THE NEW-LIFE MOVEMENT  
(Diary Leaves)

By Nicholas Roerich

[This very interesting article on "the New-Life Movement" has been specially written for the Twentieth Century by Prof. Nicholas Roerich, the famous Russian painter and pacifist. We are indebted to him for this gesture of friendly appreciation of this journal from far-off Peiping (China).]

Last year, General Chiang-Kai-shek, the "Father of the Movement" defined the essential principles of this new life. In the introduction to his pamphlet, a parallel is drawn between this movement and the movement of the Oxford Group. Of course, there is very little similarity between the foundations of these two movements. The movement headed by Chiang-Kai-shek has a great application to modern life, not for China only, but in general.

We have already mentioned that at present curious combinations of remote antiquity with ultra modern assertions take place. Likewise into the foundations of this new movement of the leader of China were laid the most ancient and most noble principles of Li, Yi, Lien and Chih, that is to say: polite manners; chivalrous courageous conduct; honesty; and decency and thoroughness of action.

It is very significant that into the foundations of new reforms and achievements are being laid principles inherited in far antiquity. Probably for many superficially modern people, all these principles will appear as abstractions, strange from the lips of a statesman. But to us the appeal to the
eternally living ethics is very close. For, on unshakable
eternal foundations of ethics can be built also the present real
success and prosperity of nations. Sobriety, discipline, self-
consciousness, the understanding of duties, the striving
towards constructiveness will be built not upon negative
formulae, destroying the entire past, but precisely on the
affirmation of immutable foundations.

The hieroglyph Li will remind of good conduct in life,
of true discipline, mutual esteem and those good family cus­
toms, from which grows healthy statesmanship. The
hieroglyph Yi points to the immutability of honour, heroism,
valour, without which human relations are impossible. Lien
denotes honesty and affirms the language of the heart, the
just judgment of which is born by purity of thought; and
Chih stands as the sign of a conscientious mode of action, in
other words, the beautiful art of thinking, without which
people invariably return to savagery.

These eternal foundations of existence are recalled in a
simple manner. Pan-human is the thinking which can
understand them in full reciprocity. There is no abstraction
in the construction of life with such calling reminders.

Chiang-Kai-shek recalls the five thousand years of
Chinese culture and also justly points out that in view of
negligence towards the mentioned foundations, contemporary
life has retrogressed far from those possibilities, which once
have already been in the world.

China has 35,000,000 square li of territory and abounds in
natural resources which if developed, could easily make this country
one of the wealthiest nations of the world. Yet there is wide-
spread poverty and misery in the land. This again is due to the
neglect of the traditional virtues of China, namely Li, Yi, Lien
and Chih.

China has 400,000,000 people who used to be well organized in
all the essentials of life. But what spectacle do our people present
to the rest of the world today? They are disorganized, indolent, cowardly and torn between conflicting perverse teachings, leading a life little better than that of savages. This again is due to the neglect of Li, Yi, Lien and Chih.

To sum up, the New-Life Movement aims at the substitution of a rational mode of living for the present irrational mode of living of the people. How can this be effected? My answer is: by making Li, Yi, Lien and Chih the code of our daily conduct.

In advocating the revival of our traditional virtues such as Li, Yi, Lien and Chih, the object in view is an artistic mode of living for all our people. Many are apt to think that only a few privileged persons can lead an artistic life. This is a mistake. It is within the reach of all. Every Chinese should have a decent standard of living, which is another term for an artistic mode of living.

In ancient times China used to have the so-called six arts and sciences: Rites, Music, Archery, Horsemanship, Calligraphy and Mathematics. These things to-day have made the Western powers great and strong, although the Chinese people for centuries used them as guiding principles of action in life. The reason why there is so much suspicion, jealousy and animosity in Chinese society to-day is that we have forgotten the teachings of our ancients. There is no hope of improvement unless we order our lives in accordance with the principles of Li, Yi, Lien and Chih.

The poverty of China is due to the existence of so many people who cannot produce anything of their own and who live on others. The productivity of the people must be increased. We must develop our immense natural resources and avoid waste. Every one should consider it a shame to depend upon others for his support. In other words, everyone must work for his own living. There is no way to relieve the poverty of China and remove the source of civil strife other than to practise the principles of Li, Yi, Lien and Chih in our daily lives.

In advocating Li, Yi, Lien and Chih as the code of our daily conduct, we are inspired by the desire to "discipline" the life of our people. When a nation cannot fight for the defence of its soil against foreign invasion, it cannot be considered a nation. We must cultivate stern measures if we are to overcome the
present weakness of our country. China to-day is overrun by
Communist-Bandits. Civil war has not yet been completely
banished from the land. Our national territory is growing smaller
and smaller every day. Imperialists join with traitors and com-
munists in oppressing our people and undermining our country.
If we wish to deliver China from the present crisis and bring peace
and order to the land, we must prepare to "discipline" the whole
country. Before this is possible, the people must be trained in the
habits of orderliness, discipline, cleanliness, simplicity and accurate
thinking. They must be law-abiding, conscious of their responsi-
bility and ready to die for the country.

A rational mode of living is realized when the principles of
Li, Yi, Lien and Chih are applied to the daily conduct of the
people, especially in matters pertaining to food, shelter, clothing
and deportment. A great revolution will have been effected and
the foundations of new national structure laid when every
Chinese lives in accordance with the principles of the New Life
Movement, which are based on the traditional virtues of Li, Yi,
Lien and Chih.

Thus it was affirmed on March 1 of last year by General
Chiang-Kai-shek in Nanchang. The appeal of the head of
the government found response throughout the country.
Social organizations, private enterprizes, provincial depart-
ments, municipalities and various administrations immediately
decided to join this movement. One of the earliest organiza-
tions was formed at Nanking already on the 16th of March.
At the opening ceremony a significant speech was delivered
by Mr. Wang Ching-wei, followed by a series of friendly
demonstrations on the part of workers, students and trade-
unions. In his speech Mr. Wang declared that the movement
of new life is the vital spark of the regeneration of the
Chinese nation and called for a sincere support of all respon-
sible organizations, and also of all social leaders. He insisted
that this movement must be systematically spread and
organized and it was accepted by everyone for immediate
application.

If the principle of living ethics were applied in many parts of the world, then the movement of the new life would quite naturally rejuvenate the quests of our days. Finally, whatever name we attribute to these searchings, they will invariably lead to the approaches to the same permanent values. No matter how people try to revaluate the immutable, it will make itself known imperatively and undeviatingly.

It is said that revaluations take place thrice every century,—so it is thought. Probably this term is meant to represent the change of generations. Within normal conditions such a periodicity of waves of life is rather accurate. It is instructive to follow how the history of ethics and culture under different names in various hidden and open approaches, mentions the same Immutable, Eternal.

Know that to be indestructible, by whom all this is pervaded. Nor can any work the destruction of that imperishable One. Whether we shall speak in terms of this or another age, whether we use the expression of wisdom of one or another nation, the theme will be one and the same—of the Eternal, Indestructible and Immeasurable.

Ever remaining the same, unperturbed by success and failure, perform thy duties in union with the Divine.

And again on that same memorable field of Kurukshetra!
It is the duty of the President to make annual reports to the Congress of the State of the Executive Department and to submit reports in writing on any matter which he may deem necessary for the country.

In his addresses to the Nation, the President shall have the power to declare that the interests of the country are involved in any question of international commerce, and that such question is of such importance as to require that the domestic relations of the country shall be affected by it.

If any question of international commerce shall arise, the President shall have the duty of making a report to the Congress, and of submitting a report in writing on the same, in the form prescribed by act of Congress.