesion like sand?

If freedom should now be made an appeal to Europeans when they have already obtained it, I believe they would certainly not welcome it with as great enthusiasm as when they were yet under monarchical oppression. Before they had freedom they fought for it; but when they got it, each person tried to get more and more of it individually, and the result was an abuse of freedom.

Mill, an English philosopher, declared that the liberty of an individual should not interfere with that of any other person. Such is true liberty; for if one's liberty interferes with another's, there is no liberty. Formerly, personal liberty was

unlimited; but Mill's statement has set a limit to it. So personal liberty in Europe is now much reduced in scope. If liberty is to be unassailable, there must be limits.

The Chinese have too much personal freedom. It is this freedom that makes us as loose as sand. The reason why we do not appreciate freedom is not because we do not have it, but because we have too much of it.

Food and clothes we need and we realize it; but there is another thing we need ten thousand times more, and yet we do not appreciate it. If we take one or two meals a day and have two suits of clothes, we can live throughout the year; but there is one thing without which even for a few minutes we shall die. What is it?—Air. How many times a day do we take in air? At least sixteen breaths a minute are needed for any person. In one hour we breathe, therefore, 16×60, or 960 times; and for a day of twenty-four hours we have to breathe 23,040 times. Is it not ten thousand times more important than food?

But we never appreciate the importance of air. We know the difficulty of getting food, but we never think of our need of air. We can feel the need, however, if we close our nostrils for a minute, bolt all the windows and the doors of a crowded lecture hall for a short time, or shut a person in a small room with closed windows and

doors for a day. Europeans were enthusiastic because they felt a great need. They wanted "freedom or death."

Our people appreciate only the need of wealth, but not so much the need of freedom. When the savages in the mountains of Kwangsi take dried bear livers and deer horns to the market for sale, they do not want money, because they have no use for it. They want salt or cloth in exchange. Freedom to the Chinese is the same as money to savages. They do not need it. But still we find our students talking about liberty. They are ignorant of the real situation.

Did all the people of France and the United States get freedom after their revolutions? Many classes of people did not, such as students, soldiers, public officials, and those who are below the legal age. So when freedom was obtained in Europe during the last two centuries it was only to be enjoyed by those who were of age and who were not in the above-mentioned classes. Even now these few classes of people still cannot enjoy freedom.

Our students, having got the idea of freedom into their heads and having no real use for it, take it into their schools and create trouble there. We have seen many students strike. Their plea was that they were fighting for liberty. Freedom is not without limits. But our students

have broken all the limits. This is an abuse of freedom. We do not blame foreigners for saying that the Chinese enjoy no liberty, because they do not know Chinese history; but it is strange that our own students should forget the famous peasant's song of liberty:

At sunrise to work I go,
At sunset to rest return;
For water to well I turn,
In fields, I till, crops grow.
With me what has the king to do?

Our people have enjoyed freedom in actual life from very early days until now, though we have not a name for it. The freedom we enjoy is so full that we need not try to get any more.

Lesson X

DEMOCRACY was born of freedom. Unless we know how the Europeans fought for freedom we cannot appreciate its value. Europeans struggled for freedom with intense enthusiasm. As their enthusiasm cooled down after they had gained freedom, they found that it was not so desirable as they thought. It is not sacred and unassailable.

We agree with foreigners when they say that the Chinese are as loose as sand; but we cannot agree when they say that the Chinese do not understand freedom and have undeveloped political

thought. The fact that we are incohesive as sand shows that we have too much freedom. Because of too much individual freedom we have no solidarity.

Our revolution is different from foreign revolutions, so our method should also be different. Europeans had no freedom. They revolted in order to get freedom. We have too much freedom, so we have no solidarity and cannot withstand foreign economic exploitation. Not only have our students too much freedom, but our party members too.

In the second year of the Republic, Yuan Shih-kai contracted a large foreign loan without the consent of Parliament, murdered Sung Chiao-jen, and did many things to endanger the Republic. I urged the various provinces to rise against him; but as the members of our party all looked for their own freedom and even our armies, from the generals down to the soldiers, all claimed individual freedom, nobody would obey commands. Yuan's men were a strong compact body, but we were a layer of sand; so he was able to defeat us.

What relationship, then, is there between the French slogan of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" and ours of the "Three Principles"? I think that our principle of nationalism corresponds to the French watchword of freedom, because nationalism aims at gaining national freedom.

Europeans fought for individual freedom, while we fight for national freedom. If we can limit our individual freedom so that we can have a strong united government, our country will become free.

If our students are willing to sacrifice their individual freedom, and study every day, their education will give them the ability to serve China. If our soldiers will sacrifice their individual liberty and obey commands, they can be loyal to the country and make China free. But when students and soldiers agitate for freedom, their freedom will not be liberty but license. If they have too much license they will break the discipline of schools and armies. Then we shall have no more schools and armies.

Why should we strive for national freedom? As I have said, the position of China is that of a subcolony which is even worse than that of Korea and Annam. These countries are slaves to only one master, but we are slaves to more than ten nations. As a nation, we have no freedom. Unless we organize ourselves into a solid body with our revolutionary principles, we cannot recover our national position.

The French watchword, "liberty," corresponds, therefore, to our "principle of nationalism," because we need national freedom. "Equality" corresponds to our "principle of democracy," because the latter gives equal political rights

to every citizen. "Fraternity" corresponds to our "principle of livelihood," because fraternity means brotherhood, and our "principle of livelihood" aims at promoting the welfare of the whole people. This last principle we shall discuss in Book III.