

GUNS AND BUTTER

In the history of the world, there has never been a viable civilisation that has been devoid of a strong religious base, a base whose roots may be traced to a god, or a family of gods – either pantheism or monotheism.

Say what one likes about religion, but one cannot deny that religion causes people to have a strong moral footing and, from this footing, laws may be fashioned for the benefit of all layers of society.

The People's Republic of China (PRC), a government, which maintains a very strong atheistic dogma, is unlikely to amount to anything, ever, if the history of great and noble civilisations is to be accepted as a guide to the future.

The recent announcement of the PRC Government, with regard to its success in sending up a rocket into space as a prelude to a manned space flight, making the most populous country in the world, today, the third nation in the world to have the ability to perform such a feat, may be compared with the feat of the Government of the PRC to fail to feed, adequately, its population of more than 1.20 billion people (assuming that this 1997 figure is accurate).

It is estimated that not less than 20 percent of the human population of the PRC are either starving, or near to that pleasant state.

This would mean, assuming that these statistics, also, are accurate, that the number of people, who are either on the poverty line or are starving in the PRC, probably represents the entire human population of the United States of America, or, put another way, it represents more than 4 times the human population of Great Britain.

In 1982, the Constitution of the People's Republic of China was promulgated.

One of its ingrained tenets was that legitimate religious activities would be protected in the PRC.

Recently, the world has witnessed the persecution of the '*religious*' cult, the Falun Gong (or Falun Da Fa), by the PRC Government.

The PRC Government maintains that the adherents of the Falun Gong do not indulge in activities that constitute a legitimate religious activity and, as such, they may not be protected under the 1982 Constitution.

This is an interesting determination by the PRC Government since history has shown that the roots of Daoism (or Taoism) may be traced back to the philosophical and mystical tenets of Tao Te Chung, a Chinese philosopher who lived in the 3rd Century B.C.

Daoism maintains that the individual should seek only to confirm with the underlying pattern of the universe (the Tao Way), which may neither be described in words nor conceived in thought.

Daoism, also, developed as a cult in which its followers sought immortality through magic and experimentation in alchemy.

One may be tempted to suggest that one of the 3 main principles of Chinese thought, today, is based on a cultish concept, not unlike Falun Gong.

Buddhism is the closest ideal that could be considered a religious belief in the PRC, today.

Its roots lie in Northeast India and are based on the teachings of a 6th Century cultish individual: Siddhartha Gautama – the Buddha, or the *‘Enlightened One’*.

This cultish figure left no written body of thought, but his followers codified his ideas as being (a) Life is suffering (b) All suffering is caused by ignorance of the nature of reality and the craving, attachment and grasping that result (c) Suffering can be ended by the overcoming of ignorance and attachment and (d) The path to the suppression of suffering is the Noble, Eightfold Path – right views, right intentions, right speech, right actions, right livelihood, right efforts, right-mindedness, and right contemplation.

The only other widespread belief in the PRC, today, a belief, that is, approaching a religious fervour, is that of Confucianism.

Handed down by Confucius in the 5th Century B.C., its followers maintain that the primary concerns of man are good conduct, practical wisdom, and proper social relationships.

Although Confucianism became the official ideology of the PRC State, it has never existed as an established religion, complete with a Church and priesthood.

While Chinese scholars, through the ages, have honoured Confucius as a teacher and a sage, Confucius has never attained an omnipotent rank, as did Jesus, who followed Confucius nearly 5 Centuries later.

In The Beginning

History records that the first manned, hot-air balloon rose in France in about 1783.

It was used in the Franco-German War of 1870 for military observation.

The PRC Government has just sent up its *‘balloon’*, and it is likely that the underlying principle of this not extraordinary success, of trying to be able to put a man into space, is not dissimilar to the concept of the French physicist, Jean François Pilatre, when his balloon discovery was used as a military weapon.

And, meanwhile, more than 240 million people are starving, or are close to that happy state, in the 3.7 million square miles that make up the People’s Republic of China.

Interestingly enough, the landmass of the United States is very similar to the size of the landmass of the PRC.

But the major difference between the 2 nations is that the 270 million human population of President Bill Clinton’s country is not suffering anywhere near to the extent of the human misery of the PRC’s less fortunate human population, many of whom are bordering on starvation.

Lest the PRC Government jump on TARGET for telling alleged untruths, one may see human misery within a few miles of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the PRC, simply by taking a train to Shenzhen and noting the number of people, roaming the train station and the footpaths, surrounding the station, most of whom cannot afford a pair of sandals to protect their cut and blistered feet.

For the most part, the average tourist does not see the misery of those 2 Chinese people out of those 10 Chinese people, those souls, being that part of the human population of the PRC in dire straits -- because tourist brochures do not, normally, include trips to areas where poverty is the chorus of the day.

Meanwhile, the PRC Government, in its wisdom, spends hundreds of billions of US dollars in trying to match the military might of the US Government.

One of the main reasons that such acts of lunacy may go unchallenged in the PRC is that there is little accountability in the PRC Government’s scheme of things: The man who holds the reigns of power is the man who guides the country’s destiny, rightly or wrongly.

Since the people do not have much of a real voice in government (some people would claim that the people of the PRC have no say in government, in realistic terms), the people of the PRC remain subservient to their perceived masters; and, they are forced to rely on the integrity of those in power, their masters' might being superior to their masters' consideration of that which is, truly, right.

In the early days of the building of this great civilisation, the Government of China followed the path of power in order to rule a country which, as history has shown, was unruly and, in many cases, ungovernable, during its formative days.

The Han Dynasty (206 B.C. to A.D. 220) reunited China and brought about the golden age of Chinese philosophical thought.

But it did not embrace a monotheistic belief, or a pantheistic concept of the origins of man, or that man was descended from an omnipotent force, in the modern sense of accepted religious beliefs, widely practised in the Western World, today.

The Han Dynasty ushered in the fall of the Qin Dynasty (221 B.C. to 206 B.C.) and established many of the distinctive institutions of China, institutions that, to this day, survive.

The Qin Dynasty collapsed under the weight of military revolts and rebellions, mostly from the peasant class.

Ascendancy to the purple of office was by way of might, rather than right, with the man, who wielded the sword and the spear, being the man who wielded the baton of political power.

In A.D. 25, feudal barons overthrew the existing Imperial Regent, Wang Mang, who had, in A.D. 9, unilaterally declared himself to be the Emperor of the short-lived Xin (or Hsin) Dynasty, which survived for 14 short years.

It, like its predecessors and successors, was a paganish form of government.

The feudal barons of A.D. 25, in collaboration with the Liu Family, said to be descendants of the Han Emperor, restored the Han Dynasty.

China's Inglorious History

The history of China has, always, been the history of governmental control by force of arms, with the few, ruling the many; and, those who revolt, openly, against the few, caused to suffer the penalty for political defeat at the hands of their (ungodly) victors.

And the situation of today is unchanged from the century old traditions, going back to the days of the feudal barons who seized control of the country by virtue of might, rather than right.

That the peasant class of China has a long history of suffering under the hands of those in power is undisputed.

That one of the greatest potential powers in the history of the world has, historically, subjugated its peoples to an existence that should be the shame of modern politicians is undisputed.

That the present government of the People's Republic of China is traveling along the same road as its predecessors is, unfortunately, unquestionable.

Unless changes are brought about, social fears and uncertainty will raise their heads in the most populous country of the world in due course.

And the blame will be on the Administration of the Government of the PRC since, when a government puts technology ahead of bread, then that godless government cannot expect to be the viable rulers for too long a period of time.

While despotic empires and emperors come and go, only the good in man is cherished and remembered in the annals of human history, for the bad in man serves only as a reminder of man's inhumanity to man.

The PRC rocket has gone into space and has returned to earth.

It proves nothing except the arrogance of a nation's leaders.

Better to fill the bowls of the hungry with rice than to demonstrate fear for the concern of the military might of one's neighbours in the ever-shrinking planet called earth.

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