

Review Article

The Extended Debate about Economic Reform in China

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Historical experience has shown that there are distinct phases in socio-economic transformation after a revolution like those in Russia in 1917 or in China in 1949. Both economies were mainly based on agriculture at that specific point in time. Economic development thus implied primary accumulation, construction of a modern technical and cultural infrastructure (railways, roads, schools, universities, hospitals, social security system etc.) as foundations of industrialisation - development in all fields of society and economy in order to catch up with developed countries. This phase necessarily called for a high share of investment and a low share of consumption in the GNP. But the policy of asking the consumers, who, after all, are the producers, too, to forsake consumption and accept a very slow improvement in their standard of living, can become dangerous for development itself, if this policy is too hard and lasts for too long. In this case people will be alienated and try to flee from the official planned economy into some type of shadow economy.

This first phase should therefore be as short as possible and be followed by a second phase, during which the demands and needs of the producers-consumers are taken as the main target of economic strategy: more consumer goods (in the broadest sense, including housing, transportation, education, social services). However, due to bureaucratisation of the planning machinery and the solidification of certain pseudo-Marxist „theories“, the transition from the first to the second phase of planned economic development was delayed both in Russia and in the People's Republic of China. A real, sovereign representation of the demands of workers and peasants vis à vis the planning authorities was entirely missing. Trade unions had lost their independence and had become tools of state administration with the entirely dishonest argument that, after a revolution, different, let alone contradictory interests, social groups or classes with their specific demands no longer exist.

Wage policies, too, have to be seen and understood in the context of primary accumulation and extreme scarcity of all consumer goods. Thus, "war communism" is in fact equality in poverty, realised by rationing and distribution of scarce food and commodities. "Theory" soothes this poverty as "communism" and as the ideal form of future equal distribution of all goods and services. When initial poverty and economic monostructure are overcome, new factories are built and production is diversified, the primary equality is abolished and a controlled, limited differentiation of income is desirable.

Planning in both the Soviet and Chinese economies became unrealistic. Precise quantitative, physical goals were set, ignoring the gestation time necessary for any production, be it food, steel plants, bridges or housing. Stalin ordered the first five-year plan to be implemented in four years. And Mao Zedong in 1956 ordered a big leap forward. Economists who dared to disagree with this command economy were dismissed, jailed or even executed. Economic debate was banned by Stalin in 1930. And the famous Chinese economist Sun Yefang was jailed for seven years during the "cultural revolution".

While the economies of these underdeveloped socialist states were struggling to catch up with the rest of the developed world, this rest also made some progress in technology and in the living standard of workers and peasants. Technical progress was achieved sometimes in small steps, sometimes in large, and it included the consumer goods sector. Such changes cannot be hidden anywhere in the world of today, since the media have access to the most remote corner of our planet.

The ban on debate and alternative thinking in the field of economy and the emphasis on quantitative growth were two of the factors that slowed down the fast growth of these economies in the second post-revolutionary period and contributed to the breakdown of socialism as it existed in Eastern Europe and the USSR.

After 1989 came the opportunity for many Western "experts" to advise the new governments in economic policies. Often they suggested fast, immediate transition to an open market economy, i.e. capitalism, opening the borders for importation of consumer goods and technology transfer and privatising factories and collective farms etc. The results of this advice have not been very convincing hitherto. Therefore it might be of some interest to look into the development of the Chinese economy and its problems during the extended period of reform, which began after Mao Zedong's death in autumn 1976.

Some Western observers have been impatient with the pace of structural transformation of the urban industrial sector. Leading Chinese politicians,

e.g. Zhu Rongji, now premier since March 1998, responsible for economic policies and structural reform, have tried to explain the caution. In an interview in 1993 he said:

"But, if we dismiss the workers, we create enormous unemployment, and that will threaten social stability. If we create a social network as in the West, that will be too expensive for the state. Even in the developed countries social security has become a burden too heavy for the governments ... The industries of the state sector bear a huge burden on their shoulders and offer the living basis for many people. If we consider that, these factories are quite useful."

A book by Joseph Fewsmith from the US follows the intensive debate about economic reform in the PRC and its connections with the political changes.² In the introduction the author points to the interrelation between the think-tanks and the political process:

"These schools of thought do not exist independently of the political process, but are part and parcel of a continuing debate over public policy and power." (p. 5)

Since the death of Mao, there has been a broad debate of the economic issues and of objectives and methods of reform. Since 1978, the merciless infighting in the CP-leadership has ceased. Now the struggle is against the (more dangerous) "left deviationism" (i.e. the opponents of reform) and "bourgeois liberalisation", the undesirable awkward side-effects of reform and opening.

The changed approach - no more hard inner-party struggle until the annihilation of the "enemy" - is due to the experience of the present leadership, most of whom were victims of the cultural revolution:

"The party veterans, who returned to power in the late 1970s were repelled by Mao's leadership style and the ruthless inner-party struggles that he had visited upon them." (p. 8)

Fewsmith sees three groups in the leadership: the opponents of economic reform, the cautious reformers "led" by Chen Yun (often called conservative) and the more daring reformers around Deng Xiaoping, both victims of the cultural revolution. But their later differences were dealt with in a dialogue. Fewsmith defines Deng's line as "marketization and diversification of the economy, the depoliticization (not liberalization) of society, opening to the outside world, and ... higher rates of economic growth" (p. 9). The two opponents are both Marxists, and none wants a "final victory" over his peer.

¹ Interview of Zhu Rongji with P. Seidlitz, "Zhu Rongji will einen Expansionskurs ohne unkalkulierbare Experimente halten". In: *Handelsblatt*, 10 May 1993.

² Joseph Fewsmith, *Dilemmas of reform in China - Political conflict and economic debate*. Armonk, N.Y., and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1994. X + 289 pp.

Chapter 1 deals with agrarian reform, started as a regional experiment in 1978 and fully implemented in 1983. The ideas about a different agrarian strategy go back to Chen Zihui (1956), Wan Li and Deng Xiaoping, who in 1962 tried to criticize the hasty formation of people's communes. The final success of the reform was partly due to a conjunction of forces between peasants and leadership, both prone to reform, against a bureaucracy that wanted to maintain the status quo.

There have been several attempts to correct the effects of the big leap forward. Thus, at a large conference of young communists in 1962 Deng Xiaoping declared:

"Whatever form the peasants are willing to adopt, they should adopt; those that are illegal should be legalized."

And he added:

"Now if we want to restore agricultural production, it is necessary to look at the situation. We should use whatever form (of production) arouses the enthusiasm of the masses. Now it seems that whether in industry or in agriculture, it is not possible to advance without first retreating." (p. 26)

Deng was then forced to recant in a lengthy "confession".³ The profound debates started in 1978 after the factual demise of Hua Guofeng. There were different lines in the administration, different political lines in the CP, in the research institutions which formulated different strategies, think-tanks organizing their field research and seminars; the results were submitted to the leading institutions of party and state. The politicians, among them Chen Yun, who in 1978 voted Deng back into office, were

"strongly committed to socialism, including central planning, (but) found their vision of socialism mocked by the poverty of China in general and of the countryside in particular" (p. 37).

Over the following years Deng promoted younger reformers and helped them to leading positions, beginning in 1978 with Hu Yaobang, 1980 with Zhao Ziyang and Wan Li. But he also suffered setbacks and hard opposition from old-fashioned economists. Thus, the struggle about the new responsibility system for the farming sector was first officially accepted in a party document two years later. A "group for agricultural development" in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences was the driving force in formulating the new agricultural policies.

Chapter 2 deals with the reform in the industrial sector, which was more difficult and therefore more protracted than in farming. Pioneering thinkers were Hu Yaobang and Hu Qiaomu. In 1977, "an intellectual atmosphere of

³ The confession is quoted at length in: Erwin Wickert, *China von innen gesehen*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt (no year).

unprecedented openness developed quickly" (p.57). The two, political friends of Deng, criticized a mistaken planning strategy, not planning itself, with arguments reminding one of Nikolai Bukharin's early criticism of exaggerated, bureaucratized planning and Sun Yefang, who during the cultural revolution had been labeled "China's Liberman"⁴. Hu Quiaomu's report was the impulse "to several tens of conferences" all over China in 1979, debating the relationship between plan and market, repeating a famous conference on that same issue in 1959. As a result, a large central meeting of economists in Wuxi called for "an organic integration of plan and market", representing "the essence of socialism" (p.65), and demanded more freedom for the management of large state enterprises:

"The articles that came out of the Wuxi conference, reflected an unprecedented openness in Chinese economic thinking and a willingness to challenge long-held understandings of Marxism, including the views of more open-minded policy-makers and intellectuals such as Chen Yun and Sun Yefang." (p.66)

Some participants had extended their criticism and asked for an end of effective planning; that, however, was not accepted by the vast majority. But, the economist Dong Fureng demanded a new form of "property (of the means of production) by the people", not privatization, but severing the ties between the state and economic enterprises. In 1979 Xue Muqiao edited his "studies of China's socialist economy", a collection of papers by several famous reform economists. The book criticized sharply the cultural revolution and its disastrous effects on the economy; thus, it influenced the evaluation of Maoism, formulated by the CP leadership on June 27, 1981 after an extended public debate.⁵ In 1979 the administration of the economy was also re-organized and several research groups on economic problems were formed, coordinated by a small group for the study of the reform of the economic structure. Furthermore, several young researchers formed small groups which were encouraged to publish their critical studies. Now, many ideas were thrown up, many nuances of reform debated, all aspects of planning criticized. Some proposals were tried in "small" samples. There was, however, also foreign intervention against the reform attempts. Fewsmith quotes an interview stating that during the Wuxi conference on theory in April 1979,

⁴ Liberman was a leading economist in the era of Krushchev, who advocated economic reform. - Sun Yefang was victim of the "cultural revolution", when he was in jail for about 7 years.

⁵ Resolution on certain questions in the history of our party since the founding of the People's Republic of China (1981, 27 June). In: Xue Muqiao (ed.) (1982), *Almanac of China's Economy 1981*. Hongkong. pp. 76-104.

"Kim Il-Sung made a secret visit to China and grilled Deng Xiaoping on whether or not he was intending to become another Krushchev, whether or not he intended to uphold socialism, whether or not he would maintain the leading role of the Communist Party, and so forth. Deng, whose power was not yet secure, feared that he would indeed be labeled another Krushchev." (p. 82)⁶

The next chapter deals with the real difficulties of reform; here the differences appear between the two leading reformers Chen Yun and Deng Xiaoping, Chen not opposing reform, but counseling caution, a slower pace, understanding the task, given the huge dimensions of country and population. Already in 1957 Chen had warned:

"The scale of construction must be suited to the national and financial material capacity. Whether it is suited or not, determines whether there is economic stability or instability ... There will be rashness and economic chaos, if the scale of construction exceeds the national and financial capacity." (p. 89)

He had demanded a threefold equilibrium: between financial revenue and expenditure, between bank loans and repayments, between supply and demand of goods and materials. On these issues another controversy arose between the leading political reformers Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, both supported by Deng and, together with Wan Li, brought into the highest party leadership by Deng and Chen.

Deng now started a debate about political reforms. For him

"most important (was) the question of systems and institutions. Chairman Mao made many correct statements, but the faulty systems and institutions of the past pushed him in the opposite direction" (p. 101).

Deng inaugurated an intensive ideology debate which was almost stopped by the political crisis in Poland in autumn 1980, when the Polish communists were defeated in the general elections and government passed to non-communists. The draft of the resolution on the history of the CP and the evaluation of Mao Zedong was accepted by the Central Committee and transferred to 4 000 party activists for further discussion and correction.

During a central working conference Chen Yun criticized the reform for going too far. He was not opposed to the attraction of foreign capital, but he warned:

"The reason that I repeatedly urge caution while welcoming foreign capitalists is that some of our cadres are still very naive about this." (p. 108)

Fewsmith describes the compromise made by Deng with Chen:

⁶ Liu Shaoqi was given the label "China's Krushchev" at the start of the cultural revolution. He died in jail in 1969. His wife and their four children survived.

"With Chen's pre-eminence over economic policy reasserted, China's leadership became essentially a duumvirate, with Deng having final say on political matters but Chen having the most important voice on economic affairs. Although Deng and Chen shared many goals, including the economic development of China and the retention of party leadership, their personal styles, their different visions of the future, and their different political resources fashioned the central political rivalry in the decade of reform." (p. 109)

In 1981, the pendulum swung back; the cautious Chen Yun prevailed. In 1983, another swing of the pendulum: in its new year declaration the party leadership calls for the separation of state administration and economic management of the people's communes and permits the employment of wage laborers. In that year also, Hu Yaobang, secretary general of the CP, uses the anniversary of the death of Karl Marx to present a non-dogmatic Marx and to call for a revival of non-dogmatic Marxism.

For this task intellectuals were instrumental; they contributed to a renewal and reinterpretation of Marxism, thereby giving a theoretical foundation to reform. These Marxists mainly referred to the economic and philosophical manuscripts of 1844. In 1984, first cautious steps were taken to reform the management of the industrial sector, then still mainly owned by the state. This led to a deepening rift between Chen Yun and Deng, who felt that his friend's approach was too conservative and obsolete. The power of the party secretary over the factories was limited to his political tasks and the competence of management received first priority. Quantitative orders by the Planning Commission were considerably reduced from January 1, 1985 onwards.

New conferences debated issues of economy and of Marxist theory; the debates were intensive, sometimes heated. By the end of October the plenary session of the Central Committee took a "decision about reform of the economic structure". Deng summed up the debate:

"Some of our comrades are most worried by whether we will become capitalist ... They are afraid of seeing capitalism suddenly looming up after having worked all their lives for socialism and communism, and they cannot stand such a sight." (p. 135)

The problems of reform encouraged opponents and critics and led to splits among the reformers. Difficulties arose due to the harsh reactions of foreign entrepreneurs, since active, sovereign trade unions did not exist to defend the employees. In addition, the impulses of the agrarian reform of 1978-82 were exhausted. To further raise food production new ways and ideas were called for. Another problem was the overheating of the economic boom. Excessively high growth rates threatened the intersectoral balance and the stability of the currency, which might lead to social unrest and political in-

stability. To discuss these issues, Zhao Ziyang in September 1985 convened an international symposium, where Chinese reform economists met with W. Brus (Poland), Janos Kornai (Hungary) and the Nobel laureate James Tobin (USA). Even the Keynesian Tobin supported macro-economic control at least for the transition period of the economy: 7 p.c. annual growth for the five-year plan period was seen as tolerable.

In 1986, Zhao Ziyang, supported by Hu Yaobang, attacked the cautious Chen Yun. At a working conference of 800 party officials, leading reformers had the rostrum. Qiao Shi, an ally of the reformers, was to head a special committee against corruption. Three sons of high cadres ("princes") were executed as a warning signal. Zhao Ziyang mobilized "young researchers, who were part of a genuine intellectual revolution" (p. 181) for new debates and new ideas. One of them proposed the establishment of "stock-asset management bureaus ... responsible for handling the state's investment in enterprises, ... appointing the requisite number of directors" (p. 187) - a property reform, not leading to capitalist privatization. State authorities should deal with development planning and policy, should harmonize the relations between enterprises and control law and order.

Deng again took up the issue of political reform and connected it with the struggle against corruption. During a high-level conference of the provincial governors in April 1986 he said: "Unconditioned power is the source of all unhealthy tendencies." (p. 190) He criticized "leftism", which meant a conservative approach towards economic and political reform. The reformer Li Yining demanded freedom of academic debate, alleging that the conservatives did not protect, but rather distort, Marxism. In the debate, several schools of thought would emerge that would all be Marxist.

That same year 1986, the Central Committee decided to "work out plans" so that political reform could proceed "step by step and with proper guidance" (p. 195). But Hu Yaobang's attempt to accelerate this process led to an alienation between him and his mentor Deng. For different reasons the tensions between Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang were also aggravated. In January 1987, Hu was dismissed and Zhao became party secretary in addition to being premier. Zhao, too, tried to promote political reform; in March 1987 he declared that "our political structural reform is in the planning stage, and we are studying a concrete program for this reform" (p. 206). Deng confirmed this statement in an interview with the governor general of Canada; the forthcoming 13th party conference would decide about it. But the conservatives mobilized their forces in a public conference in April 1987. The struggle between the two lines was fought in public. Economic reform of the industrial sector took another step with the enterprise law, which was to consolidate enterprise autonomy. The role of the manager was discussed again; some reformers advocated sole responsibility. A separate

group of entrepreneurs with its specific interests should be formed, "because only such a clearly demarcated group could restrain the constant pressure for wage increases" (p. 213).

A new element in the process of reform was introduced by Zhao Ziyang in 1987: he proposed to promote village and township enterprises (VTE), which could participate in the "great international cycle". Two young economists had developed a theory of the "great international cycle"; two difficult problems of reform might be solved: the re-employment of 180 million hands who have to leave farming by the year 2000, and the early modernization of the aging industries. The village and township enterprises were to be established in eastern China's countryside, which would stimulate the export drive with its cheap labour. Increased inflow of foreign currency would then finance the technology transfer and modernization of the industrial sector. Zhao accepted the idea, and a drive for VTE was started. The hope was to solve the problems of surplus labour (without rural exodus) and of lack of capital in one stroke.

But, at the 13th party conference in September 1987 Zhao was relieved of premiership by the more conservative Li Peng. Zhao had favored the reformer Tian Jiyun - without success. Since that time the political influence of Zhao and his mentor Deng has declined. At a conference of the party leaders in July 1988, Zhao again failed to win a majority for his strategy. A decision of the Central Committee to support "the reform of prices and salaries as the key to the entire economic reform" was countered by a government decision two weeks later to give priority to anti-inflationary measures; price reform became secondary. This might have been a reaction to public panic after the announcement of price reform. A cooling-off period for the overheated economic growth was decided upon, slowing the growth rate to 6 p.c. Tensions grew among economic leaders and also in the leadership of the CP. Rumours circulated in winter 1988/89 about an impending discharge of Zhao Ziyang as secretary general of the CP. Fewsmith comments:

"Conflict over economic policy was central in driving China's political leadership to the edge of the abyss; with the development of the student and popular movement in the spring of 1989, conflict in the party became irreconcilable. Then the logic of total victory took over, with tragic results for the people of China." (p. 232)

In a short concluding chapter the author sums up his deliberations about the complicated interweaving and interaction of politics and economy in the Deng era. Deng and other victims of the cultural revolution had a comprehensive economic and ideological program, when they discharged Hua Guofeng. Their theoretical vision - "underdeveloped socialism" or "initial phase of socialism" instead of Mao's short-cut to communism - had to be explained to the party and be accepted by it. Without the active support of

hundreds of thousands of party activists the economic reform could not be implemented. Wan Li's and Zhao Ziyang's experiment with agrarian reform, Hu Qiaomu's speech and the campaign about practice as sole criterion of truth formed the basis for Deng's return to the leadership positions. But the reformers differed in their visions of socialist development of the economy; Chen preferred more equilibrium, Deng understood disproportions as impulses for a new equilibrium on a higher economic level.

Deng Xiaoping's biography, his modest personal style, the new political culture might alone have formed the basis for his popularity, prestige and authority. But due to his personal experience under Mao Zedong with his dictatorial decisions and their catastrophic effects, he did not act as an autocrat. He also, so Fewsmith, understood that leadership is easier with different opinions, which lead to improved decisions and offer an alternative in case of failure. He was more the arbitrator, who weighed all proposals (and the strength of the inner-party currents) and then tried to find the best decision, a balanced compromise - without losing sight of his final objective. He needed comrades for his reform and did not aim at total victory over his opponents inside the party.

In this respect it is quite interesting how Fewsmith views the events of June 4, 1989 at Tiananmen Square and their background. In 1988 difficulties had already accumulated and tensions become aggravated. Fewsmith suggests that the conservatives felt "that the endgame was approaching" (p. 246). That was the other tradition in the CP, the attempt at a total victory. Even the conservatives - so the author - did not aim to return to Mao's strategy, but rather to a more cautious reform process; the differences were about the degrees and the pace of reform, not about the principle. But:

"Although Zhao Ziyang was made the scapegoat for the difficulties the economy had encountered, there is little question that the target of conservative ire was Deng Xiaoping. Conservatives lacked the power to oust Deng and no doubt lacked the desire to split the party decisively by trying to do so, but they did have the desire to constrain Deng and to reduce his authority over the economy ... Deng's prestige within the party plummeted and conservatives took advantage of his weakened position to dominate economic policy as well as other areas of the polity." (p. 246)

Deng's two speeches to the "victorious" soldiers after June 4 were clear concessions. And:

"It is indeed suggestive of Deng's loss of authority in the period immediately after Tiananmen that he could not get his own remarks released without ... a critical revision." (p. 247) "Such a direct ... challenge to Deng's ability to set China's political agenda was unprecedented in the post-1978 period and reflected Deng's own political weakness in the aftermath of Tiananmen - which was compounded by the demise of communism in Eastern Europe.

Moreover, the events of late 1989 and early 1990 make it clear that Deng's political opponents were willing to use the political momentum that they had gained in the wake of Tiananmen to push an economic and political agenda quite distinct from that of Deng's. In short, they worked to undermine Deng's authority, establish a different political line, and thereby secure the succession." (p. 249)

In spite of his age, Deng did not give up his struggle for continued reform even after his fourth loss of power. That was already clear in autumn 1990. In 1992, he made his last public appearance with the trip to southern China. When the 14th party conference convened in October 1992, Deng had again turned the balance of forces. His theories were the main part of the political report of the Central Committee: "the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics" and the "building of a socialist market economy". Fewsmith finds that even the horror of Tiananmen in June 1989 did not turn the political clock backward. The forces of economic reform had their positive effects.

Finally, he reports some important reforms in internal policies, mostly unknown to the distant observer:

"The Chinese political system is beginning to respond to the political pressures from below in ways that it has not previously responded in the past four decades." (p. 250)

After the revision of the electoral law in 1986, the official party candidates for the post of governor failed in several provinces and local interests prevailed. And he concludes:

"The passing of the generation that made the revolution, the rapid growth of market forces and non-state enterprises, the growing wealth of the population, and the pressures to contain the forces that could destroy China may pave the way for the institutionalization and politics of compromise that have for so long been lacking. Perhaps such cautious optimism may yet prove warranted." (p. 250)

This book is the most detailed analysis known to me of Chinese politics and economic policies and of the changes after the death of Mao in autumn 1976. The analysis offers a profound understanding of the problems of socialist construction in a vast country, underdeveloped due to internal social stagnation and semi-colonial exploitation and oppression. For their giant's task the leaders of communist China cannot find any precedent anywhere. European dimensions and methods cannot be used, maybe even European concepts are inadequate since they often have a different connotation in China.

Harmonious economic development can hardly be achieved; but the swings which have causes different from economic cycles and crises in a capitalist economy, should be minimized.

There is a continuous, extended, controversial, largely public debate, which can, however, only be observed and followed by interested and politically active persons. The new problems motivate Marxist economists to develop Marxist economics further and to establish different lines and "schools" of thinking, which are all Marxist. The solutions suggested are multifarious; no unanimity is aimed at, and no last word ending all debates is spoken by any "leader".

No solidified factions have formed in the CP, different opinions co-exist. The quite recent experience calls for a new political culture of patient debate. Economic strategies are determined by economic reality and are changing with this reality. The strategy of the period of utter poverty and scarcity cannot be maintained when this period is overcome.

Foreign observers discuss whether this openness for new thinking and new solutions was already leading or will lead to the end of China's socialist experiment. Unlike in the Mao era, most Chinese economists do not question the socialist philosophy and conviction of their opponents, rather the viability and usefulness of their ideas.

Maybe the simplifying perception of the "final goal" of the Stalin- and Mao-leadership has to be replaced by an entirely different philosophy: transformation of a semi-feudal backward society and economy into a modern and socialist one is not done by impatient campaigns and big leaps forward toward a fixed goal, but is an outdrawn process of patient construction and modernization, in which economic growth is accompanied by steady improvement of living standards (in the broadest sense) of the entire population. In this long process there is also time for the socio-psychological adaptation of the individual to a different society and a different role in this society.

The necessary patience is connected with a different understanding of ways and goals of the new society; it will not be a heaven of harmony without social conflicts and tensions. Deng has spoken of a transition period of 50 to 100 years.

Finally, Fewsmith suggests a re-evaluation of the events of June 4, 1989, when the army crushed a peaceful demonstration for a better socialism. Probably Deng was not responsible for the brutal military solution, which severely damaged respect for the communist leadership. By own intention, by personal experience and due to his understanding of power relations Deng was never an autocrat, rather, a mediator, but always the communist who does not lose sight of his objectives, even when he is compelled to compromise. The decision, carried through by the conservatives, forced the resignation of Zhao Ziyang, but it aimed also at the factual deposition of

Deng and thus wanted to determine the succession and the economic strategy. Fewsmith says:

"This is not to say that elite conflict was the only cause of the Tiananmen tragedy. Obviously the tremendous changes in society and in the relationship between state and society wrought by the reforms were fundamental to the emergence of popular protest. Nevertheless, elite conflict contributed greatly to the political atmosphere in which the protests occurred, as well as to the way in which the regime responded." (p. 16)

With his energy, Deng has overcome this fourth defeat in his political career, has again promoted reformers into the political leadership and consolidated the reform strategy.

Fewsmith's book is an impressive publication about China's recent history. It stimulates our thinking and the re-assessment of many usual perceptions.

Rainer Hoffmann / Hu Qihua

Neokonfuzianer und Sinobuddhisten

**Drei Studien zur Entstehung der Lixue-Philosophie
in der späten Tang-Dynastie**

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Nahezu ein Millennium hindurch bildete die *Lixue*-Philosophie die geistige Grundlage der chinesischen Gesellschaft. Ihre Aussagen, die die ethischen Aspekte des Lebens in den Vordergrund stellen, erscheinen in einer Gegenwart voller Modernisierungsprobleme in einem neuen, bedeutungsvollen Licht. Die in der gesamten chinesischen Oikumene zu verspürende Re-Traditionalisierung bedeutet konkret einen Rekurs auf konfuzianische und neo-konfuzianische Wertmuster.

Die vorliegende Arbeit ist bestrebt, den intellektuellen Anfängen der *Lixue*-Weltanschauung nachzuspüren. Sie will zeigen, wie die Han-Yu-Generation in einer politischen, gesellschaftlichen und geistigen Krisensituation imstande war, eine grundstürzende Reform der konfuzianischen Lehre in die Wege zu leiten.

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