In this presentation I try to survey the Chinese developmental model in the light of civilizational dynamics. I will first give an overview of the Chinese scene, and then take up a few issues for specific discussion. As China is a huge country and her problems are equally vast, numerous and complex, this presentation has become fairly long, yet with important issues I may fail to cover.

I

Napoleon once described China as a sleeping giant, and hoped it would remain so lest the world might be shaken by it. Today, this sleeping giant has not only waken up, but is bending on her internal development in a scale and dimension exceeding what it had been doing in history. The entire world is watching what China is doing domestically because whatever happens there might have an universal impact.

China, like India, was a developed country before the 18th century when the rest of the world remained less developed. The emergence of the modern civilization and the powerful impact of Western colonialism and finance imperialism condemned her to a developing country for one whole century. After 1949, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) launched a feverish movement to regain China’s position in the family of nations as a developed country. This feverish movement for making China "fu" (rich) and "qiang" (strong) was a successor to the May Fourth Movement (1919) which has driven home a conviction that the evil roots of China’s humiliating defeat by the western powers lay in China’s own age-old traditions. Unless China totally broke away from that tradition there would be no prospects for the emergence of a new China.

The first generation of the leaders of the PRC operated on this premise; and worked hard to destroy the old and build up the new. Destroying the old was easier than building up the new as there was no suitable example to emulate. In many aspects, the PRC adopted the Soviet model, particularly the "Economic Planning" system which is now called by the Western economists as "Command Economy". This has brought a drastic change in China’s way of life.

In the past, China was like the USA — a vast country with abundant resources welcoming people of various ethnic origins to settle there to develop its economy. There were two kinds of scenarios of government rule. A benevolent kind was to maintain peace and levy less taxes. Economy could prosper under such regimes. Another kind was the government’s involvement in constant warfare, and had to pass on the burden to the common people. Life became miserable under such reigns. Thus, the Chinese history had projected a time-tested rhythm that grassroots initiatives were precious in developing a prosperous life in the country.
The PRC leadership ignored this rhythm initially, and tried to make the state power the sole locomotive for the country’s economic development. In this process, the grassroots initiatives were destroyed. There were some isolated examples of people under a highly regimented management system maintaining great enthusiasm in developing production. But the People’s Communes, by and large, could register very slow economic growth, and the state owned industrial enterprises proved to be highly inefficient and uneconomical. However, the country succeeded in keeping a high spiritual culture with revolutionary zeal. Social evils like prostitution, drug addiction, black money etc. were unheard of. Of course, because of the want of transparency, many ugly things, particularly corruption and petty crimes committed by those who held power, were hidden under the carpet.

Then came the post-Mao era of reforms and opening up of China to the outside world. The post-Mao leadership under Deng Xiaoping gradually diluted the economic plans of the state and loosened the state control on grassroots economic activities. This change brought about positive results in economic development. In the last 15 years China’s economic growth was nearly 10 per cent a year on an average, which was not only unheard of in China’s history, but was also outstanding in the post-World War era, when Europe lingered around 2-3 per cent of growth rate.

Another fundamental change adopted by Deng Xiaoping’s leadership is to erase the abstract dichotomy between socialism and capitalism. Socialism during the Mao era was conceived as "Xing wu mie zi" (Uplift the proletariat and exterminate the bourgeoisie). Deng Xiaoping felt that China should emulate all good examples which could develop the productive force. While economic planning, to him, was not exclusively socialist, market economy was not exclusively capitalist either. Market economy was just a "method". "If it serves the interest of socialism, then it belongs to socialism. If it serves the interest of capitalism, then it belongs to capitalism." Deng Xiaoping, thus, created a new conception in China’s development orientation. "He destroyed the adherence to economic planning, and also broke the taboo on market economy," commented Hu Sheng, President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. ¹

China has had one and half centuries of interface with the modern civilization since the Opium War (1840-42). This interface has experienced some twists and turns. In the beginning China tried to reject modern civilization but failed. Then, a leftist movement rose under the influence of the anti-current of modern civilization, i.e., Marxism, and launched an attack on China’s own traditions. Then, China, during the post-Mao era ceased to embrace communism too tightly, and developed a soft corner for the capitalist economic pattern of development. Today, China wishes to have the good things from both the mainstream and anti-current of modern civilization — to emulate the market economic system from the mainstream capitalist world, and to adhere to socialism which is an inspiration from the anti-current of modern west.

Deng Xiaoping raised an important slogan "Building up socialism according to Chinese characteristics". His approach is also known as pursuing the "Chinese road
towards socialism". Such a policy symbolizes China’s quest for an endogenous pattern of development. During the Mao era there used to be the slogan: "Gu wei jin yong, yang wei Zhong yong." (Employ past experience for the benefit of the present, and employ foreign experience for the benefit of China.) Outwardly, there seems to be a contradiction between China’s providing herself as a market for foreign trade and investment and her strong desire for enhancing her own enlightened self-interest. One Chinese scholar, Li Yi’ning, a professor of Beijing University, tries to find a logic in this contradiction by describing it as a strategy of "exchanging market for technology" (yi shichang huan jishu) — meaning to have the benefit of the latest foreign technology implanted in China by allowing foreign enterprises to enjoy the profit of Chinese market. Li Yi’ning is one of the avant-garde economists in China who have gone quite beyond the framework of Marxist political-economy. He is one of the members of the think-tank for the present PRC leaders, but not all his proposals have been accepted for implementation.

Here is the involvement of a fundamental problem concerning national self-reliance and international globalization. Both in India and in China there has been a strong opposition to the encroachment of transnational interests into the domestic economy to hamper the growth of the national industries. What Deng Xiaoping and his followers among present-day PRC leadership have been doing is an experiment based on either a self-confidence that China’s national industries will emerge a winner in the on-going globalization, or a fatalistic mentality that without participating in the globalization China will not take off in the fierce international competition. Li Yi’ning and others who see the right logic in such an experiment seem to reflect a complex mentality of both this self-confidence and fatalistic mentality.

One element of urgency for China to embrace globalization is the time factor when both the developed countries and the Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs) are eager to shed their labour-intensive industries. China has seized this opportunity to take over the "sun-set industries" of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other countries to become the processing zone of the world for shoes, electronic toys, garments, cheap watches, etc. Such "sun-set industries" do not augment self-reliance to China’s modern development. But, China has, at no time, ignored the need of developing her own manufacturing and other industrial capability to be able to stand on her own as a modern power. It is estimated that there were three major waves in the last 40 years of importing advanced foreign technology into China. The first wave took place in the 1950s when the Soviet Union helped China to build up her heavy industrial base. The second wave took place in 1978 when the government led by the transitional leader Hua Guofeng hurriedly signed huge contracts with Japan and Germany to modernize its steel industry to the extent that the country failed to digest the intake, and had to cut down the import by paying compensation to foreign companies. From 1983 there started the third major wave, and in three years 3,000 plus new technological items were imported. But, many of such items were repetitions, amounting to a waste of precious foreign exchange. There were even isolated instances of China-made machinery being bought back as advanced foreign technology. In all, China’s industrial capability is commendable after four decades of
hard work in development. In the Mao era, when the Western world imposed an embargo on China, she could make a series of breakthrough in science and technology by using the reverse technology. China could develop its own atomic energy, aeronautic and air-space industries, etc. China has now the largest manufacturing industry in the world, and is fairly advanced in certain fields of technology such as rocketry, nuclear, underground mining, bridge building, etc. But, on the whole China’s technological level remains three or four decades behind the leaders of the world. According to American standards, most of China’s factories are junk yards. China can’t throw the obsolete equipment away, but is trying to renovate them into semi-state-of-the-art conditions. It is a poor country’s development course to modernization.

China has an ingenious programme in developing her own science capability called "Xinghuo jihua" (Spark Programme), drawing inspiration from Chairman Mao’s famous saying that "A single spark can start a prairie fire". This Spark Programme was initiated in 1986, aiming at introducing scientific research findings to industrial units, agriculture, animal husbandry and other areas of productivity. There is another programme called "863 Programme" instituted in 1986 to develop high tech by indigenous efforts. This was supplemented by the "Torch Programme" in 1988 for marketization of the achievements of the 863 Programme. Over the years, there has been a brain-drain in China with young scientists going abroad and failing to come back. The PRC government has announced special incentives to attract them to return to the motherland. This step has created a discrimination between homespun scientists and seawater-drunken scientists, thus becoming an invisible encouragement for more brain-drain.

The "Special Economic Zone" and its younger sister, "Economic and Technological Development Zones" are special features of post-Mao China’s new economic development. The government grants a special policy to such zones to allow them to import foreign technology and investment. The philosophy behind the establishment of these zones is termed "Yin feng ru chao" (Making a nest for the phoenix to enter) — foreign investment is the "phoenix". The "Special Economic Zones", particularly Shenzhen, was a topic of great controversy. Many veteran leaders wept after visiting the place — feeling that their revolutionary martyrdom and heroism had been cheated, and no one would have shed blood for the communist revolution if they had known that capitalism and exploitation would have been brought back through the back door. There were fierce internal debate about whether such zones belonged to the socialist or capitalist family. In 1992, Deng Xiaoping, the designer of such zones, visited them and reaffirmed their contributions to the country. He also appealed to fellow Party comrades to postpone the debate for a decade or so to let history judge whether such an invention had any justification. Today, such zones are no longer in the limelight as the whole country has virtually become a huge "Special Zone" for opening up to the outside world.

What China presents today is a very dynamic, fluid, complex, and in certain sense, chaotic picture of embarking on the course of development. China was a developed
country in the past. Chinese were great inventors, and have always had an aptitude for expanding production. Such basic orientation and talent of the Chinese people are the major factor for China’s fast economic growth now that the government spares no efforts to encourage grassroot initiatives. However, China’s past development and prosperity is one thing while the development and affluence in the modern civilization is another. England and other European countries had taken three centuries to build up the edifice of modern prosperity. America has taken less time, but also about two centuries. It would be impossible for China to flog-leap into the brave new world. In many ways, she has to advance steadily like a tortoise, if not a snail. There are many problems and obstacles on her future road.

The greatest difficulty in China is the size of population. The Chinese government is always proud of the fact that with only 7 per cent of the earth’s cultivated land, China is feeding 22 per cent of humankind. But, behind this proud proposition is the great strain as well. In the first place, there is tremendous population pressure on land which has to produce enough to sustain all these people. Second, with the application of modern technology China’s limited agricultural land does not need more than a fraction of this huge population to attend to it. During the Mao era, people were just whiling away time in non-productive pursuits under the management of the communes. Today, the majority of Chinese population — those who live in the countryside — have to fend for themselves. They will starve if they while away their time. But, when they want to take up production sincerely there is not enough work for most of them. Two situations have risen. In the better developed areas, people have invested in village and township industries (like India’s cottage industry) and succeeded in absorbing the surplus labour from the plantation industry. There are even some areas where all the rural population have been absorbed into the secondary and tertiary industries, leaving the primary industry, i.e. plantation, to imported labourers. But, these are only isolated examples. Overwhelmingly large parts of China’s countryside have developed a surplus labour force without full employment. In some areas, this surplus labour has started to spill over to the affluent areas or the big cities to find odd jobs. In the last six, seven years, such movements have assumed alarming dimension in what is called "mingongchao" (waves of job-seekers). There are several tens of millions of such job-seekers flowing from the poor villages into the big cities and affluent coastal areas today which is a serious destabilizing factor in China’s socio-economic life right now, and, in course of time, would become a political destabilizing force if the trend is not timely checked.

China is, paradoxically, a big country without sufficient land for her agricultural development. One-fifteenth of the land masses on earth belongs to China which amounts to 9.6 million square kilometres. Country-wise, China is the third largest on earth in size, but population-wise, her per capita possession of land territory is only one-third of the average of the world population. Then, large tracts of China’s territory are occupied by deserts, glaciers, rocky mountains and plains, and high altitude cold areas unfit for agriculture. China’s per capita arable land is one of the lowest among countries whose population is above 50 million — only slightly higher than Japan and Bangladesh.
China’s per capita agricultural land is only half of that of India and Pakistan, and only one-ninth of that of USA. Worse still, because of rapid industrial development, there has been a sharp reduction of China’s agricultural land. This reduction couples with a high rate of population increase. For instance, in 1993, the total loss of agricultural land in China amounted to 9.37 million mu (a mu is about 1/6 of an acre) which was as large as the total agricultural land of Qinghai province. While the agricultural land of the size of a province was lost, the population increase in 1993 was about 16 million which was three times of Qinghai’s population. Under such dual pressure on agricultural land — diversion for non-agricultural use and population increase — the per capita share of agricultural land would be reduced to 0.6 mu (i.e. 0.1 acre) fifty years later. And there would be hardly any agricultural land visible for an average Chinese in the end of the 21st century if such a development continues.  

Erosion is another cause of the loss of agricultural land which, too, threatens China’s future development. As Mr. Li Ruihuan, one of China’s top five leaders, observed:

Another deep crisis faced by the agricultural land of our country is the grave erosion of the soil, leading to the deterioration of our ecological environment. Now the total area of erosion of soil amounts to 1.3 million square kilometres, the total area of desertification is 176,000 square kilometres. Every year large tracts of cultivated and grass lands are swallowed up. If we don’t take effective measures, by the year 2000 we are going to lose 1.8 million square kilometres of soil and will have 0.2 million square kilometres of land being turned into deserts.

Connected with the loss of agricultural land is the scarcity of water resources in China. As Li Ruihuan observes:

The special feature of the topography of our country is having high land in the west and low land in the east, creating the loss of large quantity of water. The distribution of water resources is tilted towards the south, resulting in frequent floods in the south and general drought in the north. Particularly during the rainy seasons there is a serious imbalance among areas. We have drought and flood happening in different places at the same time, or in the same place at different times. In the past 2,000 years, there occurred 1,600 great droughts, and 1,300 great floods in our country.

Li Ruihuan added that in the vast north-west there was a vast area of 2.96 million square kilometres which comprised 31 per cent of China’s entire territory. The potential farmland resources here was 32.3 per cent of China’s total. The area was rich in sunshine. Many of the places could be turned into fertile agricultural lands if there was water. Right now, there is serious thinking about making some major alternations of China’s water distribution systems. One scheme is to make Yangtse River flow into Yellow River. Another is to bore a water tunnel through the Kun Lun Range and make Brahmaputra flow into Xinjiang. The second scheme, if implemented, will affect India and Bangladesh as Brahmaputra is shared by the three countries. The first scheme would not affect any other country, but it would mean to merge the world’s fourth largest river
(Yangtse) and the seventh largest (Yellow) and make the largest river system of the world.

The deterioration of ecological environment which has been touched upon by Li Ruihuan deserves serious attention. The number of Chinese household is too large to be supplied with electricity or cooking gas. Burning coal and firewood is still widely practised. While coal burning generates carbon monoxide, burning firewood tends to destroy the existing forest coverage. A new ecological threat is the acid rain. The rainfall area with precipitation containing less than 5.6 pH has increased from 1.75 million square kilometres in 1985 to 2.8 million square kilometres in 1993. It occurs in southeast China where factories are concentrated, and has a tendency of moving northwards and westwards. There is avoidable pollution created by ignorance and want of health regulations. In Jiuqi village, Taoyuan county, in Hunan province people wash their insecticide implements in the pond where fish is also bred. In course of time, the fish which gradually developed their immunity have become live carriers of poison. Peasants who eat such fish get poisoned and even get killed for want of immunity. Modern culture itself contains danger to life if people don’t have scientific knowledge and consciousness. There are a lot of man-made disasters in China because of such ignorance, and neglect of safety measures. Such ignorance-induced pollution or calamity will continue for some time until the level of education in China reaches the safety mark.

When the humankind enters the 21st century modern civilization will turn softer and softer. The battle of economic development will no longer be fought on the ground. It will be fought on the computers in the game of system science — networking in information gathering and employing information for profitable ends. Human resources will assume great importance in the future scheme of development. China and India are the largest reservoirs in the world of human resources. But, human heads are not automatically the human talents needed for the future. Ordinary human heads have to be converted into talented human heads. Education must be placed on the agenda right now if India and China are to stand in the front row of development in the 21st century.

Coming to the subject of education in China, we have the shocking statistics revealed by Li Ruihuan, in his speech addressed to an all China educational conference in Beijing in January, 1995. He said that Chinese, on an average, is exposed to systemic education for only 5.4 years. He also revealed that the Chinese population’s per capita share of government expenditure on education comes to only US $ 12.92 in a year as against the average figure of $ 42 among all developing countries.

There are various remedies for the deficiency in education. Allocation of more funds is one of them. However, in a developing economy like China, and a country of China’s population size, even spending one US dollar more on education for every Chinese would mean an additional government expenditure of 10 billion yuan (equivalent to Rs. 4-5 billions) which is a large burden for the exchequer. Of course, as education is so vitally important for future development, not spending large sums on it is unwise and myopic. But, there are still limitations to such a spending.
How education can develop smoothly and healthily in China's current honeymoon with the market economic system is a question which has received serious attention. One problem is whether education should be pushed into the market economy or not. Chinese education, particularly higher education, is now under a double assault by the new emergent socio-economic order of the market system. In the first place, the overwhelming number of educational institutions in China are government owned. They are subjected to the same pressure as the government-owned enterprises in industry and other fields are subjected to, viz. finding their own resources and funding for themselves. The prestigious Beijing University, for instance, is saved from bankruptcy only because of its establishment of a business concern called "Beida Fangzheng" which supplies a software to modernize Chinese printing press — a major invention by one of the University professors. While the University has been saved by this master stroke of commercialization (with Beida Fangzheng Company contributing to one half of its annual expenditure which the Ministry of Education fails to meet), commercialization has already eaten into the vitals of life of the University. University teachers take the first opportunity to "go commercial", and every University department sets up a commercial wing to earn some extra income to cater for the welfare of their own staff. While certain departments like scientific subjects and law can prosper, departments like "Eastern Languages" (with Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit, etc.) have to envy their nouveau riche sisters helplessly. All this results in a degeneration in the teaching ethics of the University. On the other hand, the students of the University have, by and large, lost their interest in studies. Their morale is hard hit by such unpalatable fact: they had worked hard through all-China competitions just to enter into the No. 1 educational institution which now looks like an apology of China's modern culture of commercialization, while many of their fellow students who were the residues of academic competition are now successful entrepreneurs — darlings of Deng Xiaoping's China. Beijing University is just an example to show how China is dangerously heading towards destroying its educational institutions.

There is another dangerous tendency of trying to turn education into a commodity, and educational institution into a market. There is a serious ignorance of the nature of education on the part of the Chinese zealots for marketization. The importance of education lies in its being "an invisible hand" as one Chinese scholar terms it. Of course, in the market economy there is always an invisible hand, i.e., the market lever which decides the success or failure of an enterprise. However, one should not ignore another invisible hand which regulates the human ethics and morality — the hand of education. Education, thus, should be understood as a different productive base which should have its autonomy from the market forces, although it should be relevant to the market needs. 12

Apart from educational institutions, there are other means to achieve an improvement of mass education. The rapid development of audio and video communication networking has already drastically revolutionized the educational process. Today, classroom education which the educational institutions offer are serving only a narrow purpose of qualification creation. The quality of the education and the
quality of the receivers of education are less important than the papers which these institutions offer. You may be a genius and a person of exceptional information and intelligence. But, you do not get a job which you deserve if you do not have a university degree. On the other hand, you may be the most unintelligent and uninformed among your generation, but because of your excellent paper qualifications you get into the ranks of the social elite.

In the 21st century this paper-qualification-oriented education will die its natural death because of revolutionized methods of evaluation talents, of selections of managers and administrators. Future education is also moving away from classrooms to remote-sensing education networks through radio and television waves and optical cables. This is both good news and danger signal to humankind. I shall come back to this problem later.

Similar to education, Chinese literature has also received a fierce assault from the force of marketization. I must briefly introduce the background before discussing this issue. Chinese literature was a huge state-owned industry during the Mao era. The majority of Chinese "writers" were, and still are, on the payroll of the state. In the meanwhile, except the illegal underground press, all the publishing houses are state-owned enterprises throughout the history of the PRC. The profession of Chinese "writers" is a curious creation. Many of the "writers" have been posted to the literary arena to engage in literary creation which was described by Stalin as the "engineering of human soul". There are also many writers who first emerge by their own creative genius, and, then, get enrolled as a "writer" either in the provincial Writers’ Union, or in the all-China Writers’ Union, both of which are semi-government organizations. Such writers get paid even if they don’t write or publish. But, they become famous with enhanced income and social status if their names see printing in the state-owned publishing world. In the past, these writers had an easy task of propagating the government policies which gave them enough themes to write about. Today, the state no longer gives them readymade themes, and has asked them to write according to the needs of the emerging socialist market economy.

Many writers feel that the "Modern Period" of Chinese literature has come to an end, and a "Post-Modern Period" is unfolding itself. There is great confusion in the literary scene. Commercialization has deeply affected the popular taste, the writers are widely divided in their responses to the changing literary taste. Some of them have quickly shifted to vulgar and sensational staff and earn lots of royalty. Shenzhen, which is the leader of China’s Economic Zones, has been staging "Manuscript Auctions" by contemporary writers.13 Others who don’t want to stoop so low are having a hard time to survive as respected writers. Some few writers have become business entrepreneurs and continue to create. On the whole, the literary scene is a jungle full of weeds — very few flowers, let alone immortal works.

A serious problem of the health of China’s endogenous development is how to tame political power and let the economic growth ride on it for steady galloping towards prosperity. Historically, China has had the largest bureaucracy for ruling over a
population from 1/5 to 1/3 of the humanity which has chosen to live under the Chinese political umbrella for the last two thousand years. The Chinese bureaucracy is a monster of two thousand years of life. It was and still is a necessary evil to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country. But, it is a great burden of the ancien régime which should not be carried into the 21st century.

During the Mao era, China had carried this burden when she adopted the Soviet model of the "Command Economy". This further heightened the abuse of political power in all the spheres of the country’s life, and created the phenomenon of what may be called the "dislocation of power" (quanli cuowei). There were three ramifications of it. The first was the "Monopoly of Power", rendering China into a huge factory. The second was the "Misplacement of Power", making the government manage what should have been left to the people to manage. The third was the "Alienation of Power", facilitating the infiltration of political power into economic arena. It was the third ramification which could easily generate corruption.¹⁴

China still suffers the top-heavy pattern of governance today. All the changes of the present Reform Regime, good or bad, originated from the central government. Any dilution of the implementation of the centre’s decisions in a local setup is frowned upon. An appending evil of this top-heavy system is the absence of public supervision of the government officers’ doings. The age old "guan benwei" (officers rule the roost) tradition is still well entrenched. Such a government-officer-oriented social trend is churning out what is termed "Power Fetishism", clinging to power as the short cut for amassing personal wealth on the part of the corrupt government officials.¹⁵ A Chinese scholar observed:

However, during the great tide of commodity economy and the transition of administrative system from the old to the new, we have some Party and government officials using the power within their control to infiltrate illegally into the commodity economy, which has, thus, created the phenomenon of corruption, of a collusion between officials and businessmen, employing power to run business, transacting power with money, using power for personal gains . . . this not only runs counter with the demand that the socialist state mechanism must serve the economic base, but also creates a sharp contradiction with the principle of equal exchanges of the commodity economy and the mechanics of the market economy. Because of the intrusion and effect of political power serious unequal exchanges have been created in the economic arena. This will produce an inestimable corroding effect and destructive effect on the developing commodity economy and the market economic mechanism which is now being built.¹⁶

II

There are some specific issues facing China today which are a universal phenomenon. I shall highlight a few for a brief discussion, using the Chinese example to see the fundamental problems of our modern civilization. I am quite conscious that the moment I step beyond China I am on an unsure turf, and my conclusions may carry
certain bias due to want of deep understanding of other civilizational developments. But, I shall venture into this part of my presentation to elicit criticism and help from fellow-participants to enhance my own understanding.

The first issue I wish to raise concerns the equilibrium between the Western domination and the promotion of China’s native characteristics in her future development. China’s quest for an endogenous developmental model tends to encourage the revival of her traditional values. China’s ruling elite has begun to re-examine the merits of Chinese traditional thinking according to Marxist analysis. Some scholars have even gone beyond the Marxist framework to appreciate the positive aspects of Confucian ethics and spiritual order. Since the supreme leader, Deng Xiaoping, could go beyond the Marxist framework to embrace market economic system, these scholars who now covertly or even overtly propagate the restoration of the Confucian spiritual superstructure are having freedom to do so.

Many scholars feel that the traditional Chinese value systems occupy a major place in China’s future spiritual arena. This arena will be dominated by two Western cultural guests: Marxist political ideology, and Darwinist rationalism. The ideal mainstream of Chinese culture should be a three-in-one synthesis, according to some thinking, i.e. socialism, scientism, and Chinese traditional virtues. Today, such a synthesis is vaguely visible in a blurred picture in China’s superstructure. There are various sub-currents and anti-currents in China’s cultural arena. Among the sub-currents we have regional life-styles such as "Shanghai culture", "Guangdong culture". A kind of "Yuppie culture" is also emerging championed by young entrepreneurs. The "Hong Kong culture" and "Shenzhen culture" are also appearing as these two places are China’s windows for the opening towards the modern developed world. There are also "smoking culture" and "prostitution culture" which have attraction for certain sections of the society along the coastal areas. While there are attempts to exalt the art and style of smoking, there are also literary creations highlighting historical prostitutes as lovable and even admirable specimens of human beings.

Tradition versus modernity is a theme particularly vital but complex to tackle in such age-old civilizations like India and China. On the one hand, one need not be a Marxist to concede that humanity is always on a unilineal course of civilizational evolution, that the present is more advanced than the past. On the other hand, it is also clear to many, including sensitive Western thinkers, that there is a spiritual decline of humankind which, if unchecked, will create a universal civilizational crisis. There are many happenings in the modern era which cannot be called human progress. For one thing, two world wars were fought in the 20th century with such mass killing never witnessed in human history. While the cold war has just ended, the world is still holding dangerous nuclear weapons which can destroy the earth many times over. While money is not available to buy milk for millions of babies born in Africa and Asia, the governments are spending US $ 130 million a year on the production of human-killing weapons. For another, in many Western societies, the family institution is on the verge of total destruction while humans are retrogressing from monogamy to free and unrestrained
copulation like the primitives or even beasts. By destroying traditional values, China has now exposed herself to both the progressive and retrogressive trends of the modern civilization. A few years ago, some left (or call them "ultra-left") intellectuals raised the alarm of "spiritual pollution" (jingshen wuran) and wanted a nation-wide campaign to counter it. This was stopped by Deng Xiaoping, fearing that it might disturb the smooth development of Chinese economic reforms. Deng’s soft pedalling the degenerating Western cultural influences has resulted in serious erosion of morality in China today, particularly among those who were born and brought up during the Cultural Revolution — people who have never been systematically indoctrinated by healthy education and revolutionary ideology.

Let me take up a case of the ground reality as an illustration of cultural degeneration in the context of tradition versus modernity. We know that in historical times the Tarim Basin was lush green. Today it is mostly dry and barren. This has figured in one of Li Ruihuan’s above quoted speeches as well.¹⁸ Desertification has had a tremendous growth in the last two thousand years in Xinjiang in China, and the Taklamakan Desert in the Tarim Basin covers an area of 327,000 square kilometres which is 2.27 times the territory of Bangladesh. More unpleasant is a report about the phenomenon of "increasing desertification day by day" (ri jian shahua) of Xinjiang’s culture today. The report says that when you visit a book shop you see on the shelves a plethora of unhealthy vulgar publications which bring discomfort to the mind. When you turn on the television or radio, good programmes are like soothing streams being drowned by the ocean of sand. When you watch the cruel executions of violence on the silver screen you wonder how there could be such human hatred against each other. When you hear the pop albums blaring out such lines like "Let me for once having enough love", you feel you are listening to the last cry of someone who is going to die in the next moment. Why can’t love be enjoyed by a human heart enduringly instead of the momentary feeding of a hungry sex beast?¹⁹

Xinjiang is what modern foreign scholars call "Chinese Turkistan" and what ancient Europeans call "Serindia", meaning China-India (The first syllable "ser" stood for "Seres" or "Serica", the ancient Roman word for "The Land of Silk", i.e. China). Scholars and tourists can still find remnants of ancient Buddhist monuments in Xinjiang which suggest the existence of a highly developed and sophisticated spiritual culture in this land more than a thousand years ago. It was the records of those days which depicted the Tarim Basin as a greenland on the track of the famous "Silk Road". This name "Silk Road" (alternately "Silk Route") was given by a German sinologist, Albert Herrmann, in 1910. It would have been more appropriately called "Dharmaratna Marg" (Road of the Jewels of Truth). The great Taklamakan Desert in the heart of the Tarim Basin did exist at that time. Many Chinese pilgrims who had trodden on it believed that ferocious goblins resided in the desert, and devoured human beings and animals who passed through it. But, what these pilgrims did was to trace the skeletons of those devoured by the goblins so that they could find their path to India — the "Land of Buddha".²⁰ Many Indian monks did the same in a reverse direction to reach China to disseminate Buddha’s message of
enlightenment, non-violence, and universal love. Without such selfless spirit and self sacrifice of ancient Buddhists of China. India and many Central Asian nationalities there would not have been the "Dharmaratna Marg" and "Serinda". It is the fallacy of human evolution that the ancients built cultural edifices in the desert while the modernists turn cultural greenland into a desert.

This brings home the maldevelopment of modern civilization. On the one hand, there has been tremendous material advancement in Xinjiang, in China, in other parts of Asia and the world; on the other hand, there is retrogression in moral standard and spiritual culture everywhere including Xinjiang as we have just seen.

Scientists have noticed the depletion of Ozone Layer around the globe. This Ozone Layer is earth’s shield to protect human bodies from the damage of harmful rays. Spiritually, culture is the invisible Ozone Layer that protects human souls from harmful rays from the cesspool of iniquity. Desertification of culture is more harmful to humankind than that of the ecological environment.

Interesting statistics show that Xinjiang ranks as one of China’s largest homes for centenarians. According to the 1990 census, 894 centenarians were discovered in Xinjiang among whom 814 were Uighurs. We know that there were only 8.6 million Uighurs according to the 1990 census figure. This means that for every ten thousand Uighurs, one has lived more than a hundred years. According to analysis, the sources of the Uighurs’ longevity comes from their life style. First, their daily diet consists of wheat, rice, carrot, onion, cabbage, mutton, in addition to a lot of fruits, i.e. water-melon, melon, fig, walnut, peach, date, apricot, grape, mulberry. Second, they don’t smoke, drink very little alcohol, refuse to eat the meat that is not from freshly killed animals by the cut which lets out their blood (the halal food for all Muslims). Third, they drink tea with milk and with a sprinkle of goat’s or mare’s butter. Fourth, they are a tension-free people, fond of singing and dancing, physical labour, helping others etc.21 In other words, it is the preservation of the endogenous life style which is the secret of long life for the Uighur race, and for other ethnic communities who can preserve their endogenous virtues.

This endogenous life style in Xinjiang, in other parts of China, in India, in many developing countries is being endangered by unhealthy trends of modern civilization which are being popularized by the mass media, particularly movies and television programmes. As I have alluded to earlier, television programmes will replace classroom teaching as the most important means in popularizing education. It would be dangerous if the field of television and other visual media are dominated by commercialization. Visual media induced crimes are not only a perennial feature of the USA but are on the increase in India, China, and other Asian countries. In the award-winning Chinese movie, "Red Sorghum", the hero is a rapist, and the theme song of the film is the rapist’s joyous expression when he chases the heroine of the film and rapes her in the field. Today, you go to any city or town in China, you hear the tiny tots singing this song merrily which is not only sickening, but has a dangerous impact on the healthy growth of morality in China.
One notices that in India it is the cosmetic industries which control the mass media, in China it is the food processing, brewing, and tonic medicine industries which have an upper hand. When you just watch Chinese television you may gain a misconception that Chinese are a sick race, or are deficient in healthy food in their daily diet, whereas it is just the other way round. But, they are many Chinese who are crazy for tonics, and, at one time, the free medical services of China became the back door for the distribution of tonics. Powerful cadres and respected elders still gather a huge stock of tonics as gifts that they don’t need at all. This brings us closer to the subject of AIDS (Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome). AIDS is a terrible disease which not only takes away the lives of those who, for their own indulgence in unhealthy social behaviour, have suffered its affliction, but also kills those who are entirely innocent — getting it through birth or blood transfusion. AIDS symbolizes the wrong direction which modern civilization chooses to develop. It is a punishment for the sin committed by the humankind for their obsession with materialism. It is the most materialistically oriented societies which are worst affected by such a deadly disease. Scientists have been trying hard to combat this deadly enemy of humans through laboratory research. But, in my opinion, this is not the remedial solution. In the first place in the absence of rigid monogamy and strict discipline in sexual life, AIDS cannot be eliminated even if it eventually becomes curable. In the second place, even if AIDS is eliminated, another deadly or deadlier punishment will be on its way against human obsession with materialism without the accompanying high spiritual culture as an antidote.

To go a step deeper into the problem, the occurrence of AIDS to humans is because of ACIDS, i.e. Acquired Cultural Immunity Deficiency Syndrome. We can see clearly that the phenomenon of cultural desertification which I have alluded to earlier is created by the poisonous wind from the Western world. This wind has come to Xinjiang and other parts of Asia after turning many Western communities and societies into cultural deserts. In USA, television is called the "idiot box". The new generation of America is called "Generation X" which is deeply poisoned by this Idiot Box. There are 40 odd commercial channels of American television which (except a couple of them being devoted to Christian programmes) rarely impart any moral education and spiritual culture. This X-Generation is daily poisoned by the advertisements enticing them to eat more junk food, to indulge in more luxuries, to participate in the gambling games with culture only as a disguise, to the scenes of sex and violence — but seldom telling them how to become morally healthy and spiritually noble human beings, how to choose their future careers, how to combat social evils, etc. This is the generation whose minds and souls have already undergone desertification. Since there is no strong spiritual force to combat this cultural poison in USA, the American society is already the victim of ACIDS. In fact, ACIDS and AIDS are two heads of the same monster. Just chopping off the head of AIDS it can grow again in another form. Only after chopping off the head of ACIDS will the monster be killed once for all.

AIDS is an exopathic disease. It does not grow from the endobiotic development or maldevelopment like obesity, hypertension, tumour, tuberculosis, diabetes, etc.
America was AIDS-free a few decades ago, and the disease has come to the USA from Africa. ACIDS is also an exopathic disease, and modern America is one of the sources of it. Both these aspects have connections. America is a land wedded to freedom and openness. It is the greatest sanctuary for the human birds of all different ethnic features of the world to feather their own nests without restrictions and discriminations. The American way of life is not endogenous. It is a universal creation which has forged into a powerful exogenous acculturation force.

America is the best specimen of modern civilization, while the harmful part of modern civilization is the worst endopathic disease for pre-modern societies. Modern civilization is strong in modern science, but weak in philosophy, in moral values, in spiritual enlightenment. Modern science has achieved wonders in examining the exterior of the universe, getting the true picture of the twinkle twinkle little stars which exist light years away from the humankind. However, modern science still gropes in the dark about human body’s own internal rhythms and functioning. The more modern the gadgets that subject the human body to echographic or radiographic examinations, the more confused are the pictures that appear. This is because a human is 50 per cent material and 50 per cent spirit. To find out the dynamics of human spirit we have to design different research methods and laboratories.

The best defence against AIDS and ACIDS is to emphasize the endogenous development of a country, a community, a society. In the Chinese context, this means combating Commercialism and Mammonism which has not yet become an important agenda in China’s developmental strategy. There is a Chinese saying: "Ren wei cai si, niao wei shi wang." (As the birds die in the quest for food, humans die in the quest for money). If this saying becomes a universal truth, the "economic animal" which a human being is will be reduced to a slave of Mammon. This was a theme which Jiang Zemin, the Chairman of the PRC, advocated against at an all China conference on mass media in January, 1995. 22

Commercialism is a complex subject which a non-economist like me may not be able to do justice with. The dilemma of China today is that while the leadership has tasted the forbidden fruit of commercialization and marketization and want them to take China to a higher level of economic development, it has also noticed the danger of the inundation of Commercialism and Mammonism. There is a dichotomy in the situation concerning the socio-economic development of China today.

I seem to have said too many bad things about commercialization, and about the USA which exemplifies commercialization. But, I am not blind to the virtues of the USA and the US model of commercialization. See the facelift which commercialization has brought about in China. In the Mao era when commercialization was frowned upon life was dull, and the developmental front was a drab scene. In the last 15 years, China seems to have suddenly awakened from a monotonous slumber, and every body, everywhere is crying for development. So many high rise buildings, flyovers, factories, motor cars and motor cycles, etc. — as if all have suddenly appeared from nowhere. It is
commercialization which has created such a developmental explosion. USA is no doubt a benign model for China to leap forward to a higher stage of economic development.

However, there is no denying the fact that Commercialism and Mammonism erode all spiritual values, and degenerate the cultural fabrics of a society. At the root of Commercialism is the paramountcy of self-interest of the individual. In the USA and other capitalist countries self-interest is balanced with the norms of a civil society, with civic courtesy and civic ethics harmonizing the social life. China under the Mao regime had made hundreds of millions of bird-cages to keep the bird of egotism in place. In the post-Mao era the cages are open, and individual egotism flies all over. Without the civic norms, they fight each other without any law of games, and some birds become vultures. People with better resources abuse the political power to advance in fortune seeking. A few talented reach to the top relying on their own merits, but few of them can avoid greasing the palms of the checkpoints by compromising their conscience. Many others who don’t have the means to get rich through proper channels resort to cheating, counterfeiting and other unethical means towards the goal of personal prosperity. China, in the last 15 years, has suddenly become a classical example of "every road leads to Rome" — never mind the immorality along the roads. While counterfeit drugs kill the lives of human beings, counterfeit fertilizer and insecticide damage the crops.

Whereas in the USA such things can’t easily happen it takes time for the Chinese authorities to regulate industrial production and commercial behaviour. During the Mao era, China was miraculously honest with almost no theft. Today, petty theft is rampant, pickpockets have a field day, gangs of robbers operate in crowded trains. How is it that overnight a puritan society has suddenly become so outrageous? The sudden liberalization of egotism which I have just alluded to is, no doubt, at the root of the change. But, there are other factors — the absence of rule of law, the want of civic ethics, etc. In a word, it will take a few decades, if not longer, for China to build up a civil society like that functioning in the USA and other advanced countries. But, even in the USA, Japan, Italy, frauds, hoaxes, and economic crimes are not infrequent occurrences. Individualism, selfishness and indifference to collective interest and to the affairs of fellow human beings are the fatal weakness of a capitalist society, no matter how perfect is its civic order. Capitalism, essentially, is a moral disease. By emulating capitalism, China has contracted this disease in no small measure.

Another irritating phenomenon in China today is the absence of courtesy. Even foreign tourists can’t tolerate the arrogant attitude of some of the public service personnel although they generally treat foreigners far more courteously than they do their fellow countrymen. Not that Chinese are arrogant as a race. Individual Chinese do impress their foreign friends as most amiable and modest. The arrogance is the residue of the traditional heritage — a tradition of "officers rule the roost", as alluded to earlier. The concept of "public servant" is alien to Chinese culture although the slogan of "wei renmin jiuwu" (service before self) was the loudest slogan during the Mao era. Placed in any tiny position like a sales person at a counter a Chinese instantly feels his or her importance which generates arrogance. Another factor contributory to this arrogance is PRC’s cadre
system. All those who have been cadres, big or small, have a sense of pride of belonging to a revolutionary organization which rules over China. In Indian traditional parlance, they are a kind of "Brahmins", while those who are outside the cadre are called "qunzhong" (the masses) — a term which also connotes "those who are less revolutionary conscious", thus in an inferior status. Although the revolutionary spirit among the cadres is much diluted today, the arrogance attached to it has not totally disappeared. There is also the phenomenon of an "in-group" scenario which exists in all countries but particularly in China. There is an "in-group" affinity which is the source of affection, cooperation, courtesy, and even self-sacrifice — all not available for others who are not included in the "group". In China, so also in India, one generally gets things done through "guanxi" (literally "relationship", in reality "connections") and avoids the toil of standing in the long queue as well as the irritation at the public counters. In this way, the public counters are for the "mass", i.e. those who have no "guanxi" — no strings to pull. Naturally, they have to be the recipients of arrogance of the "in-group" oriented Chinese service personnel. In other words, where there is no "guanxi" there is arrogance and the accompanying irritation. If China can Americanize in this respect as fast as possible, half of her social tension will disappear.

Superstition smacks of ignorance, but superstition brandished in Commercialism makes it look more ridiculous. In China, like in India, people can spend money to get their favourite numbers of the allotted telephones. The people of Guangdong province which is full of nouveaux riches would spend money to get number "8" and to avoid number "4". This is because, in their dialect (the Cantonese), the sound "fā" for "eight" is homonymous to the word for "getting rich", while the sound "sì" for "four" is homonymous to that for "to die". In the past, the ancient Chinese used to burn some paper symbolically for the dead, wishing that the departed souls would not be short of money to spend in Heaven or hell — a custom which must have spread from India to China. Now, people spend enormous sums to ask the Buddhist temples or individual suppliers to make paper-made houses, motor cars, refrigerators, sofas, etc. and burn them during the funeral. This is the custom which has prevailed in Hong Kong for many decades, and is now getting widely spread in neighbouring Guangdong province. This custom has completely lost its original touch of symbolism, but becomes a stupid indulgence in superstition and pomp and show. Here is another example of how the development of material culture can pollute the spiritual culture.

Tackling "poverty" has become an increasingly important universal subject. The general approach is to increase growth coupled with some forcible measures of equitable distribution of social wealth. The world developmental strategists first fix an arbitrary criterion of US $ 300 as the "poverty line", and, then, try to mobilize resources to help those segments to increase their annual income to cross this line. So far, such a strategy has not achieved much success. Those who live under the "poverty line" are on the increase year after year. Out of 5 billion people of the humankind, 1.3 billion are living below the poverty line. This is a problem which cannot be solved by the modern culture of development.
We must first understand the nature of the problem. World-wise, humans today have increased social wealth many times more than the increase in world population. During pre-modern times people might have been poor, but there was no "poverty" problem. "Poverty" is a modern institution — the legitimate child of modern civilization. For instance, the poor people in ancient India and China ate very little food, and dressed very shabbily according to modern standard. Their hygienic conditions were bad in comparison with modern standard. Yet, poverty was not such a glaring problem as it is today. To begin with, people, rich or poor, were living on the same scale and mode of material consumption. The difference between the rich and poor lay only in the quantity and quality — eating the same kind of food, using the same means of transport, i.e. their own legs. Today, the affluent segments of humankind travel by jet planes while those who live below the poverty line can’t even get near the airport to look at the exterior of the planes. And, so much food is thrown away from the air services that could feed many who cannot even get such luxurious leftovers. And the paper used up by an international flight can be enough stationery for a rural school for a whole year. Some of such rural schools in India and China don’t even have blackboards and slates, let alone paper for the students to write. In eating, the dog food for the pets of the rich is more than luxurious delicacies for poor human beings. In China, before 1979, a household had an income of only few hundred yuan for a year. Then, in the beginning of 1980s, there was the new phenomenon of the *nouveaux riche* called "wanyuanhu" (Ten thousand yuan households) which made headline news. In recent years, there has been a phenomenon called "wanyuangou" (Ten thousand yuan dogs). Some of the *nouveaux riches* in China now spend ten thousand yuan or more to buy famous European species of pet dogs, while there are several tens of million of Chinese today whose annual income is below 400 yuan. This is the true nature of "poverty"! Today, in certain Chinese circles where Commercialism and Mammonism have become people’s deities, "Ten thousand yuan households" no longer arouse admiration and excitement, but "Ten thousand yuan dogs" do. In other words, in a section of Chinese society, the rapid economic development has made human dignity below that of the dogs. What a degeneration!

We see here clearly that "poverty" is not a phenomenon of want. It is a social disease. We must first cure such human disease before we can tackle the problem of "poverty". I am glad to see that some municipal governments in China, like Beijing, have started administrative measures to discourage the development of this "dog culture". However, such a "dog culture" is only the symptom, not the pathogenesis of the disease. The pathogenesis lies in the deficiency of spiritual culture. All what we have discussed earlier — cultural desertification, ACIDS and "dog culture" — are from the same root cause. The other side of the coin is Commercialism and Mammonism. Commercialism and Mammonism are the cancer-causing agents for our cultural body. They are worse than narcotics.

China’s national minorities suffer a good deal in the development of globalization. As the Nagas in India resist strongly the building up of a railway through their territory, minorities have their rights to live according to their own liking. In China, no minority
community can resist the wheel of modernization which has rolled into all the remote nooks and corners of the country. Natural economy does not survive anywhere in China now. But, the demolition of the self-sufficiency economy does not necessarily mean an improvement of economic conditions in the minority areas. The main difficulty is that many minority communities can’t establish modern economic enterprises on their own after their rights of self-sufficiency were taken away from them. There is the need of capital, technology, personnel, infrastructure and transportation and other services all of which have to depend upon exogenous aid. Destruction of the endogenous economic system in the minority areas without exogenous aid is a mockery of modern development. As a result, some minority areas in China can’t even survive without urgent relief measures. In 1994, half of the minority families of the Baise Zhuang Autonomous Prefecture in Guangxi province had no food, nor warm clothing to pass the winter. The central government, provincial government, and prefecture government had to rush 9 million kilograms of foodgrains, 550,000 pieces of quilts and cotton quilted coats for their survival, in addition to 1.48 million yuan (about 6-7 million rupees) for them to invest in various production projects. Here is an instance of both the PRC’s efficiency in its protection of the minority communities as well as its failure in developing all the minority areas into prosperous modern societies.

III

I should conclude now by returning to the theme of endogenous development for China’s future. I have dwelt much upon the fact that China’s national development is symbiotic with the development of modern civilization of the world. By attempting an endogenous development, China, or any nation, can’t get away from the exogenous influences — be they exopathic diseases or exophilic blessings. Yet, it is in the context of globalization that there is the need for emphasis on endogenous development. The fundamental logic behind endogenous development is to recognize the heterogeneity of modern civilization. It is wrong to think that west or USA is the sole origin of modernity. Modern civilization is the joint contribution of all the peoples, of the first or second or third world. However, there is also the unmistakable tendency of some nations trying to impose their own value judgements on other nations in the name of modernization. Emphasizing endogenous development bears relevance to a resistance against such hegemonic tendency of modern development.

Globalization is a subject of much controversy among academic circles. We might detect two different developing trends in globalization. The first trend is what I have just now alluded to: the hegemonic behaviour of certain great powers to monopolize the world market, to dominate world developmental trends, to impose their own value judgements on the weaker nations. The second trend is the genuine demand of all the nations, peoples, ethnic and cultural communities to come closer towards one another, and build up a Jambudvipa (universe) of co-prosperity, amity, and harmony. Obviously, no one in the developing world would vote for the first move, but everyone would try to contribute to the healthy development of the second dynamism.
To return to China’s development, we also see the existence of binary opposites. The opposites are not unrelated to the opposite dynamics which I have just stated. On the one hand, there is a strong desire on the part of China to march hand in hand with other developing countries to build up a millennium of universal co-prosperity. On the other hand, she has to struggle against the imposition of other nation’s will on her developmental course. There is a new dimension: if China becomes a world power (which is very likely) would she also behave like a hegemonist in the international affairs? Right now, of course, China has a large share of the world’s population below the poverty line. So, from the viewpoint of the entire Chinese nation, it is in her interest to march hand in hand with other developing nations — otherwise she will never achieve her national salvation from backwardness and want.

One important issue concerning the dichotomy between endogenous development of China and the exogenous influences of modern civilization is how to modernize China’s vast rural areas and bring modern civilization to Chinese peasants who comprise 80 per cent of China’s population. Europe never had such a problem in its modernization process. In the 18th and 19th centuries, England could afford to destroy her primary industry — agriculture — because she had colonies to supply plenty of agricultural products. America started its agriculture as an industrial enterprise, and never has had a large portion of its population solely dependent on agricultural income. Only India and other Asian countries have acute problems of developing agriculture, and uplifting the living standard of the peasants.

There is a slogan in China that "Agriculture is a strategic industry. Foodgrain is a strategic material." It is now realized that China’s 1.2 billion mouths have to be fed by the yield from Chinese fields. If China’s countryside is poor, 900 million of her population are sufferers. On top of it, China is a country famous for peasant rebellions. In the last four decades, Chinese peasants have been strong supporters of the PRC because the Chinese communist movement, particularly its armed wing, essentially belonged to Chinese peasantry. The majority of PRC’s leaders and cadres at all levels in the past were peasants, and the majority of the membership of CPC are still peasants.

In the last few years, Chinese peasants have been very unhappy for many reasons. First, the new changes take place mostly along the sea coast while peasants in the interior are still as poor as before. Secondly, modernization is always a trend in favour of the secondary and tertiary industries. Industrial products, commercial profits, and service charges are all more lucrative than the toiling in plantation. The country’s reforms, particularly the price reform, leave all products in the jungle of market competition where agricultural products always have a disadvantage. The result of the reforms is the hike of prices of fertilizer, insecticide, and agricultural implements much higher than the increase of prices of agricultural products. Peasants have found it unprofitable to produce. Disparity between rural and urban incomes which has been reduced for some years is again being increased, and has reached as high as 1:2.53 (urban population earning two and half times of the income of the rural population) according to 1993 statistics. To add injustice to injury, the state planning has proportionally reduced its rural input.
Investment in agriculture which was 10.69 per cent of China’s total investment in 1978 has occupied only a poor 2.2 per cent in 1993. In the last two years, the government has been trying to mobilize more resource onto agriculture, and adopt all possible measures to stabilize the enthusiasm of the farmers, particularly the grain and cotton growers. But, how to carry the huge peasantry of China to future prosperity remains a serious problem in China’s development.

India, too, has a similar problem. Both the Chinese and Indian peasants share the worry that globalization would ultimately mean their marginalization from the mainstream of the country’s development. In other words, modernization has its innate dynamism against the agricultural society which China and India have inherited for three thousand years. Endogenous development in China (also in India) means to protect the majority of her population from the onslaught of the anti-agricultural exogenous force of modern civilization. To do this and still embrace modernization is like having the cake and eating it.

Another exogenous tendency carried by modernization to China (also India) is to erase the characteristics of national minorities which have existed in China for more than a thousand years. If the minority culture is merely backwardness, there is no need of even crocodile tears for its extinction. But, China has always been a collective of diverse nationalities and cultures. Minority cultures have played an important role in enriching Chinese cultural life. The Manchu culture, for instance, has contributed greatly to the development of the Beijing dialect (which is the standard language of China today) and the Beijing Opera. Today, the popularity of Beijing Opera has been overtaken by Jazz in Beijing itself because of modernization. Incidentally, Jazz itself was and still is the cultural asset of the minority — the African Americans. This community has the most awkward fate in the USA today. On the one hand, almost all the great singers and athletes who have won glory for America are "blacks" and many of them are heroes of millions of American "whites", while one-fourth and more of African American youths are languishing in jail. The latter phenomenon is the marginalization of the minority society due to the Social-Darwinist force of modernization — Survival of the fittest. In China, this force of Survival of the fittest is being patted by the authorities which leads to many state-owned enterprises going bankrupt, causing problems to hundreds of thousands of their workers. If the majority nationality cannot protect itself from the onslaught of marginalization, how can the minorities in a much weaker position protect themselves. China should prevent her minorities to go the direction of the African Americans. Otherwise, there will be no endogenous model in her development.

There is a theory anticipating China to break up after the exit of the supreme leader, Deng Xiaoping. Minority areas, particularly Tibet and Xinjiang, figure in this hypothesis. I think there is no likelihood that this will happen. China will hold, and will be in a strong position after the return of Hong Kong and Macau to the motherland. Then, mainland China will be in an even stronger position to get Taiwan closer to its orbit. Taiwan’s independence and China’s break-up are supposed to be linked up. I think both
can be avoided if the PRC leadership plays its cards tactfully and attains success in developing the economy and enhancing the living standard of all its nationalities.

If everything goes well, many models will develop inside China. Right now, there are two distinguishing themselves. One is the Guangdong model, and another the Su’nan model. The first is exogenous in nature and tilted towards private enterprises, while the second is endogenous in nature and tilted towards collective developmental programmes.

Guangdong province is situated in the Pearl River Delta which is now one of China’s golden triangles. Guangdong is the homeland of the majority of overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia as well as other continents. As blood is thicker than water, when the Chinese diaspora enthusiastically responded to Deng Xiaoping’s new economic policy to invest in China, they naturally put most of their eggs in the Guangdong basket. Guangdong also has an important linkage with the developed world, i.e. Hong Kong. From the early 1980s onwards, Guangdong and Hong Kong have started merging into one integral economic zone with the Hong Kong capitalists and transnational companies dominating the scene. Today, virtually all the chimney-smoking industries of Hong Kong have moved to Guangdong, making Hong Kong a city of office premises, and the nerve-centre controlling the next door industrial bases at Guandong. The Hong Kong-China border immigration posts are now overlooking the heaviest road traffic of the world, and most of the trucks bear both the Hong Kong and PRC Guangdong registration plates (one white and another black for easy differentiation). Hong Kong has not waited for 1997 to integrate with the motherland. It is already inseparable with Guangdong now. People are saying that Guangdong is the 5th "small tiger" of the Asia-Pacific region (after South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore), which is not an exaggeration. There is a delicate relationship between Beijing and Guangdong. On the one hand, the central government has purposely allowed Guangdong to go a step ahead to stimulate a rapid economic growth of the entire country. On the other hand, there are reports about the semi-independent attitude on the part of Guangdong province in carrying out the central government’s decisions. In this relationship there is the scenario of a spoiled favourite child. Right now, there is no sign of rebellion of the child who is still a favourite bathing in the affection of a joint family.

The Su’nan (southern Jiangsu province) model is made up of ten odd counties under the jurisdiction of three cities, Suzhou, Wuxi, and Changzhou. There are some similarities of Su’nan with Guangdong. It is situated in the Yangtse River Delta (another golden triangle of China) with China’s biggest city, Shanghai, as its neighbourhood. Su’nan has, from history, been the most prosperous countryside of China. Cotton textile industry was first established here in the 14th century. It has since become China’s textile centres specializing in both cotton and silk fabric productions. It was because of Su’nan that Shanghai became China’s textile centre in the 19th and 20th centuries. Su’nan was one of the first Chinese countryside to respond to Deng Xiaoping’s new economic policy. The peasants there initially pooled their savings and started establishing industries in the villages. They gathered information about the international markets, designed suitable consumer goods, imported latest machines, and produced garments, knitwear, shoes and
other light industrial products for the overseas market. They employed foreign experts (many of them Chinese), and even went abroad to start new ventures. With such epoch-making enterprises, Su’nan has 2-3,000 village factories enjoying international reputation. They form an important foreign exchange earning sector of China’s small-scale industries. An additional feature of the Su’nan model is the protection of agriculture by its new rising industry. Because of the collective ownership of assets, the local leadership see to it that adequate funds are allocated to the development of agriculture so that there is ample supply of food and raw material. As I have said earlier that agriculture is the mainstay of endogenous development in China, the Su’an model ensures this endogenous interest. Perhaps, it is in the Su’nan model that we can ultimately find the solution of modernizing China’s countryside without first destroying China’s agriculture. If every Chinese province can be developed like Su’nan, China will succeed in carrying her 80 per cent of peasant population to the modernized future without making them suffer.

Among the affluent components of the Su’nan model, the Huaxi Village of Jiangyin County is most famous. It has achieved a per capita income level higher than that of the four "Asia-Pacific Tigers". The unique feature in the development of this village is that there are neither nouveau riche households, nor "poverty households". Su’nan is a typical model of coprosperity. Developing spiritual culture is another special feature of the Su’nan model. Sizeable investment has been put into the establishment of "cultural palaces" where the workers and peasants can have a healthy recreation during week ends and after work on week days. Such a model has transformed the countryside into many newly built towns some of which are even more modern than many big and medium cities of China. Because of such a developing pattern, a phenomenon has occurred which is described as "Peasants become workers but not going to the cities; peasants leave plantation but not leaving the village." Like Guangdong, Su’nan today is crowded with foreign investors and tourists. Airports have been built on agricultural lands to facilitate international travellers. Limousines are a common sight, carrying both foreign guests and also natives — bumpkins who 15 years ago knew only cycling. It is in this Su’nan model in which we see the future of a healthy endogenous development of China. If there is any place in China where there is genuine socialism, it is in Su’nan (also in other areas where the Su’nan model is followed).

Already in the limelight is the rapid development of Shanghai which is designed as the "dragon head" (longtou) of the entire Yangtse river valley. Both the central government and the municipal government of Shanghai (the richest city of China) are investing heavily in infrastructural development of Pudong area — the new Shanghai. The ambition of all this is to revive Shanghai’s position of the biggest city and industrial, commercial and financial centre in the East during the 19th century — as built by the Britons. When this dream comes true (which may take 50 to 100 years), China will have both Hong Kong and Shanghai to form a hub of economic development of the Eastern Hemisphere, echoing with Tokyo, Osaka, and Singapore. While Hong Kong will remain a capitalist paradise for at least 50 years after the 1997 takeover, Shanghai will essentially
belong to the socialist arena of China — the socialist version of Hong Kong. When Shanghai becomes the Dragon Head, Su’nan and a larger area (including the entire Jiangsu province, in addition to neighbouring Shandong and other provinces) will emerge as the body of this new socialist dragon in development. Meanwhile, when Hong Kong and Macau return to the motherland in 1997 and 1999, south China (centering around the Pearl River delta) would become China’s bridgehead to integrate all diaspora developmental initiatives for an international and interzonal development which would be exogenous in character. The Shanghai-Su’nan endogenous and the Guangdong exogenous models will vie with each other for supremacy; while China marches along the road of endogenous development, she will progress further towards globalization. In the long run, China will still be a unity of diverse models like it is today. Perhaps, the confusion and uncertainty will not be as great as at present, if we re-examine the same issue after five or ten years. By then, we shall already be in the 3rd millennium of our common era. By that time, I hope China, India and other countries of the world will become more united in their joint march towards the millenium of coprosperity.

Notes
1. See Hu Sheng, "Shenme shi shehuizhuyi, ruhe jianshe shehuizhuyi?" (What is socialism? How to construct socialism?), in Xinhua Wenzhai (Xinhua Digest Monthly), Beijing, No. 8, 1994, p. 11.
3. Gu Honghong, ""Yinjinchao’ pingshuo" (Comment on "Import waves"). In Liaowang (Observation weekly), Beijing, No. 53, Dec. 31, 1990, pp. 16-17.
4. All these statistics were given by Li Ruihuan, a top ranking Chinese leader, in his speech delivered to the 7th session of the 8th Chinese People’s Consultative Conference on July 1st, 1994. See Xinhua Wenzhai, No. 9, 1994, p. 1.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 2.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
10. Ibid., Jan. 5, p. 2.
12. Zhang Renjie, "Dui jiaoyu ying shiying shichang jingji xuyao’ zhi zai sikao" (The rethinking on "Education should cater for the needs of market economy"), Xinhua Wenzhai, No. 12, 1994, pp. 147-48.
14. Ibid., Bao Xinjian, "Lun woguo xingzhentizhi gaigede shuangxiang mubiao jiegou" (On the structure for the dual targets of the administrative reforms of our country), p. 10.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 1, text of Li Ruihuan’s speech. Li said in his speech on July 1st, 1994 that "Because of the destruction of the ecological environment, the prosperous Silk Road of the Tang Dynasty and the greenlands of our vast west has become a vast desert."
19. This is the summary of an article by Xiao Lian entitled "Shamo yu qingquan" (Desert and clean stream), in *Xinjiang Ribao* (Xinjiang Daily) published in Urumqi, Nov. 23, 1994, p. 3.
20. *See* famous pilgrim Xuanzang’s (602-64) description in his biography authored by his disciples Huili and Yanzong. *See* Wu Bolun, *Chuanbo youyide sichouzhilu* (The Silk Road which spreads friendship), Xi’an: People’s Publishing House, 1983, p. 80.
21. Li Qingshan, "Weiwuer laoren changshou tanyuan" (An inquiry into the sources of the longevity of the Uighurs), in *Xinjiang Ribao*, Nov. 26, 1994, p. 5.
23. Mahbub ul Haq, "Towards a better social order", in *The Economic Times*, Feb. 27, 1995, "Insight".

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