

IS THERE A CHINESE STRATEGY OF DEVELOPMENT? \*

A Contribution to an Everlasting Debate.

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Goals, Processes and Indicators of Development Project,

1. Introduction

Nobody should have a right to complain that China is highly capable of surprising us from the West<sup>(1)</sup> - conservative or radical, liberal or marxist or both or neither. China always had this capacity because of our penchant to try to understand China on our terms. Whether dubbed "inscrutable" or "mischievous", dominated by "oriental despotism" or the "Asiatic mode of production" she still usually refuses to make sense. Sometimes she seems so scrutable and obvious, and then suddenly the veil is drawn - not necessarily over China, but over our Western eyes. The present author certainly does not claim to be an exception: the Western veil is probably there regardless of many efforts at least to become aware of its structure as a cognitive filter. So the following should be read as one person's effort to scrutinize the inscrutable.<sup>(2)</sup>

From a cultural revolution delighting the Western left both because of its egalitarian rhetoric and because of its many important social experiments China now seems to be embarking on a capitalist road<sup>(3)</sup> not very different from that which was so violently denounced during the Cultural Revolution. The step from a distribution-oriented system - distribution both of power and of material goods for consumption - to a growth-oriented system - for the production of material goods and services - seemed to be a very quick one indeed. How come? From the Western left: when they were so clearly on the correct path, how could they so suddenly make "the great leap backward" (Bettelheim), embarking on the wrong path.<sup>(2)</sup> From the right: how could a society so hopelessly lost in rigid "dogmatism" suddenly become so beautifully "pragmatic"? Possible answer: perhaps because the Chinese have a different concept of what constitutes a "path", and for that reason an entirely different concept of what constitutes a development strategy. Why should their underlying concept be similar to ours - so

clear-cut and contradiction-free<sup>(4)</sup> This is the idea to be pursued.

2. The distribution-growth oscillation hypothesis.

The basic theses of this paper are three in number, and they can be presented as follows:

- (1) Chinese history, from the victory of the revolution October 1949, can be seen as a progressive oscillation between distribution and growth oriented policies, with changing goals that are tried implemented, with lags;
- (2) This oscillation will continue in the foreseeable future; just as the policies initiated by the Cultural Revolution came to an end, the present policies will come to an end;
- (3) This should not be seen merely as the result of trial-and-error politics, but as the outcome of a Chinese view of "development", consistent with sinic civilization as a whole.

The paper, then, is devoted to these three hypotheses. Although some similar points may be made about pre-1949 history<sup>(5)</sup> I shall not attempt to explore that, among many reasons because the marxist component with its emphasis both on distribution and on the Western idea of progress, was not yet incorporated into sinic civilization (as I now assume it to be). And my immodesty in trying to make some predictions about China into the 1980s, perhaps also the 1990s, will at least be tempered by a refusal to go any further: by the year 2000 so many other things will have happened in the world as a whole, and China in particular, that this mode of analysis for sure will be much less relevant.

Today, however, the whole world, including China, is talking and has been talking for some time of growth and of distribution -- sometimes also, fallaciously, of redistribution as if there had been distribution before. Often the rhetoric is about growth with distribution, or distribution with growth. But what is the meaning of that crucial little connecting particle, the word "with"? It has to be defined in social space, in geographical space and in time. Thus, does it mean that a little elite will continue growing and the rest of society will distribute what is left among themselves? Does it mean that a part of the world, e.g. the part that refers to itself as the "first", will continue growing and the rest, e.g. the "third" will distribute what is left to it - possibly by making use of the social space method just mentioned by having Third World elites grow and Third World masses distribute

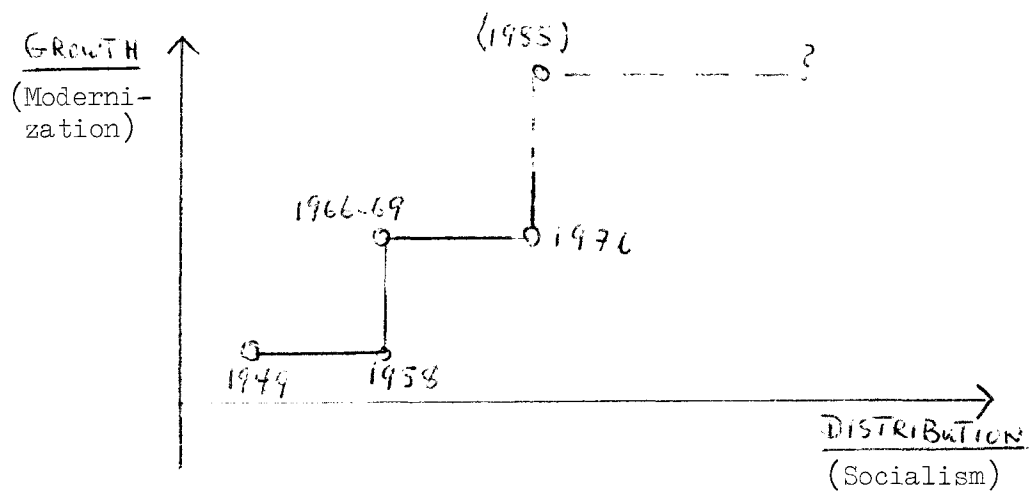
the (very) little that is left when the first world in cooperation with Third world elites have grown? And what about time: do the processes of growth and distribution take place at the same time, hand in hand, or one after the other, sequentially? Is there a synchrony or a diachrony in this, and in case of the latter: what comes first, growth or distribution?

It takes little empirical and/or theoretical insight to see that the slogan "growth with distribution" will take on a very different color dependent on the precise answer to these queries about the little world "with". But this is not the place to spell out that.<sup>(6)</sup> Rather, it will be assumed that when the Chinese talk about social space in this connection they mean all of China; when they talk about geographical space they are rather uninterested in the rest of the world and again mean all of China; and when they talk about time they mean sequentially, starting with distribution, then growth, and then distribution again, and then growth again.

3. A view of Chinese post-revolution history.

In short, the idea is that they think and act in terms of a mental image something like this, with changing emphasis on the goals pursued:

Figure 1. The distribution-growth oscillation hypothesis for development policies



Concrete years from the thirty years of history of the present Chinese Dynasty, the communist one (first ruler: Mao Zedong, second: Deng Xiaoping or Hua Guofeng) have been given for the crucial turning points in the twisting, oscillating developmental policy. It should be pointed out immediately that the "curve" is not correctly drawn: I would assume both that when there is growth there is a loss in distribution gained in preceding phases (a typical

leftist hypothesis), and that when there is distribution there may be some loss in the growth or accumulation level obtained in preceding phases, at least the way that is usually measured (an equally typical rightist hypothesis). For these reasons the vertical lines should tilt towards the left and the horizontal lines should tilt downwards, but this does not affect the central point in the reasoning about political ethos and emphases in various periods.

Briefly stated, the view of Chinese post-1949 history implied by this figure is as follows. The immediate task after the revolution was distribution, primarily in the countryside as the landowner-peasant relation was seen as the basic internal contradiction in the system - to be handled once the external contradictions (relative to Japanese and other forms of imperialism, and relative to their helpers such as Chiang) had been done away with. This contradiction was of the antagonistic variety and could only be resolved through recourse to violence. As a result there was distribution of land or rather "access to land as means of production", a rather basic form of distribution, leading to a process that went through many phases of ever higher levels of collectivization (through the three forms of cooperatives, for instance). The focus was on distribution rather than "growth" in this period, but with no doubt that the level of material consumption for the masses went up because human and other resources were not sifted off in wrong directions, including that of being wasted, underutilized, not used at all. Above all, a structure emerged whereby control over (most of) the surplus produced was in the rural area.

Nineteen hundred and fifty-eight is then seen as a turning point, the "Great Leap Forward", a call for growth, albeit also in a decentralized fashion (backyard iron furnaces, and the People's Communes, established August 1958). At this point relations to the Russians had started cooling considerably, but the technology imparted by them, including the social structure needed to handle that technology, had started becoming operational. Together with what was left of pre-war, pre-devastation technology there was certainly a

basis for a leap, even for a big one. In this phase, then, there was not only little distribution but a significant decrease of it as new types of class contradictions started emerging, becoming more and more clearly felt. Maybe it should be pointed out that by "distribution" I do not have a narrow economic concept in mind such as "income distribution" (distribution of means of consumption). I am thinking of a concept that would include this, but also power and privilege in general - including the power over means of production, which, in turn, includes the power to participate in decision-making about production. The response to that situation was the Cultural Revolution of 1966-69.

It seems relatively clear what it was all about. Thus, it was not primarily cultural. It was above all a structural revolution; culturally speaking it might even have been counter-revolutionary. Structurally it was concerned with five parallel contradictions between the people in general and old and new elites, and with the effort to overcome the contradictions by setting up five alternative structures to those administered by, and to some extent for, those elites:<sup>(7)</sup>

Figure 2. Five parallel contradictions in the Chinese social formation.

<u>Bureaucrats</u>	<u>State Capitalists</u>	<u>Intelligentsia Professionals</u>	<u>Top Military</u>	<u>Top Party</u>
(particularly in Beijing)	(heavy industry)	(universities, artists)		(gerontocratic)
<u>Local self-reliance</u>	<u>Small factories</u>	<u>Non-formal education</u>	<u>People's Liberation Army</u>	<u>Revolutionary Committees</u>
( <u>tzu li keng sheng</u> ) <sup>(8)</sup>	better	new patterns of re-	decentralized,	all over; not
People's	10,000 with	cruitment; 3 years of	tunnels,	proportionately
Communes,	30 workers	study, 18 months theo-	guerrilla style	representative,
size average	than 30 with	retical much practice,	defense	but made to
about 10,000	10,000 workers	no exams		articulate
	job relations			contradictions
	of new kinds			clearly

Certainly much more can be said about the content of the Cultural Revolution,<sup>(9)</sup> but this is sufficient for the present purpose. There was a heavy rhetoric directed against the five elites, particularly the first three. How many were persecuted, haunted, villified and humiliated; how many were treated worse than that (thrown into prison, re-schooling camps, even tortured and killed) we do not know. My own hunch would be that the first number is very

high, the second not so high.<sup>(10)</sup> The basic strategy seems to have been not to throw them all out putting others (with a different social background and/or ideology, the famous "correct line," the "mass line") in their place, but to build an alternative structure that existed side by side with the old one in a very uneasy balance, here in favour of the new, there in favour of the old (what was shown to visiting foreigners like the present author was the new - how representative that was we had no way of knowing). This co-existence is in itself an interesting phenomenon, no doubt many of the cultural revolutionaries would have gone much further and eliminated the old (if they had been able to do so) had they known what would come after the death of Mao.

That this was a major distribution is beyond doubt, bringing totally new groups into power at least at the local level; possibly creating something approaching a power vacuum at the top. There was also a very classical aspect of class struggle in this: the five old elites tended to be veterans of the Long March, people who must have felt they deserved a reward for their struggle, life-long, for the revolution. But they were also the descendants of the old Ch'ing dynasty, Manchu upper classes - taller than the ordinary Chinese, with a different physiognomy - somewhat like the Castilian relative to the Andalusian.<sup>(11)</sup> Zhou Enlai is a major example that these two categories are not mutually exclusive. Those contesting them, were younger, there were women/girls among them, they were not veterans (with the rather important exception of Mao himself). They were from other parts of China - rivalling Shanghai being particularly important; they often had less education.<sup>(12)</sup>

What they were protesting against is very clear: they did not want Chinese society to close itself again, serving a small elite, the new mandarins, most of whom would be recruited from the elite university in Beijing, Beita (like the Japanese corresponding elites from Tokyo university, Todai). Thus, much of their struggle was the Chinese version of what in those years went around the world, called the "student revolt" by its participants and sympathisers, "student unrest" by its detractors. It started in China before Europe.

In passing it should be noted that the ideology of the Cultural Revolution avoided the two important fallacies of the liberal-economistic and the Marxist-

revolutionary West: that of identifying distribution with distribution in consumption (including the means to consume in a monetized economy, money), or with distribution in access to means of production only. The five contradictions in the scheme above should be seen as pointing to this, but going far beyond. The struggle against "the three mountains" and against the classical class enemies, latifundistas and capitalists, was over. In the rhetoric the Cultural Revolution was often presented as if they were on their way back into power. But in discussions<sup>(13)</sup> such stands were quickly given up in favour of a more structural analysis: a new structure was seen as coming up that could pave the way for the re-emergence of private landownership and private capitalism; however, it was also bad in itself. Why? Because it gave challenging tasks to the few and degrading routine jobs to the many --- So, "politics came into command", not economics in the narrow sense; "never forget the class struggle" became another key slogan.

We note in passing that in this kind of reasoning, this capacity to see contradictions in many places, there is both daoism and marxism: daoism in taking it for granted that there will be contradictions, marxism in seeing their class character. Of liberalism there was little, and that was at the root of the problem. This lack of liberalism was among the factors ultimately leading to the decline and fall of the Cultural Revolution. Freedom was restricted and not only for the old elites:

- little freedom to move, except for shorter travels; enforced settlement
- little freedom to choose one's own occupation; mass meeting decisions
- little or no freedom to enjoy Chinese classical culture

Freedom was, presumably, traded for equality, and classical Chinese culture was depicted as reactionary, both in content and style. Political-civil human rights in the Western sense were threatened or non-existent.

But in addition to that the whole experiment was short on growth. A key factor here, definitely, was the inability to find a technology that would be both efficient and compatible with the basic tenets of the Cultural Revolution: something the people themselves could not only handle but also

maintain and repair, even invent and develop further so that they would not be dependent on the decisions made by bureaucrats, the administration and financing by the state capitalists, the research and professionalism of the intelligentsia - not to forget the role played by the top military and the top party people.

This was a difficult bill to meet, and there is only one relatively unambiguous example that it was met: acupuncture. Of course, the Chinese in this phase never argued that such people's technology should rule the ground alone - their argument was always that of "walking on two legs". But both legs should be healthy, neither should be dragging, limping behind the other. Acupuncture came out of the Chinese womb, it could be people-handled and developed further; and it was efficient, like all technologies up to a certain point. But, with some important exceptions mainly in agro-technology: for the rest the main way in which people could be creative and participatory was by being on constant call to repair aging machinery falling apart, with no spare parts available, a task demanding much ingenuity. Obviously this works for some time, but after that enthusiasm will wither away, or the machines will break down completely, or new machines, less in need of wire-and-tape ingenuity will be put in their place. None of these is compatible with the ideals of the Cultural Revolution.

The next phase, predictably, became a phase of growth, not distribution. It could be called the counter-revolution, but I shall prefer a less high-sounding term, "the current phase". It is easily seen what the major driving force would be: the same set of five contradictions as propelled into being the cultural revolution (also a rather high-sounding term, maybe the "preceding phase" would be better?); but run backwards. Of course those elites wanted to get back into power, and of course their strategy for doing so was to point, correctly, to the shortcomings of the preceding phase (and there were many more than those that can be summarized under the headings of "lack of freedom" and "inefficiency"). The timing was also relatively obvious: right after the death of Mao Zedong - who was identified with that phase as he had himself clearly been active at the very beginning - as one necessary (but hardly sufficient) condition, the other necessary condition being thousands and thousands of youths - among them that famous assistant professor in philo-

sophy at Beita.

The crucial role played by technology was quickly grasped by the new forces. As is well known - with frenetic speed - they started ordering all kinds of technology for the four modernizations,<sup>(14)</sup> all with one characteristic in common: it would strengthen the elites because it was bureaucracy -dependent, capital-dependent, research-dependent more than participation-, labour- and creativity- dependent. At the same time it was deemed to be efficient. And at the same time some measures were taken to increase the freedom of the Chinese people - how much and for how long a time remains to be seen. In short, the new people in quest for power were riding on two powerful waves: the five elites who wanted to come back, and popular discontent with excesses and shortcomings of the cultural revolution. And they were quickly rewarded: the classical structures hardened, and the military got not only technology: they even got a war, with their socialist neighbour, Vietnam.<sup>(15)</sup> And the party became the focus of attention, again.

What about the Gang of Four - the si ren ban - about which it is often said "and Mao makes five"?<sup>(16)</sup> I consider this a propaganda figure, an effort to personalize a class struggle by pointing to probable excesses by some people rather than to the crucial issues, thereby mystifying the whole politics of Chinese development. It is doubly insulting, not only to those whose political intelligence is grossly underestimated by being told such stories, but also to the story-tellers themselves if the listener behaves as if he believes that the story-teller believes what he says. The whole effort to personalize and see Chinese post-1949 history as a stage where everything that happens is a result of the power play between the dramatis personae, the Chinese leaders, will lead us seriously astray -- there are much deeper forces at work. But that does not mean that some of the leaders cannot articulate some of these forces better than others and that they cannot sometimes serve as their catalyst: after all, that is what politics at the level of the leaders is about. But the basic contradictions are not among them; they are located much deeper, in the social formations themselves.

Having said this it should be noted that there seems to have been some division of labour between the old friends Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai: the former was better, more in the forefront in the distribution phases, the latter more in the growth phases (including being invoked, post mortem, as some kind of patron saint for the current phase). Maybe this should be regarded as a display of complementarity rather than of conflict. In the case of Lin Biao it was different - he probably came too close to the Russians, the arch-enemy. And in the case of Liu Shaochi it was also different: denounced as "China's Khrushchev", as "hidden traitor, renegade and scab" during the Cultural Revolution, he passed away. Had he not he might, like Deng, have been put into power again in the current phase. Thus, there seems also to be a pattern for Chinese leaders to oscillate - much different from Soviet leaders who have but one peak, in their power career, never two or more.

The programme of the current phase is predictable to the point of tedium. To run Figure 2 backwards, from right to left: abolition of the revolutionary committees; strong emphasis on heavy military technology ; re-introduction of a very classical university pattern with examinations and scholastic emphasis in the pattern of recruitment; a tendency towards bigger factories and heavier industrial technology with more specialization, and a return to the solid power base for the administration in Beijing with no more excursions into the communes for bureaucrats in need of "remoulding of their personalities" for some months.<sup>(17)</sup> Possibly there is also the gradual dissolution of the autonomy of the People's communes with return to the old administrative units, and to more private land ownership and marketing - thus eroding the People's commune from above and below. No doubt this will lead to growth, no doubt it will lead to decreased equality in distribution - both of power and of material goods. The bottom may come somewhat up although that is unlikely ; the top will no doubt be able to accumulate the goods that now come into China and those produced by her. And in this we can also clearly see a third factor in addition to inefficiency and lack of freedom positively motivating the current phase, not negatively, like the struggle to get back into power . This is the rapidly growing awareness of the international system after the

opening in 1971 - a fear of being left behind by the flow of all the glittering growth of the "first," and even "second," and even "third" world; on an island all by themselves, with lofty ideals but little more. And in all of this also the increased feeling of being in a dangerous world where tunnels and some small guerrilla bands look grossly incongruous and out of touch relative to the type of means of destruction the superpowers are sporting around the globe.

Instead of blaming one might try to understand. But in so doing - and this is the second hypothesis - we can also see clearly how this current phase may come to an end and what the next phase will look like. It will come to an end because of increasing class contradictions (the five mentioned plus some possible new ones - none of the five were resolved in the preceding phase), decreasing distribution, increasing inequality and ultimately sheer exploitation of the masses. This will take the classical form: to pay the bill incurred to the rest of the world China has to export at very competitive prices; to do that savings have to be made; to do that workers have to be paid badly - but as they have to live to produce they also have to be fed to reproduce which means that peasants have to be paid badly. Whether directly or indirectly exploited whether what is exported is (semi-) manufactured goods or outputs from agriculture, the result is the same: the peasants will have to pay. Sooner or later they will think, then say, then shout, then rally around the slogan: "-we have been through this before, haven't we-". They have, indeed also in the modern form of inflation and mass unemployment. (18)

When will this happen? Only half-facetiously let me mention "Galtung's law about the duration of post-1949 phases in Chinese development": after about 9 years --. From 1949 to 1958 there were 9 years, from 1958 to 1967 there were 9 years, from 1967 to 1976 there were 9 years -- that should give us 1985. (19)

Around that time a new turning point might come - give or take some years- growth ethos would have petered out because of the revolts and discontents caused by the inequalities engendered by it, there would be new demonstrations in that square in Beijing, CocaCola bottles will be smashed against the MacDonald's Hamburger (Japan, Inc.) stands, now introduced so that the Chinese can have fast food and not waste too much time that could be used more

productively, the Gang of Four will be resuscitated, Mao will come up and Zhou down, and so on, and so forth. Hopefully the new leaders would have done their homework and also come up with some good answers to the problems of an efficient people's technology, how to combine equality with more freedom, not less, and how to cope with the rest of the world as an economic, political, military, social and cultural challenge. And a new phase would have begun.

4. Why this distribution-growth oscillation?

And that brings me to the third and final point: that this is not merely a zig-zag course run by a rat in a maze receiving electric shocks when he runs too far in either direction, nor necessarily a conscious strategy concocted by some political super-mind, but a direct expression of a very Chinese way of conceiving of things. In saying so there is also an effort to explain the phenomenon. It is then assumed that Sinic civilization can be seen in terms of components that in China come together in an eclectic or syncretic, but also synthesized, even synergistic amalgam:<sup>(20)</sup>

Confucianism<sup>(21)</sup> - with its emphasis on the state, the family, the golden past, non-manual work as the best, some individual mobility; examinations

Buddhism (mahāyāna) - with its emphasis on sharing of merits, collectivism, restraint, equality; some kind of organic solidarity.

Daoism<sup>(22)</sup> - with its emphasis on the small, a golden future, and the contradiction in everything, dialectics

Westernism - with its emphasis on progress and goal-directedness, on "time's arrow", with two branches:  
- liberalism with competition, individualism and capitalist efficiency, accumulation, institution-building, checks and balances  
- marxism with its emphasis on contradiction between classes, solidarity, revolutions, anti-imperialism

The assumption is that China is the only place in the world where all of this can be found, in ratios that would vary over time and space and from person to person - but there would always be some kind of combination beyond co-existence of what to the Western mind would be highly contradictory, even irreconcilable elements. No element would be completely absent.

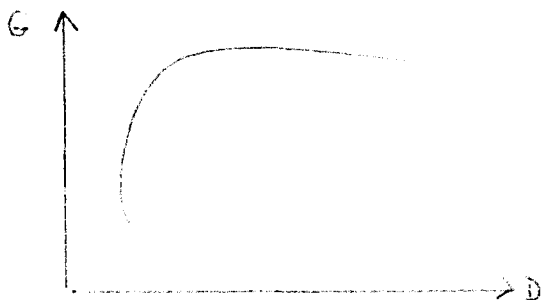
The concrete implication of this assumption, as a contribution to explaining the Chinese pattern of development, is obvious: within the context

of Sinic civilization the zig-zag pattern not only receives legitimation, but looks normal, natural. The growth dimension receives its legitimation both within confucianism and from Western liberalism. The distribution dimension receives its legitimation both from buddhism and from Western Marxism. In addition, daoism would give a high level of legitimacy to a major instrument of distribution, decentralization down to the small unit, the commune<sup>(23)</sup> - a major reason why communism looked like commune-ism in China during the period of the Cultural Revolution. And the dialectic itself, the oscillation, even in relatively rapid succession measured by social time, between emphasis on distribution, then on growth and then on distribution again, would find its basis in daoism.

It should be pointed out how different this would be - if it is a correct interpretation - from Western development thinking according to which one is either in the liberal or in the Marxist camp, thus favouring either the vertical, or the horizontal inclination - seeing the other one as wrong. To this it may be objected that there is room for distribution within liberal thinking (social democracy), and there is room for growth within Marxist thinking (the Soviet Union itself being an example with its emphasis on "catching up and overtake" from the very beginning). This is true, but it would generally lead to these two types of images of the developmental pattern: Figure 3. Two Western models of distribution/growth relationship.

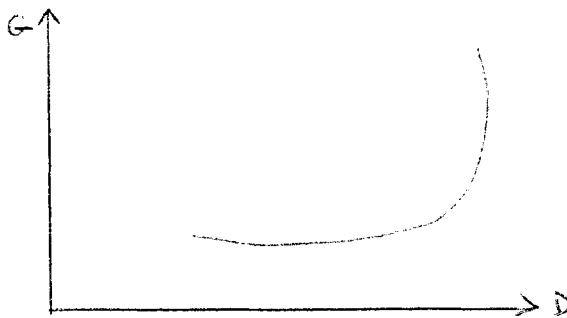
Liberal model:

Growth first, then distribution



Marxist model:

Distribution first, then growth



Obviously, these would at most represent one turning point on the Chinese curve. What the Chinese seem to do is to incorporate both models and link them together in an endless twisting snake of a curve.

5. Conclusion: Ten implications

- (1) According to this picture, let me now try to draw some implications from this. Admittedly simplified and overdrawn, the Chinese strategy of development, the Chinese "model", is neither the "distribution first" nor the "growth first," but the zig-zag course making use of both of them.

For that reason it makes little sense to say that they have betrayed their model; they are in a different phase of it.<sup>(24)</sup> As the current phase is more similar to what happens in the West (both in its Western and Eastern part - the European socialist countries) it has been disregarded as a part of the Chinese "model" as human perception tends to be by contrast rather than by similarity. The Chinese have to be exotic! But then it may also be that they are better, more creative in the distribution than in the growth phases; and more imitative in the latter.<sup>(25)</sup>

- (2) Absolutely crucial in the total scheme, what indeed makes it revolutionary, was a distribution phase as an initial phase. The Chinese practised the dictum "distribution first, then growth"<sup>(26)</sup> If they had started with growth - the conventional model - any distribution attempt later would probably had been very skimpy indeed. Chiang would have done that - and China would have been a poor carbon copy of its East and Southeast Asian neighbours. It would have been too big to replicate the Taiwan exercise.
- (3) In the concrete social mechanisms leading to the dramatic (and dramatized) turning points there are things easily recognizable from other societies: distribution with little or no growth leads to shared poverty and discontent; growth with little or no distribution leads to increased inequalities and general emergence and sharpening of class contradictions - and discontent. Where the Chinese differ - and that is the basic thesis - is in the interpretation of this, in my view related to basic characteristics of Sinic civilization.

- (4) In a sense it is all already in the mother book of Chinese thought, the I Ching. First, contradictions are normal, the world is like that, nothing is perfectly perfect or imperfect. Second, contradictions will crystallize, sharpen, mature with time. Third, they will give birth to something new which in turn is contradictory, and so on, ad inf. As a consequence, correct politics is to realize this, not fight it by trying to put a lid on the cauldron of contradictions (this is what the Chinese accuse the Russians of doing), but try to lead and use these tremendous forces. As one will never escape from the yin/yang nature of reality, better work with it than against it.
- (5) More particularly, the Chinese leaders seem to make use of the turning points for energizing the population, mobilizing, dynamizing. The turning points are dramatic, but they are also dramatized, to some extent staged; denigrating the preceding phase, personalizing (in order to avoid blaming China in toto); scapegoating. No doubt mistakes can be made in wrongly assessing when the time is ripe, but a correct assessment, according to this type of thinking, will have built-in rewards because it will work with the forces of a contradiction at the point of maturation.
- (6) From this it follows that they may also build into the phases an excessive amount of imbalance to ensure that there will be sufficient contradiction raw material to draw upon.<sup>(27)</sup> This they have certainly done in the present phase, for which the prediction is that there will be a new cultural revolution, but of course different from the preceding one. This is the doctrine of the recurring revolution (not "permanent revolution", that would be a contradictio in adjecto). As is well-known, Mao had already predicted the current phase, and that his name would be used in vain after his death.<sup>(28)</sup>
- (7) Does this mean that the Chinese have a double mind about what they do - that they are not only "inscrutable", but even "mischievous"? Leaving aside these two adjectives that relate to Western misunderstandings or rather total failure to understand, the answer may be yes and no. No in the sense that when they are in this or that phase they believe fully

what they do, yes in the sense that that faith is not for eternity, not even for their own life-time, but for that period. It is the correct line at the correct time. With the turning point comes also a turn in faith, conviction, concrete social programme. From a Western point of view where faith is for life, as a part of the personality, this looks strange and leads to accusations of acting. No doubt the two perspectives are related to the difference between buddhist rebirth and the idea of Christian eternal salvation or condemnation: between shifting identities in cosmic time and one single identity frozen in eternity.<sup>(29)</sup>

- (8) Not everybody will be able to make the turns and some will do it too well. Those most identified with the preceding phase will have to wait in the corridors (often very unpleasant corridors) of history till they can be taken out of the mothballs because their phase has come. It has been pointed out that there was a possible division of labour between Mao and Zhou - but no doubt Zhou was a maoist and Mao a zhouist, and both of them fundamentally, deeply Chinese. It should be noted that to give to all a chance of a second, even third "life" these phases have to be short given the limited human life-span.
- (9) But could there not be a "locking in" this time, with deeply entrenched elites, with modern technology to suppress revolts? It is possible, particularly if Western or Japanese imperialism come into play again - in that case the contradictions will be antagonistic and only resolvable by (much) violence, according to Mao. A new long march may be called for. But if the situation remains in Chinese control the hypothesis here is that after some years the new leadership will be weakened in their fight for their privileges by feeling deep down in their Chinese souls that "our time is up" - and give in to the next generation of emerging forces.
- (10) So, the Chinese will continue "deceiving" those friends who identify with them only in every second phase. More particularly, US, Soviet Union and Japan are in for great disappointments as they rush in to make quick economic and political profit. And the rest of us would be wise if we realize that we are not Chinese, but nevertheless have very much to

learn - perhaps particularly in terms of levels of subtlety and complexity - not only from individual Chinese, but from that remarkable depository and receptacle of insight: the Sinitic civilization.

Appendix: How does political ethos relate to political reality?

How does this all relate to some of the economic indicators we have for China for this period? Obviously, it would certainly not be expected that the empirical indicators of economic growth and distribution should follow Figure 1. That figure is about political ideas, goals, programs, ethos - and a very crude version at that - not about economic reality. Economic reality would at best be lagging behind. The ethos of a period may focus on distribution but with a view to obtain growth through the release of creativity and may, in fact, obtain that. The next period may focus on growth by curbing distribution efforts but may not obtain growth because the potential is somehow exhausted, because curbing distribution may have the opposite effect. Or - there may be external factors at work not captured by the frame of analysis of Figure 1 at all. But most basically one would assume a lag: an "ethos" proclaimed takes time to be translated into concrete politics which takes time to be translated into economic facts.

Here are some data, unfortunately only on the growth dimension as the US sources consulted<sup>(30)</sup> are silent (uninterested?) on any distribution dimension:

Table 1. Phases in Chinese development and economic indicators

	1949	1958	1967	1976
GNP(Billions of US 1977 dollars)	54	153	188	342
GNP/capita	101	233	238	355
Agricultural production(1957=100)	54	108	118	148
Industrial production(1957=100)	20	142	202	502
Trade with Communist countries(mill US \$)	350*	2380	830	2345
Trade with Non-comm. countries(mill US \$)	860*	1385	3085	10915

\* For 1950, not 1949

It is very clear from the four first lines in the Table that the four indicators show little growth during the second phase, the first part of which was exactly the "Great Leap Forward", and more growth in the first and in the third phases - actually more so in the first than in the third. It is beyond the scope of this article to reason why, no doubt the causal nexus is a very complex one. The data are, at least, compatible with many other hypotheses and with combinations of them. It is also interesting to see that whereas trade with "non-communist countries" (a US classificatory category) has expanded fairly exponentially in the period trade with "communist countries" has not: the data show that in this field, so directly independent on decisions, the data are very sensitive to policy, without lag. The ratio between the two lines of trade figures tells the story quite convincingly.

If the data really should prove to be compatible with the lag hypothesis (which is not the same as confirming the lag hypothesis) then there is a rather important consequence that follows. The conclusion would stand much more strongly if the same finding held for indicators of distribution, viz that the distribution was particularly inegalitarian in the distribution-oriented periods, and not in the growth-oriented second phase (not to mention the fourth phase for which we as yet do not have data, it has not been concluded). The idea is simply this: a campaign stresses what that phase is particularly weak on, possibly because it was neglected in the preceding period and that shows up in the period after, possibly because the preceding period tried to handle the other problem and some positive results of that shows up in the succeeding period so that one can focus on the other problem instead. In either case (and the two explanations do not exclude each other) we get a certain onesidedness in the ethos of the period, and that onesidedness produces a factual onesidedness that in turn will reinforce the ethos onesidedness in the subsequent period.

One condition for this, however, is that the counter-cyclical moves of political ethos and political reality have, roughly speaking, the same wave-length. That they have to have to some extent the same amplitude is obvious: the worse the distribution/growth situation, the more and the stronger work is needed to set it right. One might assume, however, that this

will also to some extent adjust the wave-lengths to each other: as the focus on the dimension neglected in the preceding phase starts bearing fruits that emphasis will be tuned down and attention will be drawn to the dimension neglected because it might have been assumed (subconsciously rather than unconsciously) that it will take care of itself since it looked so healthy to start with. And thus a new political ethos is ushered in! - and in this particular case with a wave-length of about 9 years - - -

How does all of this compare to a development strategy with constant political ethos, whether of the liberal or the marxist varieties, or some kind of social-democratic variety emphasizing "growth with structural change"? The problem with that is that even if the political ethos is constant political (in this case its economic aspect) reality is certainly not. It will change because the systems are open even if they are not subjected to the oscillations brought about by constant or oscillating onesidedness. In the Chinese case this would be a part of the world as it is expected to behave: there is a dialectic in reality and a dialectic between reality and ethos so there has to be a dialectic in ethos too. But in the Western case there may, perhaps, be more of a tendency to hang on to an ethos once accepted, not seeing that after being self-fulfilling it may become self-denying. At that point (and we are at such a point in Western history right now, indeed!) frustrations set in with frantic efforts to make reality conform, or dramatic changes of ethos. These efforts give to the West some of its strength - perseverance - as well as some of its weakness - doggedness as well as total reversal, Umwertung aller Werte. And the corresponding Chinese pattern gives to China some of its strength - flexibility - as well as its weakness - a certain fatalism, "let us correct for that next time", etc.

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1. As an example, just consider some of the headlines in newspapers around the world that did look somewhat confusing when they first appeared: "Japan To Help in Modernization of Chinese Ports" (Asahi Evening News, 22 January 1979 - it was through the control of the infrastructure that Japan started controlling China in the 1930s, to a large extent); "Capitalist Class Resurrected in Fast Modernizing China" (Asahi Evening News, 26 January 1979); "Cinco Guardias Rojas, ejecutados en Pekin" (El País, 17 November 1978); "China Tells of 10-Year Gap in Science Graduate Study" (IHT, 22 December 1979); "Peking to Print Bible" (New Straits Times, 1 September 1979); "Peking Opens Doors to Advertising By Foreign Companies", (New Straits Times, September 1979); "Unemployment is China's Major Problem" (New Straits Times, 19 September 1979); "The Unemployment Problem in China: Working Hours Should be Cut" (op.cit.); "Hard Workers to Earn More in New Pragmatic China" (Asahi Evening News, 23 January 1980); "China, U.S. Consider Setting Up Hot Line" (IHT, 11 February 1980); "Visitors' Views of China's Gains Seen as Overstated" (NYT, 27 March 1980, referring to the three articles published by The New York Review of Books by N.N. Eberstadt reappraising the material progress held to be made by China); "China Clears Liu of Mao Charges on Education" (IHT, 28 January 1980). And so on, and so forth. These are given only as examples of what the West has now become accustomed to, but certainly was not before 1977; the whole ethos and political reality at that time being so different.

2. My first effort to come to grips with China, together with my wife Fumiko Nishimura, resulted in the book Leaning From the Chinese People, Oslo 1975 - published in Norwegian, in Denmark, in Swedish and in German in the Federal Republic of Germany. It reflects the cultural revolution phase although in no way pretending to reflect more than its ideology and its idealized examples, keeping the future very much open-ending, as it does, with a list of eight major contradictions in the China of the early seventies. The second effort is still on. A short trip to Beijing, November 1978, was very useful as were many discussions with Chinese intellectuals and others on "what is going on now".

3. For one discussion of this, see George Aseniero, China's Four Modernization Programmes: An Economic, Security and Ideological Analysis, Geneva, GPID, June 1980.

4. For an exploration of this, see Johan Galtung, Five Cosmologies: An Impressionistic Presentation, Geneva, GPID, 1980. The general orientation towards contradiction is seen as a very basic feature of a civilization, with Occidental civilization being seen as hostile to contradictions, as wanting to overcome them, get rid of them.

5. The theme of an oscillation between good Emperors and bad Emperors is a significant one in Chinese history and historiography.

6. See, for two different approaches, two of the papers presented at the workshop mentioned above, by Irma Adelman, "National and International Measures in Support of Equitable Growth in Developing Countries", and her many important articles on distribution and growth, and by Johan Galtung, "Towards a Theory of Strategies of Development" (the part referring to timing as an element of strategic thinking and action was actually presented at the first workshop of the same sub-project, also in Geneva, March 15-16, 1979). To be published in George Aseniero, ed., Development: Alternative Strategies and Scenarios, forthcoming.

7. These elites are found, of course, not only in China - and play a rather key role in the theory and practice of development. For an analysis, see Johan Galtung, Global Goals, Global Processes and the Prospects for Human and Social Development, Geneva, GPID, 1979. In that analysis Police is added to the other five. There are some reasons to believe that the cultural revolution was not sensitive enough to the role police might play and that it never was challenged so effectively as the other five.

8. "Regeneration Through Own Efforts". I got interested in the origin of this term/concept and wrote the East Asian History of Science Library to get "some material or references that can clarify the origins of the concept long before Mao Tse-tung made such fruitful use of it". I got the following reply from the Librarian, Dr. Michael Scott, so full of valuable information that I permit myself to reproduce from it noting that it represents Dr. Scott's personal (but obviously very well informed) opinion:

1. The Taoist school of thought traditionally preached detachment from the world. But Taoists advocated such detachment for the kings, not for the people. Moreover, kings were never, I think, supposed to be self-sufficient in material terms.

Taoist, and later Buddhist, monastic establishments were often founded in wild and isolated parts of China. To some extent, they may have been self-sufficient. But this self-sufficiency, if such it was, depended on large areas of land and perhaps on the labour of servants.

There are many tales of hermits - often Taoists - living alone in the backwoods. But these tales are often obvious fantasy. In addition, Taoist hermits traditionally practised medicine, and prepared and administered drugs, perhaps in exchange for money or goods. And in any case holy men, whether Taoist or Buddhist, were not averse to gifts.

To sum up these points: to the best of my belief, there is no explicit doctrine of material self-sufficiency in ancient Chinese philosophy, or in the classical tradition of literature.

2. In practice, the traditional Chinese country community was largely self-sufficient in material terms. This self-sufficiency has sometimes perhaps been exaggerated. For sober discussion of realities, one might consult: Buck, J.L., 1930, Chinese Farm Economy, Shanghai, Willow Pattern Press, and Chicago, University of Chicago Press and Tawney, R.H., 1932, Land and Labour in China, George Allen & Unwin, London (or reprint, 1966, M.E. Sharpe, New York).

Mao Tse-tung's native province, Hunan, is in the hinterland. In Mao's early years, it was little affected by western inroads into China, and was still predominantly agricultural. In his youth, then, Mao would perhaps have accepted the traditional degree of self-sufficiency as the natural state of affairs.

3. In "Quotations from Chairman Mao" - the "little red book" of the Cultural Revolution - the earliest cited use of the phrase tzu-li keng sheng dates from 10th January 1945. At that time Mao and his forces were still at Yen-an. Throughout the Yen-an years, owing to inevitable pressures of war and to economic blockade, self-sufficiency had been the key to survival. In other words, the circumstances in which Mao first advocated tzu-li keng sheng made this doctrine a statement of practical necessity.

4. The popular tradition of Chinese literature often refers to "making do", and to an implicit acceptance of material self-sufficiency. The San Yen collections of early colloquial short stories would perhaps provide material. So might longer works such as San-kuo yen-i and Shui-hu ("All Men are Brothers", in Pearl Buck's translation).

Now Mao was well acquainted with popular literature. This literature might, therefore, have been one source of his doctrine of tzu-li keng sheng. But I think there is a far more direct intellectual inspiration for Mao's doctrine.

5. This inspiration, in my view, is the debate on how China should reform and adapt herself, materially, intellectually, and politically, to the western world. This debate had begun soon after China's defeat in the Opium War. It culminated in the May 4th Movement of 1919. Mao himself took part in that Movement.

The key question in the debate was this: to what extent should China accept western technology and institutions? One of the answers that was given was that western learning should be applied only in material matters; in institutional and ideological matters, China should retain her traditional ways. (Hsi Hsueh wei yung, Chung hsueh wei pen) However, the range of opinion was broad. And as Chow Tse-tsung (1960, the May Fourth Movement, Harvard, pp.327-332) points out, one of the concepts in circulation was "self-contentedness" (chih-tsu). In this, perhaps, there is a real link between Mao and an earlier intellectual current.

9. But probably not at the present time. The distance from the event needed for a more objective assessment is certainly too short, particularly in China.

10. Thus, it would have been hard to conceal massive killings during that period, and right now the production of assessment of the Cultural Revolution is much too much in the hands of those whose vested interest it is to black-mail it as much as possible.

11. This class aspect is not so much spoken of in articles and discussions of China, yet seems to be extremely powerful. To the traits mentioned could be added calligraphy and other residues of Chinese upper-class style - thus, the first wall posters after the death of Mao were, reportedly, written in beautiful calligraphy.

12. The starting point, though, was a young female assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Beijing.

13. Some examples of such discussions are given in the book referred to in footnote 2 above.

14. See the paper by George Aseniero referred to in footnote 3 above.

15. With more distance it might be possible to see other reasons for that war, not only internal ones. As a foreign policy instrument it certainly was not a very successful one, and it might even have become a disastrous one to China if they had not backed down in time. To "teach Vietnam a lesson" has been tried so unsuccessfully by Japan, France and the United States only during the last generation, and somehow this must have had an impact on China.

16. The sub-title of the book by that title is Mao Tse-tung's last great battle, a very interesting collection of documents edited and with an introduction by Raymond Lotta, published by Banner Press, Chicago, 1978.

17. When this was said to the present author by a Beijing bureaucrat fall 1973 it sounded very much like "I'm going on a trip", "I'm going to the dentist" - something a little bit out of the ordinary, but not that much, a part of routine, not exactly pleasant, some kind of duty.

18. There are many press reports about those phenomena in China in the current fourth phase; the problem being that the statistics are not necessarily too reliable. But these two phenomena should belong to the general syndrom against which the coming fifth phase would be a reaction seems rather obvious. So, when Los Angeles Times reports (16 Nov. 1979) "Chinese Finally Got a Taste of Inflation - Food Up 33% (midnight October 31) it was certainly to be expected. It should be noted, however, that the allegation in the text that "the peasants will have to pay" goes counter to recent evidence of increased state expenditure for financing communes and other agricultural undertakings at the tune of 7.7 billion yuan in 1978, a 52% increase over 1977 and of drastic increase of government purchasing prices for grain and 17 other major agricultural products (see Beijing Review, No. 9, 1979, p. 5).

19. And maybe there is already a premonition of it in a rather key person in the current fourth phase, Deng Xiaoping: But his present plan, revealed in the Bangkok Post last weekend, is to retire from hyperactive service - to become an adviser or consultant - by 1985 (quoted from the Economist, February 16, 1980, p. 37). It might be added that the year 1985 fits rather well with the theory presented in the paper - - -.

20. This is a basic point in the theory of cosmologies put forward in the article referred to in footnote 4 above: oriental cosmologies tend to be more additive, combining elements from different cultures or even civilizations; occidental cosmologies tend to be more pure, more alternative. Hence, what is here stated in the text is nothing but an exercise in additivity of basic civilizational patterns.

21. In The Analects of Confucius, translated and annotated by Arthur Waley (New York, Vintage Books) the reader will find almost everywhere, the gems of wisdom he believes will be there - but there is no doubt where the wisdom is located:

Book II, 14: A gentleman can see a question from all sides without bias. The small man is biased and can see a question from only one side.

Book XII, 7: - but a people that no longer trusts its rulers is lost indeed (no mention that the rulers might also be lost in that case).

22. Lao Tsu, Tao Te Ching, London, Wildwood, 1972, especially the famous chapter 80:

A small country has fewer people  
Though there are machines that can work ten to hundred  
times faster than man, they are not needed  
The people take death seriously and do not travel far  
Though they have boats and carriages no one uses them  
Though they have armour and weapons no one displays them  
Men return to the knotting of rope in place of writing  
Their food is plain and good, their clothes fine but simple  
their homes secure;  
They are happy in their ways  
Though they live within sight of their neighbours  
And crowing cocks and barking dogs are heard across the way  
Yet they leave each other in peace while they grow old and die

23. It is difficult to see, however, that Daoism had some kind of federal concept in linking communes together; rather, they looked like they were isolated, living far apart from each other.

24. Some of the empirical implications of this are explored in the Appendix.

25. This is a point made by colleagues from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences: the small unit, very puritan, hard working and good at distribution is something with a long tradition in Chinese history and also something relatively unique if not necessarily stable over a longer time period. When the thinking of the present paper was shared with Chinese colleagues they tended to point this out, and also to point out that through time it may well be that China will be better at handling bigger units, so that distribution meaningfully can be over bigger units than the commune which was a major stage for enacting norms of distribution during the first and third phase considered here. This may be true, but it may also be true that with bigger units come more or less inevitably the various types of social pathologies known from other parts of the world: centralization, peripherization of the rest, growth of bureaucracies and corporations and intelligentsia, party, military and police machineries to protect them, and so on. In other words, the prediction here would certainly be that a possible fifth phase with focus on distribution would also be a phase emphasizing smaller units again.

26. This is the point emphasized equally, although for different reasons, by Galtung and Adelman in the papers referred to in footnote 2 above.

27. Thus, they would not try distribution with growth in an effort to pursue a course along the G-D line in Figures 1 and 3 feeling that this would be to strive for a balance out of touch with social reality and that one might lose the dynamizing impact of maturing contradictions.

28. In this, of course, there is a similarity to the sayings of Jesus Christ before his death.

29. This theme is developed further in Johan Galtung's "Eschatology", cosmology and the formation of visions", Proceedings of the Visions of Desirable Societies sub-project of the Goals, Processes and Indicators of Development Project, at the workshop held in Mexico, 25-28 May 1979, organized by the World Future Studies Federation in cooperation with the Centro de Estudios Economicos y Sociales del Tercer Mundo.

30. Data compiled from US Congress, Joint Economic Committee, Chinese Economy Post-Mao, November 1978 (Table 2, China: Major Economic Indicators, 1949-77) and "China: Balance of Trade", from US Central Intelligence Agency, National Assessment Center Publication, China: International Trade, 1976-77, p.9. I am indebted to Oliver Lee and Henry Au for their advice.