

Commentary 6: On How the Chinese Communist Party Destroyed Traditional Culture

Foreword

Culture is the soul of a nation. This spiritual factor is as important to mankind as physical factors such as race and land.

Cultural developments define the history of a nation's civilization. The complete destruction of a national culture leads to the end of the nation. Ancient nations that had created glorious civilizations were considered to have vanished when their cultures disappeared, even though people of their races may have survived. China is the only country in the world whose ancient civilization has been passed down continuously for more than five thousand years. The destruction of its traditional culture is an unforgivable crime.

The Chinese culture, believed to be passed down by the divine, started with such myths as Pangu's creation of heaven and the earth, [1] Nüwa's creation of humanity, [2] Shennong's identification of hundreds of medicinal herbs, [3] and Cangjie's invention of Chinese characters. [4] "Man follows the earth, the earth follows heaven, heaven follows the Tao, and the Tao follows what is natural." [5] The Taoist wisdom of the unity of heaven and humanity has coursed through the veins of Chinese culture. "Great learning promotes the cultivation of virtue." [6] Confucius opened a school to teach students more than two thousand years ago and imparted to society the Confucian ideals represented by the five cardinal virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness. In the first century, Shakyamuni's Buddhism, with its emphasis on compassion and salvation for all beings, traveled east to China. The Chinese culture became more wide-ranging and profound. Thereafter, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism became complementary beliefs in Chinese society, bringing the Tang Dynasty (618–907) to a zenith of world-renowned glory and prosperity.

Although the Chinese nation has experienced invasion and attack many times in history, the Chinese culture has shown great endurance and stamina, and its essence has been continuously passed down from one generation to the next. The unity of heaven and humanity represents our ancestors' cosmology. It is common sense that kindness will be rewarded and evil will be punished. It is an elementary virtue that one should not do to others what one does not want done to oneself. Loyalty, filial piety, dignity, and justice have set the social standards, and Confucius's five cardinal virtues have laid the

foundation for social and personal morality. With these principles, the Chinese culture embodied honesty, kindness, harmony, and tolerance. Inscriptions on the memorial tablets of Chinese commoners show reverence to “heaven, earth, monarch, parents, and teacher.” This is a cultural expression of deeply rooted Chinese traditions, including worship of the divine (heaven and earth), loyalty to the country (monarch), values of family (parents), and respect for teachers. Traditional Chinese culture sought harmony between man and the universe and emphasized an individual’s ethics and morality. It was based on the faiths of the cultivation practices of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, and provided the Chinese people with tolerance, social progress, a safeguard for human morality, and righteous belief.

Unlike laws, which prescribe hard rules, culture works as a soft constraint. The law enforces punishment after a crime has been committed, while culture, by nurturing morality, prevents crimes from happening in the first place. A society’s morality is often embodied in its culture.

Traditional Chinese culture reached its peak during the prosperous Tang Dynasty, coinciding with the height of the Chinese nation’s power. Science was also advanced and enjoyed a unique reputation among all nations. Scholars from Europe, the Middle East, and Japan came to study in Chang’an, the capital of the Tang Dynasty. Countries bordering China took China as their suzerain state. “Myriad states came to pay tribute to China. In order to have a good relationship with China, they would make an effort to translate their languages multiple times, to overcome the language barrier.” [7]

Following the Qin Dynasty (221–207 B.C.), China was often occupied by minority groups. This happened during the Sui (581–618), Tang (618–907), Yuan (1271–1368), and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties and at other times when ethnic minorities established their own rule. Nevertheless, almost all these ethnic groups were assimilated to the Chinese ways. This shows the great integrative power of traditional Chinese culture. As Confucius said, “If the people from afar are not compliant, bring them around by cultivating [our] culture and virtue.” [8]

Since attaining power in 1949, the CCP has devoted the nation’s resources to destroying China’s traditional culture. This ill intention did not come from the CCP’s zeal for industrialization, nor from a foolish desire to emulate Western civilization. Rather, it came from the CCP’s inherent ideological opposition to traditional Chinese culture. Thus, the CCP’s destruction of Chinese culture has been planned, well-organized, and systematic, supported by the state’s use of violence. Since its establishment, the CCP has never stopped “revolutionizing” Chinese culture in its attempt to destroy its spirit completely.

Even more despicable than the CCP's destruction of traditional culture is its intentional misuse and underhanded modification of traditional culture. The CCP has highlighted the vilest events in China's history, things that occurred whenever people diverged from traditional values, such as vying for power within the royal family, the use of tactics and conspiracy, and dictatorship and despotism. It has used these historical examples to help create the CCP's own set of moral standards, ways of thinking, and system of discourse. In doing so, the CCP has created the false impression that this "Communist Party culture" is actually a continuation of traditional Chinese culture. The CCP has even taken advantage of the aversion some people have toward Party culture, encouraging them to further reject the authentic Chinese tradition.

The CCP's destruction of traditional culture has brought disastrous consequences to China. Not only have people lost their moral bearings, but also they have been forcibly indoctrinated with the CCP's evil theories.

I. Why Did the CCP Want to Sabotage Traditional Culture?

The Long Tradition of Chinese Culture: Based on Faith and Venerating Virtue

The authentic culture of the Chinese nation started about five thousand years ago with the legendary Yellow Emperor, who is deemed to be the earliest ancestor of Chinese civilization. In fact, Emperor Huang is credited with founding Taoism, which is also called the Huang-Lao school of thought. The profound influence of Taoism on Confucianism can be seen in such Confucian sayings as "aspire to the Tao, align with virtue, abide by benevolence, and immerse yourself in the arts" and "if one hears the Tao in the morning, one can die without regret in the evening." [9] The "Book of Changes," or "I Ching", a record of heaven and earth, yin and yang, cosmic changes, social rise and decline, and the laws of human life, was regarded by Confucians as the top text among all Chinese classics. The prophetic power of the book has far surpassed what modern science can conceive. In addition to Taoism and Confucianism, Buddhism—especially Zen Buddhism — has had a subtle yet profound influence on Chinese intellectuals.

Confucianism was the part of the traditional Chinese culture that focused on "entering the mundane world." It emphasized family-based ethics, in which filial piety played an extremely important role, teaching that "all kindness starts with filial piety." Confucius advocated benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness, but also said, "Aren't filial piety and brotherly love the roots of benevolence?"

Family-based ethics can be naturally extended to guide social morality. Filial piety can be extended to subordinates' loyalty to the monarch. Confucius said, "It is seldom that a person with filial piety and brotherly love will be inclined to offend those above." [10] Brotherly love is the relationship among brothers and can be extended to righteousness and justice among friends. Confucians teach that in a family, a father should be kind, a son filial, an older brother friendly, and a younger brother respectful. Here, fatherly kindness can be extended to the benevolence of a monarch toward his subordinates. As long as the traditions of the family can be maintained, social morality can naturally be sustained. "Cultivate oneself, regulate one's family, rightly govern one's state, and pacify all under heaven." [11]

Buddhism and Taoism are the parts of Chinese culture that focused on "leaving the mundane world." The influence of Buddhism and Taoism can be found to penetrate all aspects of the Chinese people's lives. Practices that are deeply rooted in Taoism include Chinese medicine, qigong, feng shui, and divination. These practices — as well as the Buddhist concepts of a heavenly kingdom and a hell, the karmic rewards for good and the retribution for evil — have, together with Confucian ethics, formed the core of traditional Chinese culture.

The beliefs of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism offered the Chinese people a very stable moral system, unchangeable "so long as heaven remains." [12] This ethical system offered the basis for sustainability, peace, and harmony in society.

Morality belongs to the spiritual realm; thus, it is often conceptual. Culture expresses the abstract moral system in a language that can be commonly understood.

Take the Four Chinese Classics, the four most-renowned novels in Chinese culture, as examples. *The Journey to the West* [13] is a mythical tale. *Dream of the Red Chamber* [14] starts with a dialog among a spirited stone, the Deity of Infinite Space, and the Tao of Boundless Time at the Baseless Cliff of the Great Waste Mountain. This dialog provides clues for the human drama that unfolds in the novel. *Outlaws of the Marsh* [15] opens with a tale of how Premier Hong, the official in charge of military affairs, accidentally set free one hundred and eight demons. This legend explains the origin of the "one hundred and eight outlaw militants of prowess." *Three Kingdoms* [16] begins with a heavenly warning of a disaster and ends with the inescapable conclusion of divine will: "The world's affairs rush on like an endless stream; a heaven-told fate, infinite in reach, dooms all." Other well-known stories, such as *Chronicles of the Eastern Zhou* [17] and *The Complete Story of Yue Fei*, [18] all begin with similar legends.

These novelists' use of myths was not a coincidence, but rather the reflection of Chinese intellectuals' basic philosophy toward nature and humanity. These novels have had a profound influence on the Chinese mind. When speaking of righteousness,

people think of Guan Yu (160–219) of the Three Kingdoms period, rather than the concept itself. They think of how his righteousness toward his friends transcended the clouds and reached heaven; how his unmovable loyalty to his superior and sworn-brother Liu Bei gained him respect even from his enemies; how his bravery in battle carried him through times of peril; and how he made a heroic last stand near the town of Mai and was posthumously reunited with his son upon becoming a deity. When speaking of loyalty, Chinese people naturally think of Yue Fei (1103–1141), a Song Dynasty general who served his country with unreserved integrity, and Zhuge Liang (181–234), prime minister of the Shu State during the Three Kingdoms period, who “gave his all until his heart stopped beating.”

These authors vividly expounded the reverence for loyalty and righteousness that permeates traditional Chinese culture. Abstract moral principles reflected in these dramas have been immortalized in the form of popular cultural expressions.

Taoism emphasizes truthfulness, Buddhism emphasizes compassion, and Confucianism values loyalty, tolerance, benevolence, and righteousness. “While their forms differ, their purposes are the same. ... They all inspire people to return to kindness.” [19] These are the most valuable aspects of traditional Chinese culture, based upon the beliefs of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism.

Traditional Chinese culture is filled with concepts and principles such as heaven, the Tao, God, Buddha, fate, predestination, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, faithfulness, honesty, shame, loyalty, filial piety, dignity, and so on. Many Chinese may be illiterate, but they are still familiar with traditional plays and operas. These cultural forms have been important in helping people to learn traditional morals. Therefore, the CCP’s destruction of traditional Chinese culture is a direct attack on Chinese morality and undermines the basis for peace and harmony in society.

The Evil Communist Theory Opposes Traditional Culture

The “philosophy” of the Communist Party completely contradicts the authentic traditional Chinese culture. Traditional culture respects the mandate of heaven. As Confucius once said, “Life and death are predestined, and wealth and rank are determined by heaven.” [20] Both Buddhism and Taoism are forms of theism that believe in the reincarnation cycle of life and death, and the karmic causality of good and evil.

The Communist Party, on the contrary, not only believes in atheism, but also runs wild in defying the Tao and attacking heavenly principles. Confucianism values family, but the *The Communist Manifesto* clearly promotes the abolition of the family. Traditional culture differentiates the Chinese from the foreign, but *The Communist Manifesto* advocates the end of nationality.

Confucian culture promotes kindness to others, but the Communist Party encourages class struggle. Confucians encourage loyalty to the monarch and love for the nation. *The Communist Manifesto* promotes the elimination of nations.

To gain and maintain power in China, the Communist Party first had to plant its immoral thought on Chinese soil. Mao Zedong claimed, "If we want to overthrow an authority, we must first make propaganda and do work in the area of ideology." [21]

The CCP realized that its communist theory, which is sustained by force of arms, was the refuse of Western thought and could not stand up to China's profound five-thousand-year-old cultural heritage. "In for a penny, in for a pound." The CCP then completely destroyed traditional Chinese culture, so that Marxism and Leninism could rise to prominence on China's political stage.

Traditional Culture Is an Obstacle to the CCP's Dictatorship

Mao once said, fittingly, that he followed neither the Tao nor heaven. [22] Traditional Chinese culture undoubtedly served as a huge obstacle for the CCP in its defiance of the Tao and contention with heaven.

Loyalty in traditional Chinese culture did not mean blind devotion. In the eyes of the people, the emperor was a "son of heaven" with heaven above him. The emperor could not be correct at all times. Therefore, observers needed to point out the emperor's mistakes at all times.

The Chinese chronicle system had historians record all the words and deeds of the emperor. Scholastic officials could become teachers for their sage kings, and the behavior of the emperor was judged by the Confucian classics.

If the emperor was immoral and unenlightened to the Tao, people might rise up to overthrow him, as was the case when Chengtang attacked Jie, or when King Wu removed Zhou from power. [23]

These uprisings, judged from traditional culture, were not considered violations of loyalty or the Tao. Instead, they were seen as enforcing the Tao on behalf of heaven.

When Wen Tianxiang, [24] a well-known military commander in the Song Dynasty, was taken prisoner, he refused to submit to the Mongol invaders even when the Song emperor tried to persuade him to surrender. This was because, as a Confucian, he believed that "the people are of supreme importance; the nation comes next; last comes the ruler." [25]

The dictatorial CCP could by no means accept traditional beliefs such as these. The CCP wanted to canonize its own leaders and promote a cult of personality, and so would not allow such long-held concepts as heaven, the Tao, or God to govern from above.

The CCP was aware that what it did was considered the most heinous and enormous crime against heaven and the Tao if measured by the standards of traditional culture. They were aware that as long as traditional culture existed, people would not praise the CCP as “great, glorious, and correct.”

Scholars would continue the tradition of “risking their lives to admonish the monarch,” and “maintaining justice at the expense of their lives,” [26] and place the people above the rulers. Thus, the people would not become the CCP’s puppets, and the Party would not be able to force conformity on the thoughts of the masses.

Traditional culture’s respect for heaven, the earth, and nature became an obstacle for the CCP’s battle with nature in its effort to “alter heaven and the earth.” Traditional culture treasures human life, teaching that any situation involving human life has to be treated with the utmost care.

Such a perception was a hindrance to the CCP’s mass genocide and rule by terror. Traditional culture’s ultimate moral standard of the “heavenly Tao” was a hindrance to the CCP’s manipulation of moral principles. For these reasons, the CCP made traditional culture an enemy in an effort to bolster its own control.

Traditional Culture Challenges the Legitimacy of the CCP Rule

Traditional Chinese culture includes faith in gods and the heavenly mandate. Accepting the mandate of heaven means that rulers have to be wise, follow the Tao, and be attuned to destiny. Accepting belief in the divine means accepting that authority over humanity rests with heaven.

The CCP’s ruling principles are summarized by these words: “Never more tradition’s chains shall bind us. Arise ye toilers, no more in thrall. The earth shall rise on new foundations. We are but naught; we shall be all.” [27]

The CCP promotes historical materialism, claiming that communism is an earthly paradise, the path to which is led by the pioneer proletarians, or the Communist Party. Belief in the divine thus directly challenged the legitimacy of the CCP’s rule.

II. How the Communist Party Sabotages Traditional Culture

Everything the CCP does serves a political purpose. In order to seize, maintain and consolidate its tyranny, the CCP needs to replace human nature with its evil Party nature, and the Chinese traditional culture with its Party culture of “deceit, malice, and struggle.”

This destruction and substitution encompasses both tangible artifacts, such as cultural relics, historical sites, and ancient books; as well as such intangible things as the traditional outlook on morality, life, and the world. All aspects of people’s lives are involved, including their actions, thoughts, and lifestyles.

At the same time, the CCP regards insignificant and superficial cultural manifestations as the “essence,” retaining them, and then puts this essence up as a façade. The Party keeps the semblance of tradition while replacing the real tradition with Party culture. It then deceives the people and international society behind a façade of carrying on and developing Chinese traditional culture.

Simultaneously Extinguishing the Three Religions

Since traditional culture is rooted in Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, the CCP’s first step in destroying traditional culture was to extinguish the manifestation of the divine principles in the human world, eradicating the three religions corresponding to them.

All three major religions, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, encountered destruction in different historical time periods. Take Buddhism for example. It has suffered four major tribulations in history, which are historically known as the “Three Wus and One Zong” persecution of Buddhist devotees by four Chinese emperors.

Emperor Taiwu of the Northern Wei Dynasty (386–534) and Emperor Wuzong of the Tang Dynasty (618–907) both tried to extinguish Buddhism in order to have Taoism prevail. Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou Dynasty (557–581) tried to extinguish Buddhism and Taoism together, but venerated Confucianism. Emperor Shizong of the Later Zhou Dynasty (951–960) tried to extinguish Buddhism merely to use the Buddha statues to mint coins, and did not touch Taoism or Confucianism.

The CCP is the only regime to have extinguished the three religions simultaneously.

Soon after the CCP established a government, it began to destroy temples, burn scriptures, and force the Buddhist monks and nuns to return to secular life. Neither was it any softer in destroying other religious places.

By the 1960s, there were hardly any religious places left in China. The Great Cultural Revolution brought even greater religious and cultural catastrophe in the campaign to destroy “the four olds” [28] — old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits.

For example, the first Buddhist temple in China was the White Horse Temple (Bai Ma Temple) built in the early Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220) outside Luoyang City, Henan Province. It is honored as the “cradle of Buddhism in China” and “the founder’s home.”

During the campaign to destroy the four olds, the White Horse Temple, of course, could not escape looting:

There was a White Horse Temple production brigade near the temple. The Party branch secretary led peasants to smash the temple in the name of ‘revolution.’ The more than one-thousand-year-old clay statues of the Eighteen Arhats built in the Liao Dynasty (916–1125) were destroyed. The Beiyue scripture [29] that an eminent Indian monk brought to China two thousand years ago was burned. A rare treasure, the Jade Horse, was smashed to pieces. Several years later, Cambodian King-in-Exile Norodom Sihanouk made a special request to pay homage to the White Horse Temple. Zhou Enlai, the Chinese premier at the time, hurriedly ordered the transport to Luoyang of the Beiyue scripture stored in the Imperial Palace in Beijing and the statues of the Eighteen Arhats built in the Qing Dynasty from the Temple of Azure Clouds (Biyun Temple) located at the Xiangshan Park [30] in suburban Beijing. With this bogus replacement, a diplomatic difficulty was ‘solved.’ [31]

The Cultural Revolution began in May 1966. It was in fact “revolutionizing” Chinese culture in a destructive way. Starting in August 1966, the raging fire of the campaign to “destroy the four olds” burned the entire land of China.

Regarded as objects of “feudalism, capitalism, and revisionism,” the Buddhist temples, Taoist temples, Buddha statues, historical and scenic sites, calligraphy, paintings, and antiques became the main targets for destruction by the Red Guards.

Take the Buddha statues for example. There are one thousand colored, glazed Buddha statues in relief on the top of Longevity Hill in the Summer Palace [32] in Beijing. After the campaign to “destroy the four olds,” they were all damaged. None of them has a complete set of the five sensory organs any more.

The capital of the country was like this, and so was the rest of the country. Even the remote county seats did not escape.

There is a Tiantai Temple in Dai County in Shanxi Province. It was built during the Taiyan period of the Northern Wei Dynasty 1,600 years ago and had precious statues

and frescos. Although it was situated on a hillside quite a distance away from the county seat, the people who participated in the campaign to 'destroy the four olds' ignored the difficulties and made a clean sweep of the statues and frescos there. ... The Louguan Temple, where Lao Tzu gave his lecture and left his famous 'Tao Te Ching' 2,500 years ago, is situated in the Zhouzhi County in Shaanxi Province. Centered around the platform where Lao Tzu lectured, within a radius of 10 li, [33] there are over 50 historical sites, including the Temple Venerating the Sage (Zongsheng Gong) that Emperor Tang Gaozu Li Yuan [34] built to show respect for Lao Tzu over 1,300 years ago. Now the Louguan Temple and the other historical sites have been destroyed, and all Taoist priests have been forced to leave. According to the Taoist canon, once one becomes a Taoist priest, one can never shave one's beard or have one's hair cut. However, now the Taoist priests are forced to have their hair cut, take off their Taoist robes, and become members of the People's communes. [35] Some of them married daughters of the local peasants and became their sons-in-law. ... At the sacred Taoist places in Laoshan Mountain in Shandong Province, the Temple of Supreme Peace, the Temple of the Highest Clarity, the Supreme Clarity Temple, the Doumu Temple, the Huayan Nunnery, the Ningzhen Temple, the Temple of Guan Yu, 'the statues of the divine, sacrificial vessels, scrolls of Buddhist sutras, cultural relics, and temple tablets were all smashed and burned down.' ... The Temple of Literature in Jilin Province is one of the four famous Temples of Confucius in China. During the campaign to 'destroy the four olds,' it was severely damaged. [36]

A Special Way to Destroy Religion

Vladimir Lenin once said, "The easiest way to take a fortress is from within." As a group that inherited the legacy of Marxism-Leninism, the CCP naturally and tacitly understands this.

In the *Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra*, [37] Buddha Shakyamuni predicted that after his nirvana, demons would be reincarnated as monks, nuns, and male and female lay Buddhists to subvert the Dharma.

Of course, we cannot verify what Buddha Shakyamuni was referring to exactly. However, the CCP's destruction of Buddhism indeed started with forming a united front with some Buddhists.

They even sent some underground Communist Party members to infiltrate the religion directly and subvert it from within. In a criticism meeting during the Cultural Revolution, someone questioned Zhao Puchu, vice president of the Chinese Buddhist Association at the time, saying, "You are a Communist Party member, why do you believe in Buddhism?"

Buddha Shakyamuni attained supreme and complete enlightenment through “precept, concentration, wisdom.” So before his nirvana he instructed his disciples to “uphold and observe the Precepts. Do not fall short of them or violate them.” He also warned: “People who violate the Precepts are abhorred by heaven, dragons, ghosts, and the divine. Their evil reputation spreads far and wide. ... When their lives end, they will suffer in hell for their karma, and meet their inexorable doom. Then they will come out. They will continue to suffer by bearing the body of hungry ghosts and animals. They will suffer in a circle like this endlessly with no relief.” [38]

The political Buddhist monks turned deaf ears to the Buddha’s warnings. In 1952 the CCP sent representatives to attend the inaugural meeting of the Chinese Buddhist Association. At the meeting, many Buddhists in the association proposed to abolish the Buddhist precepts. They claimed that these disciplines had caused the death of many young men and women.

Some people even advocated that: “People should be free to believe in any religion. There should also be freedom for the monks and nuns to get married, to drink alcohol, and to eat meat. Nobody should interfere with these.”

At that time, Master Xuyun was at the meeting and saw that Buddhism was facing the danger of extinction in China. He stepped forward opposing the proposals and appealed for the preservation of the Buddhist precepts and dress.

Master Xuyun was then slandered, and labeled as “counter-revolutionary.” He was detained in the abbot’s room, and denied food and drink. He was not allowed out of the room even to use the toilet.

He was also ordered to hand over his gold, silver, and firearms. When Xuyun answered that he had none, he was beaten so badly that his skull was fractured and bleeding and his ribs broken. Xuyun was 112 years old at the time. The military police pushed him from the bed to the ground. When they came back the next day and found Xuyun still alive, they brutally beat him again.

The Chinese Buddhist Association was founded in 1952 and the Chinese Taoist Association was founded in 1957. Both clearly declared in their founding statements that they would be “under the leadership of the People’s government.”

In reality, they would be under the leadership of the atheistic CCP. Both associations indicated that they would actively participate in production and construction activities, and implement government policies. They were transformed into completely secular organizations.

Yet the Buddhists and Taoists who were devoted and abided by the precepts were labeled as counter-revolutionaries or members of superstitious sects and secret societies. Under the revolutionary slogan of “purifying the Buddhists and Taoists,” they were imprisoned, forced to “reform through labor,” or even executed.

Even religions spread from the West, such as Christianity and Catholicism were not spared. “Based on the statistics given in the book *How the Chinese Communist Party Persecutes the Christians* published in 1958, even the limited number of documents that have been made public reveal that among the clergymen who were charged as ‘landlord’ or ‘local bully,’ a staggering 8,840 were killed and 39,200 were sent to labor camps. Among the clergymen charged as ‘counter-revolutionaries,’ 2,450 were killed, and 24,800 were sent to labor camps.” [39]

Religions are a way for people to remove themselves from the secular world and cultivate themselves. They emphasize “the other shore” (the shore of perfect enlightenment) and “heaven.” Shakyamuni used to be an Indian prince. In order to seek *mukti*, a state in which one can obtain peace of mind, higher wisdom, full enlightenment, and nirvana, [40] he gave up the throne and went to a wooded mountain to cultivate by experiencing hardships and toil.

Before Jesus became enlightened, the devil brought him to the top of a mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in all their splendor. The devil said, “If you will bow down and worship me, I will give you all these things.” But Jesus was not enticed.

Yet the political monks and pastors who formed united fronts with the CCP made up a series of deceits and lies such as “human world Buddhism,” and “religion is the truth, and so is socialism.” They claimed that “there is no contradiction between this shore and the other shore.” They encouraged Buddhists and Taoists to pursue happiness, glory, splendor, wealth and rank in this life, and changed the religious doctrines and their meaning.

Buddhism forbids killing. The CCP killed people like flies during the suppression of counter-revolutionaries. [41] The political monks thereupon cooked up the justification that “killing the counter-revolutionaries is an even greater compassion.” During the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea (1950–1953), [42] monks were even sent directly to the front line to kill.

Take Christianity as another example. In 1950, Wu Yaozong [43] formed the Three-Self Church, which followed the principles of self-administration, self-support, and self-propagation. He claimed that they would break away from “imperialism” and actively join the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea. A good friend of his was imprisoned for more than twenty years for refusing to join the Three-Self and suffered all

kinds of torture and humiliation. When he asked Wu Yaozong, “How do you regard the miracles Jesus performed?” Wu answered, “I have discarded all of them.”

Not acknowledging Jesus’s miracles equates to not acknowledging Jesus’s heaven. How can one be counted a Christian when one does not even recognize the heaven Jesus ascended to? However, as the founder of the Three-Self Church, Wu Yaozong became a member of the Political Consultative Conference standing committee. When he stepped into the Great Hall of the People, [44] he must have completely forgotten Jesus’s words. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment” (Matthew 22:37-38). “Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21).

The CCP confiscated the temple property, forced monks and nuns to study Marxism-Leninism in order to brainwash them, and even forced them to labor. For instance, there was a ‘Buddhist workshop’ in Ningbo city, Zhejiang Province. Over twenty-five thousand monks and nuns were once forced to work there. What is more absurd is that the CCP encouraged monks and nuns to get married so as to disintegrate Buddhism. For example, just before the March 8 Women’s Day in 1951, the Women’s Federation in Changsha city, Hunan Province, ordered all nuns in the province to make up their minds to get married in a few days. In addition, young and healthy monks were forced to join the army and were sent to the battlefield to serve as cannon fodder! [45]

Various religious groups in China have disintegrated under the CCP’s violent suppression. The genuine elites of Buddhism and Taoism have been suppressed. Among those remaining, many returned to secular life, and many others were undisclosed Communist Party members who specialized in putting on kesa robes, [46] Taoist robes, or pastor’s long gowns to distort the Buddhist scriptures, the Taoist canons, and the Holy Bible and to look for justification for the CCP’s movements in these doctrines.

Destruction of Cultural Relics

The ruination of cultural relics is an important part of the CCP’s destruction of traditional culture. In the campaign to “destroy the four olds” many one-of-a-kind books, calligraphies, and paintings that had been collected by intellectuals were committed to flames or shredded into paper pulp. Zhang Bojun [47] had a family collection of more than ten thousand books. The Red Guard leaders used them to make a fire to warm themselves. What was left was sent to paper mills and shredded into paper pulp.

The calligraphy and painting-mounting specialist Hong Qiusheng was an elderly man known as the ‘miracle doctor’ for ancient calligraphy and paintings. He has mounted

countless world-class masterpieces, such as Song Emperor Huizong's [48] painting of scenery, Su Dongpo's [49] painting of bamboo, and the paintings of Wen Zhengming [50] and Tang Bohu. [51] Over several decades, most of the hundreds of ancient calligraphy and paintings that he had rescued had become a first-class national collection. The calligraphy and paintings that he had spared no pains in collecting were labeled as 'four olds' and were committed to flames. Afterwards, Mr. Hong said in tears, 'Over 100 jin [52] (50 kilograms) of calligraphy and paintings; it took such a long time to burn them!' [53]

"While worldly matters come and go,

Ancient, modern, to and fro,

Rivers and mountains are changeless in their glory

And still to be witnessed from this trail." [54]

If today's Chinese people were still to remember some of their history, they would probably feel differently when they recite this poem by Meng Haoran. The famous historical sites in the mountains and along the rivers have been ruined and have disappeared in the storm of the campaign to "destroy the four olds."

Not only was the Orchid Pavilion, where Wang Xizhi [55] wrote the famous *Prologue to the Collection of Poems Composed at the Orchid Pavilion*, [56] destroyed, Wang Xizhi's own grave was ruined as well.

Wu Cheng'en's [57] former residence in Jiangsu Province was demolished; Wu Jingzi's [58] former residence in Anhui Province was smashed; the stone tablet that had Su Dongpo's handwritten article "The Roadside Hut of the Old Drunkard" [59] was pushed over by the young revolutionists; [60] and the characters on the stone tablet were scraped off.

The essence of Chinese culture has been inherited and accumulated over several thousand years. Once destroyed, it cannot be restored. Yet the CCP has barbarously destroyed it in the name of "revolution," without sorrow or shame.

When we sighed over the Old Summer Palace, which is known as the "palace of palaces," being burned down by the Anglo-French allied forces, when we sighed over the monumental work of the Yongle Encyclopedia [61] being destroyed by invaders' flames of war, how could we have anticipated that the destruction caused by the CCP would be so much more widespread, long-lasting, and thorough than that caused by any foreign invasion?

Destruction of Spiritual Beliefs

In addition to destroying the physical forms of religion and culture, the CCP has also used every means available to destroy people's spiritual identity formed by faith and culture.

Take the Party's treatment of ethnic beliefs for example. The CCP considered the traditions of the Hui Muslim ethnic group to be one of the "four olds" — old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas. Therefore, it forced the Hui people to eat pork. Muslim peasants and mosques were required to raise pigs, and each household had to furnish two pigs to the state every year.

The Red Guards even forced the second highest Tibetan living Buddha, the Panchen Lama, to eat human excrement. They ordered three monks from the Temple of Bliss located in Harbin City, Heilongjiang Province, which is the biggest Buddhist temple built in modern times, to hold a poster board that said, "To hell with the sutras — they are full of shit."

In 1971, Lin Biao, the vice chairman of the CCP Central Committee, attempted to escape China but was killed when his plane crashed in Undurkhan, Mongolia. Later, some Confucian quotations were found in Lin's Beijing residence at Maojiawan. The Party then began a frantic movement of "criticizing Confucius."

A writer pen-named Liang Xiao [62] published an article in "The Red Flag," the CCP's banner magazine, entitled "Who is Confucius?" The article described Confucius as a "madman who wanted to turn history backward," and a "deceptive and shrewd demagogue." A series of cartoons and songs followed, demonizing Confucius.

In this way, the dignity and sacredness of religion and culture were annihilated.

Endless Destruction

In ancient China, the central government only extended its rule to the county level, below which patriarchal clans maintained autonomous control. So in Chinese history, episodes of destruction such as the "burning of books and the burying of Confucian scholars" by Emperor Qin Shi Huang in the Qin Dynasty (221–207 B.C.) or the four campaigns to eliminate Buddhism between the fifth and tenth century by the "Three Wus and One Zong," all were imposed from the top down. They could not possibly eradicate the culture.

Confucian and Buddhist classics and ideas continued to survive in the vast spaces of society. In contrast, the campaign to “destroy the four olds” by teenage students incited by the CCP was a nationwide, grass-roots movement with “spontaneous enthusiasm.”

The CCP’s extension to every village through village-level Party branches controlled the society so tightly that the CCP’s “revolutionary” movement extended without end and affected every person on every inch of land in China.

Never in history had any emperor eradicated from people’s minds what they considered to be the most beautiful and the most sacred, using slanderous and insulting propaganda in addition to violence, as the CCP has. Elimination of belief can often be more effective and long-lasting than physical destruction alone.

Reforming Intellectuals

China’s written language embodies the essence of five thousand years of civilization. Each character’s form and pronunciation, and the idioms and literary allusions composed through combinations of Chinese characters, express profound cultural meanings.

In addition to simplifying Chinese characters, the CCP also attempted to replace them with the Pinyin Romanization scheme in hopes of purging all cultural tradition from the living written script. The plan to phase out Chinese characters proved unfeasible and was abandoned. However, the Chinese intellectuals who played an equally important role in maintaining traditional culture were not so fortunate.

Before 1949, China had about two million intellectuals. Although a number had studied in Western countries, they still inherited some Confucian ideas. The Communist Party certainly could not relax its control of them because as members of the traditional “scholar-aristocracy” class, their ways of thinking played important roles in shaping the thoughts of ordinary people.

In September 1951, the CCP initiated a large-scale “thought reform movement” starting in Peking University among intellectuals. These intellectuals were required to “organize a movement (among teachers in colleges, middle schools, and primary schools, and among college students) to confess their history faithfully and honestly so as to cleanse any counter-revolutionary elements.” [63]

Mao never liked intellectuals. He said they “ought to be aware of the truth that actually many so-called intellectuals are, relatively speaking, quite ignorant, and the workers and farmers sometimes know more than they do.” [64]

“Compared with the workers and peasants, the unreformed intellectuals were not clean, and in the last analysis, the workers and peasants were the cleanest people, even though their hands were dirty and their feet smeared with cow-dung,” [65] Mao said.

The CCP’s persecution of intellectuals started with various forms of accusations, ranging from the 1951 criticism of Wu Xun [66] for “running schools with begged money” to Mao’s personal attack in 1955 on writer Hu Feng [67] as a counter-revolutionary.

In the beginning, the intellectuals were not categorized as a reactionary class, but by 1957, after several major religious groups had surrendered through the “unified front” movement, the CCP could focus its energy on the intellectuals. Thus began the Anti-Rightist movement.

In the end of February 1957, claiming to “let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend,” the CCP called on intellectuals to voice their suggestions and criticisms to the Party, promising no retaliation.

Those intellectuals had long been dissatisfied with the Communist Party for its insistence on assuming leadership over every field despite being unqualified to do so, its slaughter of innocent people during the movement to suppress counter-revolutionaries in 1950–1953, and the movement to eliminate counter-revolutionaries in 1955–1957.

They thought the CCP had finally become open-minded. So they began to speak their true feelings, and their criticism grew increasingly intense.

Many years later, there are still many people who believe that Mao only started to attack the intellectuals after becoming impatient with their overly harsh criticisms. The facts show otherwise.

On May 15, 1957, Mao wrote an article titled “Things Are Beginning to Change” and circulated it among senior Party officials. The article said: “In recent days the rightists ... have shown themselves to be most determined and most rabid. ... The rightists, who are anti-communist, are making a desperate attempt to stir up a typhoon above force seven in China ... and are so bent on destroying the Communist Party.” [68]

After that, those officials who had been indifferent to the “let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend” campaign suddenly became enthusiastic and earnest.

In her memoir, *The Past Doesn’t Disappear Like Smoke*, Zhang Bojun’s daughter recounted:

Li Weihan, minister of the United Front Work Department, called Zhang Bojun in person to invite him to a rectification meeting to offer his opinion about the CCP. Zhang was arranged to sit on a front-row sofa. Not knowing this to be a trap, Zhang articulated his criticisms of the CCP. During the whole meeting, 'Li Weihan appeared relaxed. Zhang probably thought Li agreed with what he said. He didn't know Li was pleased to see his prey falling into the trap.' After the meeting, Zhang was classified as the No. 1 rightist in China.

We can cite a string of dates in 1957 that marked proposals or speeches delivered by intellectuals offering criticisms and suggestions: Zhang Bojun's "Political Design Institute" on May 21; Long Yun's "Absurd Anti-Soviet Views" on May 22; Luo Longji's "Redressing Committee" on May 22; Lin Xiling's speech on "Criticizing the CCP's Feudalistic Socialism" at Peking University on May 30; Wu Zuguang's "The Party Should Stop Leading the Arts" on May 31; and Chu Anping's "The Party Dominates the World" on June 1. All these proposals and speeches had been invited and were offered after Mao had already sharpened his butcher's knife.

All of these intellectuals, predictably, were later labeled rightists. There were more than five hundred and fifty thousand such "rightists" nationwide.

Chinese tradition has it that "scholars can be killed but cannot be humiliated." The CCP was capable of humiliating intellectuals by depriving their right to make a living and even incriminating their families unless they accepted humiliation. Many intellectuals did surrender. During the course, some of them accused others to save themselves, causing deep psychological trauma. Those who did not submit to humiliation were killed — serving as examples to terrorize other intellectuals.

The traditional scholarly class, exemplars of social morality, was thus obliterated.

Mao said:

What can Emperor Qin Shi Huang brag about? He only killed 460 Confucian scholars, but we killed 46,000 intellectuals. In our suppression of counter-revolutionaries, didn't we kill some counter-revolutionary intellectuals as well? I argued with the pro-democratic people who accused us of acting like Emperor Qin Shi Huang. I said they were wrong. We surpassed him by a hundred times. [69]

Indeed, Mao did more than kill the intellectuals. More grievously, he destroyed their minds and hearts.

Creating the Appearance of Culture by Keeping the Semblance of Tradition but Replacing the Contents

After the CCP adopted economic reform and an open-door policy, it renovated many churches as well as Buddhist and Taoist temples. It also organized some temple fairs in China as well as cultural events overseas. This was the latest effort of the CCP to exploit and destroy the remaining traditional culture.

There were two reasons for the CCP to do this. On the one hand, the kindness inherent in human nature, which the CCP could not possibly eradicate, will lead to the bankruptcy of the “Party culture.” On the other hand, the CCP intended to use traditional culture to apply cosmetics to its true face in order to cover up its evil nature of “deceit, malice, and struggle.”

The essence of culture is its inner moral meaning, while the superficialized forms have only entertainment value. The CCP restored the superficial elements of culture, which entertain, to cover up its purpose of destroying morality.

No matter how many art and calligraphy exhibits the CCP has organized, how many culture festivals with dragon and lion dances it has staged, how many food festivals it has hosted, or how much classical architecture it has built, the Party is simply restoring the superficial appearances of culture, and not its essence. In the meantime, the CCP’s promotion of cultural showpieces both inside and outside China serves the sole, essential purpose of helping the Party maintain its political power.

Once again, temples are an example. Temples are meant to be places for people to cultivate, hearing bells in the morning and drums at sunset, worshiping Buddha under burning oil lamps. People in ordinary human society can also confess and worship there. Cultivation requires a pure heart free of pursuit. Confession and worship also require a serious and solemn environment.

However, temples have been turned into tourist resorts for the sake of economic profits. Among the people actually visiting temples in China today, how many of them have come to contemplate their mistakes with a sincere and respectful heart towards Buddha, right after taking a bath and changing their clothes?

Restoring the semblance, but destroying the inner meaning of traditional culture is the tactic that the CCP has taken to confuse people. Be it Buddhism, other religions, or cultural forms derived from them, the CCP deliberately degrades them in this way.

III. Communist Party Culture

As the CCP destroyed China’s traditional semi-divine culture, it insidiously established its own “Communist Party culture” in the course of repeated political movements. Party culture has transformed the older generation, poisoned the younger generation and also

had an impact on children. Its influence has been extremely deep and broad. Even when many people tried to expose the evilness of the CCP, they couldn't help but adopt the ways of judging good and bad, modes of thought, and vocabulary developed by the CCP, which inevitably carry the imprint of Party culture.

Party culture not only inherited the essential wickedness of the foreign-born Marxist-Leninist doctrine, but also skillfully combined all the negative elements built up over thousands of years of Chinese history with the philosophy of struggle and violent revolution propagated by the Communist Party. Those negative components include internal strife for power inside the royal family, forming cliques to pursue selfish interests, malicious political trickery, dirty tactics, and conspiracy. In its decadeslong efforts to overcome existential crises, the CCP has tirelessly nurtured, enriched, and renewed its essential characteristics of "deceit, malice and violence."

Despotism and dictatorship are the traits of Party culture. This culture serves the CCP in its political and class struggles. One may understand how it forms the Party's "humanistic" environment of terror and despotism from four aspects.

The Aspect of Domination and Control

1. A Culture of Censorship

The culture of the Communist Party is an isolated monopoly with no freedom of thought, speech, association, or belief. The mechanism of the Party's domination is similar to a hydraulic system, relying on high pressure and isolation to maintain its state of control. Even one tiny leak could cause the system to collapse.

For example, the Party refused to hold a dialogue with the students during the June 4 student movement, [70] fearing that if this leak was tolerated, the workers, peasants, intellectuals, and the military would also request dialogue. China would have eventually moved toward democracy, threatening the one-party dictatorship. Therefore, the party leaders chose to commit murder rather than grant the students' request. Today the CCP employs tens of thousands of "cyber police" to monitor the Internet and directly blocks any overseas websites that the CCP disapproves of.

2. A Culture of Terror

Ever since it took over China in 1949, the CCP has used terror to suppress the minds of Chinese people. They have wielded their whips and butcher's knives — people never know when unforeseen disasters will befall them — to force the people to conform. Living in fear, the people became obedient.

Advocates of democracy, independent thinkers, skeptics within the CCP's system, and members of various faith groups have become targets for killing as a way to warn the public. The Party hopes to nip all opposition in the bud.

3. A Culture of Network Control

The CCP's control of society is all-encompassing. There is a household registration system, a neighborhood residents' committee system, and various levels of Party committee structure. Party branches are established at the level of the company. Each and every village has its own Party branch. Party and Communist Youth League members hold regular activities.

The CCP also promoted a series of slogans accordingly. A few examples are: "Guard your own door and watch your own people." "Stop your people from appealing to the authorities." "Resolutely implement the system to impose duties, guarantee fulfillment of duties, and ascertain where the responsibility lies.

"Guard and control strictly. Be serious about discipline and regulations, and guarantee 24-hour preventive and maintenance control measures." "The 610 Office [71] will form a surveillance committee to inspect and monitor activities in each region and work unit at random intervals."

4. A Culture of Incrimination

The CCP completely neglected the principles of rule of law in modern society and vigorously promoted the policy of implication. It used its absolute power to punish relatives of those who were labeled landlords, the rich, reactionaries, bad elements, and rightists. It proposed the class-origin theory. [72]

Today, the CCP will affix the responsibility of the primary leaders and publicly reprimand them if they fail in their leadership roles to take adequate measures to prevent Falun Gong practitioners from going to Beijing "to stir up trouble." For serious cases, disciplinary action will be taken.

Examples of the implication system regarding Falun Gong: "If one person practices Falun Gong, every family member will be laid off." "If one employee practices Falun Gong, the bonus of everyone in the company will be withheld."

The CCP also issued discriminatory policies that classified children between those who could be educated and transformed, and those of the "five black classes" (landlords, rich farmers, reactionaries, bad elements, and rightists).

The Party promoted conformity with the Party and placing its doctrine above family loyalty. Systems (such as the personnel and organizational archive system and temporary relocation system) were established to ensure implementation of its policies. People were encouraged to accuse and expose others, and rewarded for contributions to the Party.

Aspects of Propaganda

1. A Culture of One Voice

During the Cultural Revolution, China was filled with slogans such as, “Supreme instructions,” or “One sentence [of Mao] carries the weight of ten thousand sentences; each one is the truth.”

All media were roused to sing the praises and collectively speak in support of the Party. When needed, leaders from every level of the Party, government, military, workers, youth league, and women’s organizations would be brought out to express their support. Everyone had to go through the ordeal.

2. A Culture to Promote Violence

Mao said, “With eight hundred million people, how can it work without struggle?” In the persecution of Falun Gong, Jiang Zemin said, “There is no punishment for beating Falun Gong practitioners to death.”

The CCP advocated total war and stated: “The atomic bomb is simply a paper tiger. ... Even if half of the population died, the remaining half would still reconstruct our homeland from the ruins.”

3. A Culture to Incite Hatred

It became a core national policy “not to forget the suffering of the poor classes and to firmly remember the enmity in tears and blood.”

Cruelty toward class enemies was praised as a virtue. The CCP taught “Bite into your hatred, chew it, and swallow it down. Plant the hatred into your heart so that it sprouts.” [73]

4. A Culture of Deception and Lies

Here are a few examples of the Party’s lies:

“The yield per mu [74] is over 10,000 jin” during the Great Leap Forward (1958).

“Not a single person was killed on Tiananmen Square” during the June 4th massacre in 1989.

“We have controlled the SARS virus” in 2003.

“It is currently the best time for human rights in China.”

The “Three Represents.” [75]

5. The Culture of Brainwashing

These are a few of the slogans that the CCP made up to brainwash people:

“There would be no new China without the Communist Party.”

“The force at the core leading our cause forward is the CCP and the theoretical basis guiding our thinking is Marxism-Leninism.” [76]

“Maintain maximum alignment with the Party’s Central Committee.”

“Execute the Party’s command whether or not you understand it. Even if you do not understand, carry it out anyway, and your understanding should deepen in the process of execution.”

6. A Culture of Adulation

“Heaven and the earth are great but greater still is the kindness of the Party.” “We owe all our achievements to the Party.” “I take the Party as my mother.” “I use my own life to safeguard the Central Committee of the Party.” “A great, glorious, and correct Party.” “An undefeatable Party,” and so on.

7. The Culture of Pretentiousness

The Party established models, set up examples one after another, and launched the “socialist ideological and ethical progress” and “ideological education” campaigns. In the end, people continued to do whatever they did before each campaign. All of the public lectures, study sessions, and experience sharing have become an “earnest showcase,” while the moral state of society has continued to take great leaps backward.

The Aspect of Interpersonal Relations

1. A Culture of Jealousy

The party promoted absolute egalitarianism, making anyone who stands out the target of attack. People are jealous of those who have greater ability or wealth than themselves — the so-called “red-eye syndrome.” [77]

2. A Culture of People Stepping Over Each Other

The CCP promoted “struggle face-to-face and report back-to-back.” Reporting on one’s associates, creating written materials to frame them, fabricating facts, and exaggerating their mistakes — these devious behaviors have been used to measure closeness to the Party and the desire to advance.

Subtle Influences on People’s Internal Psyche and External Behavior

1. A Culture That Transforms Human Beings into Machines

The Party wants the people to be the “never rusting bolts in the machine of revolution,” to be the “tamed tool for the Party,” or to “attack in whatever directions the Party directs us.” “Chairman Mao’s soldiers listen to the Party the most; they go wherever they are needed and settle down wherever there are hardships.”

2. A Culture That Confounds Right and Wrong

During the Cultural Revolution, the CCP would “rather have the socialist weeds than the capitalist crops.” The army was ordered to shoot and kill in the Tiananmen Square massacre “in exchange for 20 years of stability.” The Party “does unto others what one does not want to be done unto oneself.”

3. A Culture of Self-Imposed Brainwashing and Unconditional Obedience

“Lower ranks obey the orders of the higher ranks and the whole Party obeys the Party’s Central Committee.” “Fight ruthlessly to eradicate any selfish thoughts that flash through your mind.” “Erupt a revolution in the depths of your soul.” “Maintain maximum alignment with the Party’s Central Committee.” “Unify the minds, unify the footsteps, unify the orders, and unify the commands.”

4. A Culture of Securing a Servile Position

“China would be in chaos without the Communist Party.” “China is so vast. Who else can lead it but the CCP?” “If China collapses, it will be a worldwide disaster, so we should help the Party sustain its leadership.” Out of fear and self-protection, the groups constantly suppressed by the Communist Party oftentimes appear even more left-wing than the Party itself.

There are many more examples like these. Every reader could probably find various sorts of elements of the Party culture from his personal experiences.

People who experienced the Cultural Revolution might still remember vividly the “model play” of modern operas, the songs with Mao’s words as lyrics, and the Loyalty Dance. Many still recall the words from the dialogue in *The White-Haired Girl*, *Tunnel Warfare*, [78] and *Mine Warfare*. [79] Through these works, the CCP has brainwashed people, forcibly filling their minds with messages such as “how brilliant and great” the Party is; how “arduously and valiantly” the Party has struggled against the enemy; how “utterly devoted to the Party” the Party’s soldiers are; how willing they are to sacrifice themselves for the Party; and how stupid and vicious the enemies are.

Day after day, the CCP’s propaganda machine forcibly injects into every individual the beliefs needed by the Communist Party. Today, if one went back to watch “The East is Red,” the CCP’s song-and-dance epic, one would realize that the entire theme and style of the show is about killing, killing, and more killing.

At the same time, the CCP has created its own system of speech and discourse, such as the abusive language in mass criticism, the flattering words to sing the praises of the Party, and the banal official formalities similar to the eight-part essay. [80] People are made to speak unconsciously with the thinking patterns that promote the concept of class struggle, and to extol the Party and use domineering language instead of calm and rational reasoning. The CCP also abuses the religious vocabulary and distorts the content of those terms.

One step beyond the truth is fallacy. Communist Party culture also appropriates traditional morality to a certain extent. For instance, traditional culture values faith, so does the Communist Party. However what it promotes is faithfulness and honesty to the Party.

Traditional culture emphasizes filial piety. The CCP may put people in jail if they do not provide for their parents, but the real reason is that these parents would otherwise become a burden to the government. When it fits the Party’s needs, the children are required to draw clear boundaries separating them from their parents.

Traditional culture stresses loyalty. Nevertheless, “the people are of supreme importance; the nation comes next; last comes the ruler.” The loyalty preferred by the CCP is blind devotion — so completely blind that people are required to believe in the CCP unconditionally and obey it unquestioningly.

The words commonly used by the CCP are very misleading. For example, it called the civil war between the Kuomintang and the communists the War of Liberation, as if the

people were being liberated from oppression. The CCP called the post-1949 period “after the founding of the nation,” when, in reality, China existed long before that. The CCP simply established a new political regime.

The three-year Great Famine [81] was called “three years of natural disaster,” when, in fact, it was not at all a natural disaster but, rather, a completely man-made calamity. However, upon hearing these words used in everyday life and being imperceptibly influenced by them, people unconsciously accept the ideologies that the CCP intended to instill in them.

In traditional culture, music is taken as a way to constrain human desires. In the “Book of Music” in volume 24 of the *Records of the Grand Historian (Shi Ji)*, Sima Qian (145–85 B.C.) [82] said the nature of man is peaceful; the sensation of external matters affects one’s emotions and stirs up the sentiment of love or hate based upon one’s character and wisdom. If these sentiments are not constrained, one will be seduced by endless external temptations and assimilated by one’s internal sentiments to commit many bad deeds. Thus, said Sima Qian, the rulers of the past used rituals and music to constrain people. The songs should be “cheerful but not obscene, sad but not overly distressing.” They should express feelings and desires, yet have control over these sentiments.

Confucius said in *The Analects*, “The three hundred verses of ‘The Odes’ [one of the six classics compiled and edited by Confucius] may be summed up in a single sentence: ‘Think no evil.’”

Such a beautiful thing as music, however, was used by the CCP as a method to brainwash the people. Songs like “Socialism Is Good,” “There Would Be No New China Without the Communist Party,” and many others, have been sung from kindergarten to university. In singing these songs, people have unconsciously accepted the meanings of the lyrics. Further, the CCP stole the tunes of the most melodious folk songs and replaced them with lyrics that praise the Party. This has served both to destroy traditional culture and to promote the Party.

As one of the CCP’s classic documents, Mao’s “Speech at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Arts” [83] designated cultural endeavors and military conflict as two battle fronts. It stated that having just an armed military was not enough; an army of arts and culture was also needed.

It stipulated that “arts and literature should serve politics” and “the literary arts of the proletariat class ... are the ‘gears and screws’ of the revolution machine.”

A complete system of Party culture was developed out of this, with atheism and class struggle at its core. This system goes completely against traditional culture.

The Party culture has indeed rendered distinguished service in helping the CCP to win power and control over society. Like its army, prisons, and police force, the Party culture is also a machine of violence, which provides a different kind of brutality—cultural brutality.

This cultural brutality, by destroying five thousand years of traditional culture, has diminished the will of the people and undermined the cohesiveness of the Chinese nation.

Today, many Chinese are absolutely ignorant of the essence of traditional culture. Some even conflate the several decades of Party culture with the five thousand years of Chinese traditional culture. This is a sorrowful thing for the Chinese people. Many do not realize that in opposing the so-called traditional culture, they are in fact against the Party culture of the CCP, not the real traditional culture of China.

Many people hope to replace the current Chinese system with the Western democratic system. In reality, Western democracy has also been established on a cultural basis, notably that of Christianity, which, holding that “everyone is equal in the eyes of God,” thus respects human nature and human choices. How could the despotic, inhuman Party culture of the CCP be used as the foundation for a Western-style democratic system?

Conclusion

China started to deviate from its traditional culture in the Song Dynasty (960–1279), and that culture has experienced constant depredation ever since. After the May Fourth Movement of 1919, [84] some intellectuals who were eager for quick success and instant benefit attempted to find a path for China by turning away from the traditional culture toward Western civilization.

Still, conflicts and changes in the cultural domain remained a focus of academic contention without the involvement of state forces. When the CCP came into existence, however, it elevated cultural conflicts to a matter of life-and-death struggle for the Party. So the CCP began to exercise a direct assault on traditional culture, using destructive means as well as indirect abuse in the form of “adopting the dross and rejecting the essence.”

The destruction of the national culture was also the process of establishing the Party culture. The CCP subverted human conscience and moral judgment, thus driving

people to turn their backs on traditional culture. If the national culture is completely destroyed, the essence of the nation will disappear with it, leaving only an empty name for the nation. This is not an exaggerated warning.

At the same time, the destruction of the traditional culture has brought us unexpected physical damage.

Traditional culture values the unity of heaven and humans and harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. The Party declares that it derives endless joy from fighting with heaven and earth. This culture of the CCP has led directly to the serious environmental degradation that plagues China today.

Take water resources for example. The Chinese people, having abandoned the traditional wisdom that “a nobleman treasures wealth, but he makes fortune in a decent way,” have wantonly ravaged and polluted the natural environment. Currently, more than 75 percent of the 50,000 kilometers (30,000 miles) of China’s rivers are unsuitable as fish habitats. Over one-third of the groundwater had been polluted by the mid-1990s, and the situation only continues to worsen.

A spectacle of a strange kind occurred on the Huaihe River: A small child playing in the oil-filled river created a spark that, upon striking the surface of the river, lit a flame 5 meters (16 feet) high. As the fire surged into the air, more than ten willow trees in the vicinity were burnt to a crisp. [85] One can easily see that it is nigh impossible for those who drink such water not to develop cancer or other ailments. Other environmental problems, such as desertification and salinization in Northwest China and industrial pollution in developed regions, are all related to society’s loss of respect for nature.

Traditional culture respects life. The CCP urges that revolt is justifiable, and struggling against human beings is full of joy. In the name of revolution, the Party could murder and starve to death tens of millions of people. This has led people to devalue life, which then encourages the proliferation of fake and poisonous products in the market.

In Fuyang City of Anhui Province, for example, many healthy babies developed short limbs, thin and weak bodies, and enlarged heads during their lactation period. Eight babies died because of this strange disease. After investigation, it was discovered that the disease was caused by poisonous milk powder made by a black-hearted and greedy manufacturer.

Some people feed crabs, snakes, and turtles with hormones and antibiotics, mix industrial alcohol with drinking wine, polish rice using industrial oil, and whiten bread flour with industrial brightening agents. For eight years, a manufacturer in Henan Province produced thousands of tons of cooking oil every month using materials

containing carcinogens such as waste oil, oil extracted from left-over meals, or discarded argil [86] that contained residual oils after its use.

Producing poisonous foods is not a local or limited phenomenon, but is common all over China. This has everything to do with the single-minded pursuit of material gain that comes in the wake of the destruction of the culture and consequent degeneration of human morality.

Unlike the absolute monopoly and exclusiveness of the Party culture, the traditional culture has a tremendous integrative capacity. During the prosperous Tang Dynasty, Buddhist teachings, Christianity, and other Western religions coexisted harmoniously with Taoist and Confucian thought.

Authentic Chinese traditional culture would have kept an open and tolerant attitude toward modern Western civilization. The four “tigers” of Asia (Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, and Hong Kong) have created a “New Confucian” cultural identity. Their soaring economies have proven that traditional culture is not a hindrance to social development.

At the same time, authentic traditional culture measures the quality of human life on the basis of happiness from within rather than material comfort from without. “I would rather have no one blame me behind my back, than have someone praise me to my face; I would rather have peace in mind, than have comfort in body.” [87]

Tao Yuanming (365–427) [88] lived in poverty, but he kept a joyful spirit and enjoyed as a pastime “picking asters beneath the eastern fence, gazing upon the Southern Mountain in the distance.”

Culture offers no answers for questions such as how to expand industrial production or what social systems to adopt. Rather, it plays an important role in providing moral guidance and restraint. The true restoration of traditional culture shall be the recovery of humility toward heaven, the earth and nature, respect for life, and awe before the divine. It will allow humanity to live harmoniously with heaven and earth and to enjoy heavenly bestowed longevity.

Notes:

[1] Pangu was the first living being and the creator of all, according to Chinese mythology.

[2] Nüwa was the mother goddess who created humankind, according to Chinese mythology.

[3] Shennong (literally, “the Heavenly Farmer”) is a legendary figure in Chinese mythology who lived about five thousand years ago. He taught the ancient people the practices of agriculture. He is also credited with risking his life to identify hundreds of medicinal (and poisonous) herbs and various plants of that nature, which were crucial to the development of traditional Chinese medicine.

[4] Cangjie is a legendary figure in ancient China. He is said to have been the Yellow Emperor’s official historian and the inventor of the Chinese characters. The Cangjie method of Chinese character computer input is named after him.

[5] From *Tao-Te Ching* by Lao Tzu.

[6] Opening remarks from *The Great Learning* by Confucius.

[7] From *Records of the Grand Historian* by Sima Qian (145–85 B.C.), the first major Chinese historian. It served as a model for the official standard histories of the imperial dynasties for the next two thousand years.

[8] From *The Analects* by Confucius.

[9] Ibid.

[10] From *The Analects* by Confucius.

[11] This is in reference to a statement made by Confucius in *The Great Learning*.

[12] This is in reference to a statement made by Dong Zhongshu (c. 179–104 B.C.), a Confucian thinker during the Han Dynasty.

[13] *The Journey to the West* (the basis of the popular show *Monkey*), written by Wu Cheng’en (c. 1506–1582), is based on the true story of a famous Chinese monk in the Tang Dynasty, Xuan Zang (602–664).

[14] *Dream of the Red Chamber*, written by Cao Xueqin in the Qing Dynasty, tells a tragic love story that takes place in a declining aristocratic family.

[15] *Outlaws of the Marsh*, written in the 14th century by Shi Nai’an, describes the exploits of one hundred and eight men and women driven into banditry.

[16] *Three Kingdoms*, written by Luo Guanzhong (c. 1330–1400), is based on the history of the Three Kingdoms period (220–280).

[17] *Chronicles of the Eastern Zhou* was originally written by Yu Shaoyu in the Ming Dynasty, revised and rewritten by Feng Menglong toward the dynasty’s end, and further

revised by Cai Yuanfang in the Qing Dynasty. The novel covers a history of more than five hundred years during the Spring and Autumn period (770–476 B.C.) and the Warring States period (475–221 B.C.).

[18] *The Complete Story of Yue Fei* was written by Qian Cai in the Qing Dynasty. It described the life of Yue Fei (1103–1142) from the Southern Song Dynasty, one of the most famous generals and patriotic heroes in Chinese history.

[19] From *Abstract of Collected Taoist Scriptures (Dao Cang Ji Yao)*, compiled during the Qing Dynasty.

[20] See note 8.

[21] From Mao's speech at the Eighth Session of the Tenth CCP Plenary Meeting.

[22] Mao's original words in Chinese were a pun: "I am like a monk holding an umbrella — no Tao (or Fa, pun for "hair") nor heaven (pun for "sky")."

[23] Jie was the last ruler of the Xia Dynasty (c. 2100–1600 B.C.), and Zhou was the last ruler of the Shang Dynasty (c. 1600–1100 B.C.). Both were known as tyrants.

[24] Wen Tianxiang (1236–1283), a military commander who fought to protect the Southern Song Dynasty against the Mongol invaders, was killed on January 9, 1283, for repeatedly refusing to submit to the Mongol Yuan Dynasty after being taken prisoner.

[25] Mencius.

[26] From a famous saying by Mencius: "I desire life; but I also desire justice. When I cannot have both of them at the same time, I will maintain justice at the expense of my life."

[27] From the "The Internationale" anthem. The Chinese translation literally means: "There has never been a savior, and we do not rely on God either; to create human happiness, we rely entirely on ourselves."

[28] The campaign to "destroy the four olds" was a campaign in the mid-1960s during the Cultural Revolution in China. In August 1966, the Red Guards declared "a war against the old world" and announced the intention to "smash all old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits," "including barbershops, tailor's shops, photo shops, used-book stores, and so on, with no exceptions."

[29] The beiye is a subtropical plant belonging to the palm family whose thick leaves were used for record keeping in ancient times, before paper was invented.

[30] Xiangshan Park, also called Fragrant Hills Park, is located 28 kilometers (17 miles) northwest of downtown Beijing. Initially built in 1186 in the Jurchen Jin Dynasty, it became a summer resort for imperial families during the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties.

[31] From *How Many Cultural Relics Were Committed to Flames* by Ding Shu.

[32] The Summer Palace, located 15 kilometers (9 miles) from Beijing, is the largest and best-preserved royal garden in China, with a history of over eight hundred years.

[33] A “li” is a Chinese unit of length (1 li is 0.5 kilometers or 0.3 miles).

[34] Emperor Gaozu of the Tang Dynasty (ruled 618–626), alias Li Yuan, was the first emperor of the Tang Dynasty.

[35] People’s communes (Renmin Gongshe) were formerly the highest of three administrative levels in rural areas in the period from 1958 to around 1982 in China. The communes had governmental, political, and economic functions. They were the largest collective units and were further divided into production brigades and production teams. After 1982, they were replaced by townships.

[36] From *How Many Cultural Relics Were Committed to Flames*.

[37] The *Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra* is purported to be the Buddha’s final Mahayana sutra, delivered on the last day of his earthly life. It is claimed to constitute the quintessence of all Mahayana sutras.

[38] From Taisho Tripitaka Vol. T01, No. 7, *Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sutra*. Provisional translation subject to improvement.

[39] Translated from *The Theory and Practice of the Chinese Communist Party’s Suppression of Religions* by Bai Zhi.

[40] “Nirvana,” in Buddhism or Hinduism, is a state of blissful peace and harmony beyond the sufferings and passions of individual existence; a state of oneness with the eternal spirit.

[41] The “suppression of counter-revolutionaries” campaign in 1951 dealt violently with “counter-revolutionaries,” including bandits, local bullies, spies, former members of KMT, and religious associations. According to the CCP’s published records, more than two million people were executed by 1952, while the actual number may be even higher.

[42] The “War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea,” as the CCP called it, broke out in 1950. It is commonly known in the Western world as the Korean War.

[43] Wu Yaozong (1893–1975) and others published the so-called *Means for Chinese Christianity to Exert Efforts in the Construction of the New China*, also called the *Innovation Manifesto of Three Self*, in 1950. They formed the Three-Self Church thereafter.

[44] The Great Hall of the People, located at the west side of Tiananmen Square, is a meeting place for the National People’s Congress of China.

[45] From *The Theory and Practice of the Chinese Communist Party’s Suppression of Religions*.

[46] A kesa robe is a monk’s robe or cassock.

[47] Zhang Bojun (1895–1969) was one of the founders of the China Democratic League, a democratic party in China. He was classified as the “number one rightist” in 1957 by Mao Zedong and was one of the few rightists who were not redressed after the Cultural Revolution.

[48] Emperor Huizong of the Song Dynasty, alias Zhao Ji (ruled 1100–1126).

[49] Su Dongpo (1036–1101) was a famous Chinese poet and writer of the Song Dynasty. He was one of the eight great prose masters of the Tang and Song dynasties.

[50] Wen Zhengming (1470–1559) was a Chinese painter of the Ming Dynasty.

[51] Tang Bohu (1470–1523) was a renowned Chinese scholar, painter, and poet of the Ming Dynasty.

[52] A “jin” is a unit of weight used in China. One jin is 0.5 kilograms, or about 1.1 pounds.

[53] See note 31.

[54] From a poem by Meng Haoran (689–740), a well-known poet of the Tang Dynasty.

[55] Wang Xizhi (321–379), from the Jin Dynasty, is the most famous calligrapher in history.

[56] The original *Lan Ting Prologue*, allegedly written by Wang Xizhi in 353 at the prime of his career, is universally recognized as the most important piece in the history of Chinese calligraphy.

[57] Wu Cheng'en (c. 1506–1582) was a Chinese novelist and poet of the Ming Dynasty. He authored "Journey to the West," one of the four best-known Chinese novels.

[58] Wu Jingzi (1701–1754) was an elegant writer of the Qing Dynasty and author of *Unofficial History of the Scholars (Rulin Waishi)*.

[59] Prose written by Ouyang Xiu (1007–1072), one of the eight great prose masters of the Tang and Song dynasties.

[60] Alternative name for the Red Guards.

[61] The *Yongle Encyclopedia (Yongle Dadian)* is an encyclopedia compiled by scholars in the Ming Dynasty in 1403–1408. It consisted of more than 22,000 manuscript volumes with 370 million words, occupying 40 cubic meters (1,400 cubic feet). Currently only about 800 volumes were partially recovered, and the rest have been destroyed or lost.

[62] "Liang Xiao" represents a group of assigned writers, including Zhou Yiliang, whose involvement in the writing group earned him an anonymous letter from an old friend that referred to "the extreme of shamelessness."

[63] From *The Writings of Mao Zedong, 1949–1976* (Vol. 2).

[64] From *Rectify the Party's Style of Work* (1942) by Mao Zedong.

[65] From *Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art* (1942) by Mao Zedong.

[66] Wu Xun (1838–1896), originally Wu Qi, was born in Shandong's Tangyi. He lost his father at an early age, and his family was impoverished. He had to beg for food to feed his mother and became known as the filial-piety beggar. After his mother passed away, begging became his only means of making a living. Using the money he received from charity, Wu ran schools without charging tuition.\

[67] Hu Feng (1902–1985), scholar and literary critic, opposed the doctrinaire literature policy of the CCP. He was expelled from the Party in 1955 and sentenced to 14 years in prison.

[68] From "Things Are Beginning to Change" by Mao Zedong, in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 5 (1957).

[69] From *Oriental Culture* (2000), fourth ed., by Qian Bocheng.

[70] The June 4 student movement was initiated by college students advocating democratic reforms in China between April 15 and June 4, 1989. Its later suppression

by the People's Liberation Army is generally referred to as the June 4 massacre, or Tiananmen Square massacre.

[71] The 610 Office is an agency specifically created to persecute Falun Gong, with absolute power over each level of administration in the Party and all other political and judicial systems.

[72] The class-origin (or bloodline or pedigree) theory claims that one's nature is determined by the class of the family in which one is born.

[73] From the song of the modern opera "Legend of the Red Lantern," a popular official "model play" developed during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976).

[74] A "mu" is a unit of area used in China. One mu is 0.165 acres.

[75] Jiang Zemin's theory, discussed in Commentary Five.

[76] The opening address at the First Session of the First National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China (September 15, 1954).

[77] The "red-eye syndrome" is similar in meaning to the western expression "green-eyed." Here it is used to describe a person who feels wronged and uncomfortable when he sees other people doing better than he is.

[78] *Tunnel Warfare (Didao Zhan)* is a 1965 propaganda film the CCP used to depict its guerrillas in heroic resistance fighting the Japanese invaders from networks of underground tunnels in central China during World War II.

[79] *Mine Warfare (Dilei Zhan)* is a 1962 film made to depict CCP guerrillas in Hebei Province who supposedly fought the Japanese using homemade landmines.

[80] The eight-part essay (*Baguwen*) is a style of literary composition prescribed for the imperial civil service examinations. It has come to be associated with rigidity of form and poverty of ideas.

[81] China's Great Famine of 1959–1961 is the largest famine in human history. The estimated numbers of unnatural deaths from the famine range from eighteen million to forty-three million.

[82] From *Records of the Grand Historian (Shi Ji)* by Sima Qian (145–85 B.C.), the first major Chinese historian. It served as a model for the official standard histories of the imperial dynasties for the next two thousand years.

[83] By Mao Zedong (1942).

[84] The May Fourth Movement was the first mass movement in modern Chinese history, beginning on May 4, 1919.

[85] From *Warning of Huaihe River* (1995) by Chen Guili.

[86] Argil is a type of clay used to imitate vegetable oil in the manufacturing process.

[87] From *Prologue to See Li Yuan to Return to Pangu* by Han Yu (768–824), one of the eight great prose masters of the Tang and Song dynasties.

[88] Tao Yuanming (365–427), also known as Tao Qian, was a great Chinese poet.