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Huan K'uan

DEBATE ON SALT AND IRON (YEN T'IEH LUN)

Volume I

A Translation from the Chinese with Introduction and Notes by Ju. L. Kroll

St. Petersburg 1997 Хуань Куань

СПОР О СОЛИ И ЖЕЛЕЗЕ (ЯНЬ ТЕ ЛУНЬ)

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 Памяти моих родителей — Александры Ефимовны Кроль и Льва Соломоновича Гальперина

SUMMARY

Yen t'ieh lun ("Debate on Salt and Iron") composed by the Confucian Huan K'uan approximately in the second quarter of the 1st century B.C. is one of the most important Former Han treatises, an inexhaustible source of information on philosophy, political, economical, and social history as well as culture of the period. In spite of this it was studied rather insufficiently; till now it was fully translated only into Japanese and but partially rendered into English, French, and Russian. The present full annotated translation of the Yen t'ieh lun into Russian is destined to fill in the gap. Its volume I contains a long Introduction, a translation of the first 12chapters of the Yen t'ieh lun with a detailed commentary, and a bibliography; its volumeII will contain a translation of the remaining 48chapters, the commentary, and indices.

The Introduction treats the problems of composition of the Yen tieh lun and of its prehistory and presents the treatise as a monument of Chinese culture. At least in one respect Yen tieh lun seems to be unique: it is the only extant large scale monument of ancient Chinese disputation based on respective traditions of culture and state system. Two kinds of disputation have deeply influenced the work: that of debates between philosophers, and that of debates held at court, especially of court conferences; the text of the Yen tieh lun is an enlarged and elaborated version of the records of a court conference held in 81 B.C. Its participants were capital officials and provincial Confucians, the latter being candidates for offices known as "Worthy and Good" and "Well Read in Writings" recommended by central and local authorities according to a state tradition connected with institutes of feed-back and criticism within the system of government.

The author treats the problem of school of thought affiliation of debaters in detail. He does not accept their usual description as simply "Confucians" and "Legalists" unreservedly. He neither approves of Wang Li-ch'i's attempt (1983) to depict them as "pure Confucians" (adherents of "the way of the true king") and as "eclectic Confucians" (adherents of "the way of the hegemon") disputing inside the Confucian school, nor shares Michael Loewe's hypothesis (1974, 1986) that Yen t'ieh lun reflects the attitudes of "Reformists" and "Modernists" and not of adepts of two

schools of thought. He himself interprets the terms "the way of the true king" and "the way of the hegemon" as pointing to the political doctrines of eclectic Confucianism and eclectic Legalism respectively. The use of the two terms, the existence of the concept of a "school", the emergence of earliest systematic descriptions of "six" and "nine" schools of thought under the Former Han, as well as the fact that in the Istcentury A.D. a series of Han thinkers were described as belonging to one or the other of them, etc., show that schools of thought, those of Confucians and Legalists in particular, in a sense were then a reality. Therefore the author prefers to describe the participants of the discussion in the Ven t'ieh lun in terms of the followers of schools of thought, i. e. as eclectic Confucians and eclectic Legalists. The kind of eclectic Confucianism one finds in the Yen t'ieh lun contains many borrowings from the Yin Yang school, some borrowings from that of Mohists as well as certain ideas and quotations borrowed from Taoist-Legalist tradition. The kind of eclectic Legalism one finds there presents an alloy of Legalist and Taoist traditions including also many borrowings from the Yin Yang school and the ideology of merchants as well as a lot of quotations from Confucian texts. As to official ideology of the early empire, the author considers it to have been neither Confucian nor Legalist: according to him both Ch'in and Han official ideologies were of eclectic nature combining components of various teachings (including Confucianism and Legalism, ways of "the true king" and "the hegemon") with a nucleus — the concept of a world-ordering king and a universal monarchy.

With regard to correlating Yen t'ieh lun debaters with social classes and groups as well as the state the author is critical of the approach in the vein of vulgar sociology mainly typical of the PRC scholars. According to him the imperial power operated as an economic force relatively independent of classes of private owners restricting their rights of land-ownership and exercising functions of organizing economics and redistributing wealth and supplies. It had a broad social base consisting of peasant families of 4 or 5members each as real economic units; therefore it exercised economic policy of promoting the "fundamental" occupation and suppressing the "secondary" one and of curbing the rich aimed at preserving this social base in royal interests. It regulated economic relations between social classes and played the part of the representative of unity with regard to peasants and society as a whole. It was the imperial power that eclectic Confucians and Legalists appealed to proposing to it different ways of government that had certain common aims: both demonstrated care for small producers and suggested measures preventing the rich from ruining them; both brought forward the idea of unity. But the ways they proposed were different having been derived from different systems of views. Therefore the author has given up attempts to reduce Confucianism and Legalism to one or the other of class interests; he prefers to analyse these teachings within the system of relations between a representative of a school of thought (i.e. an official or a potential official) and the state (i.e. the ruler). It makes him regard *Yen t'ieh lun* debaters in the first place as bearers of their respective teachings and only in the second place as spokesmen of aspirations of social classes and groups; it also makes him to do his best to interpret each of the two teachings as a system.

Predecessors of the author approached Yen t'ieh lun either as a monument of ideological struggle or as a source of economic ideas. According to the author in spite of their numerous achievements both kinds of scholars shared a common defect of completely (or almost completely) failing to pay due attention to cultural notions of cosmos. world-ordering nature of the royal te power, and of causality understood as mutual attraction of the like; as a result they did not notice the peculiarities of thinking of the debaters. The author in his turn offers a new approach to Yen t'ieh lun that allows both to interpret the views of the debaters as systems and to reveal their world pictures. Since Yen t'ieh lun is important for the history of Chinese culture it seems expedient to investigate it resorting to culturological methods. The heart of the approach consists in bringing out the most general concepts of the debaters, i.e. those of the level of categories of culture, and in tracing their realizations in the debaters' views on government, war and peace, law and economics. One can expect that as a result of adopting the approach inner connections between the views of each of the opposing parties will become evident and two systems of views will emerge in a form fit for comparison.

The author investigated and compared Confucian and Legalist views embodying five categories of culture — the concepts of microcosm and macrocosm, time, "kind" (lei), and oneness (unity). The main diversities between Confucian and Legalist views he discovered are different concepts of human nature and its liability to transformation under the influences coming from without, Confucian orientation toward particularism and Legalist one toward universalism. But human nature mentioned above is that of subjects, its concept is correlated with that of personality of a monarch and of his ability to influence his subjects, whereas particularism and universalism are in the first place descriptions of a monarch's attitude towards his subjects (it seems proper to remind here that in ancient Chinese culture the idea of Heaven's benevolent attitude towards living beings seems to have served as a model both for particularism and universalism: Heaven's love for life and hate for death was used as a model for the former, while the image of Heaven that "covers everything" was used as a model for the latter). It follows that the main difference between the views of the debaters consists, on the one hand, of the dissimilarity of their interrelated concepts of the nature of subjects and the personality of a monarch and, on the other hand, of the dissimilarity of their notions of this personality's attitude towards and influence on the subjects. According

to Confucians a world-ordering king by means of his te power peacefully transforms the nature of his subjects and then also that of the Hsiung-nu, develops their ethical beginnings connected with yang and suppresses the mercenary ones connected with yin; his attitude towards their nature is active, orientated toward ethics, and particularistic. According to Legalists though an emperor possesses te power, he is unable to transform therewith the mercenary nature neither of his subjects nor of the Hsiung-nu; he has to accept this nature as it is and to conform to it affecting it by means of rewards and punishments (which in the case of the Hsiung-nu means the use of military force); his attitude towards his subjects is passive, indifferent to ethics, and universalistic.

As regards concepts of space and related ideas, the notion of the world-ordering king underlies the Confucian theory of gradual ordering of the inhabitants of concentric space in the direction from centre toward periphery, whereas the Legalist concept of the monarch underlies the ideas of his universalistic attitude towards all his subjects irrespective of their residence and royal concern for them consisting in offering them equal security and equalizing their economic conditions. As regards concepts of time, from the notion of the world-ordering king the orientation of Confucians towards "antiquity" and their belief in the possibility of its cyclical returns can be deduced, while from the Legalists' notion of the ruler their orientation towards "present age", the idea that change in history is irretrievable, and the linear components of their concepts of time can be infered.

As regards the concept of "kind" and related ideas, the notion of sacral personality of the world-ordering king shared by Confucians pertains to the world picture organized by this concept as a single continuum, the king both conforming to cosmos and receiving signs (that is, portents) from it in response to his deeds according to their kind; from the Legalist point of view the ruler only conforms to cosmos receiving no responses from it (which means lesser sacrality of the royal personality). As regards the concept of oneness (or unity), the Confucian theory of bringing the world to unity implying that a ruler transforms his people in his (i.e. one man's) own image by means both of his te power and his officials "of the same kind" as himself originates from the notion of the world-ordering king, while the Legalist theory of the important part that unified legal and economic standards play in government as embodyments of royal universalism originates from the Legalist concept of the ruler being the only source of power that adopts uniform attitude towards everybody. The views of the Confucians on law are dominated by their concept of the benevolent world-ordering king causing spiritual transformation and permeated with particularism, whereas those of the Legalists treat laws as standards and as an institution that compensates personal shortcomings of the ruler and inspires fear into law-breakers. Economic views of the Confucians have the theory of world-ordering as their point of departure, while those of the Legalists are imbued in the first place with the idea of universalism of the monarch establishing economic standards, redistributing wealth and supplies, and equalizing economic conditions of the ruled.

This seems to justify the conclusion that differences of views of Confucians and Legalists enumerated above originate from the basic difference in their views on the ruler and the people, of the attitude of the former towards the latter and the influence exercised by the former on the latter.

The translation of the Yen t'ieh lun is based on the edition of 1958 by Wang Li-ch'i, whose edition of 1983 as well as other modern editions, commentaries, and translations were also consulted. The commentary treats a wide range of problems beginning with philological and textological ones and ending with those connected with history, geography, law, philosophy, material and spiritual culture, etc.; it also contains analysis and explanations of numerous ancient Chinese terms.

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ХУАНЬ КУАНЬ СПОР О СОЛИ И ЖЕЛЕЗЕ (ЯНЬ ТЕ ЛУНЬ) Перевод с китайского, введение и комментарий Ю.Л.Кроля

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В СЕРИИ ГОТОВИТСЯ К ВЫХОДУ ОЧЕРЕДНОЙ ТОМ

XI. Гэ Хун. МУДРЕЦ. ОБЪЕМЛЮЩИЙ ПЕРВОЗДАННУЮ ПУСТОТУ (Баопу-цзы) Эзотерический раздел (нэй пянь)



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