

Space, Change and *Feng-Shui* in Tsuen Wan's Urbanization*

BARUCH BOXER

Michigan State University, East Lansing, U.S.A.

Introduction

THE EVER-EXPANDING body of literature that treats of "change" attests to the fundamental importance of this concept as a universal theme in social science research. Probably no single topic is of more general interest to social scientists. The idea¹ of "change", however, as a summary expression of the limitless scope for human accommodation to any natural or social environment, remains as elusive as it is ubiquitous. This paper employs the notion of "change" as an explanatory concept in a preliminary attempt to describe aspects of the urbanization process in the Tsuen Wan-Kwai Chung development area of Hong Kong's New Territories.² It also assesses aspects of Chinese belief in *feng-shui*³ as related to urbanization in Tsuen Wan. Finally, it suggests

- * This paper is based on field work in Tsuen Wan, New Territories, Hong Kong during the 1964 calendar year and a brief period in August, 1966. Research was initially supported by grants from the Joint Committee on Contemporary China of the Social Science Research Council-American Council of Learned Societies; Indiana University Advisory Committee on International Studies; and the Foreign Field Research Program, administered by the Division of Earth Sciences, National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council, and sponsored by the Geography Branch, Office of Naval Research, Contract Nonr. 2300(09), NR 389-105, Report Number 33A. Additional research and travel support in 1966 was granted by the Asian Studies Center, Michigan State University. The views expressed are entirely those of the author.
- 1 Consistent use of the word "idea" when referring to "change" is intended to emphasize the essentially heuristic objective of this paper. I am not concerned here with definition or testing of a "theory" of "change." By "idea", I mean a "way of thinking," rather than the sense of "opinion" or "intention" sometimes subsumed under definitions of "idea."
 - 2 The Tsuen Wan-Kwai Chung development area is located eight miles northwest of the Kowloon urban area, on the west coast of the mainland portion of the New Territories. See below, p. 23.
 - 3 *Feng-shui* (literally "wind and water", often referred to as "geomancy") is considered here as a body of knowledge and belief which, if properly used, can supposedly give insight into the workings of the natural universe. *Feng-shui* represents "the power of the natural environment... the composite influence of the natural processes." Stephan D. R. Feuchtwang, *An Anthropological Analysis of Chinese Geomancy*, unpublished M. A. thesis, University of London, 1965, p. 3. It is also a form of divination, where conscientious efforts

how study of these beliefs in the New Territories context can shed light on the responses of a Chinese rural population to modernization pressures.

In this particular Chinese cultural setting, an idealized conception of "change"¹ possesses an operational (or functional) component, identifiable in the eclectic teachings of *feng-shui*. This body of knowledge and belief which governs locational decisions through the provision of optimal locational guidelines has provided theoretically valid grounds for "change". Yet these same beliefs have also served to translate abstract conceptions of "change" into the more concrete locational choices that ultimately constitute at least one phase of the urbanization process in Tsuen Wan.

A primary objective of this paper is to show that variations in the form or process of urbanization can be explained as responsive to culturally-indigenous ideas of "change." In Tsuen Wan, the setting of our analysis, it would appear that many of the visible changes in the spatial arrangements and associations of land use and settlement stem from the economic demands of urbanization. But they are also expressive of a more fundamental response by a rural Chinese population to conceptions of "change" which reflect a pervasive natural philosophic tradition. These tradition-based ideas of "change," as interpreted by a segment of contemporary Chinese society, can also be seen to facilitate an accommodation to both imposed and to self-generated pressures for "modernization."²

Feng-shui considerations enter into the collective decisions of indigenous farmers and Government administrators relating to essential rearrangement of

to site graves and buildings in accordance with *feng-shui* principles are thought to bring good fortune and desired rewards. *Feng-shui* belief also functions as a social control. Cf. Maurice Freedman, *Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung*. London: University of London, The Athlone Press, 1966, Ch. 5. For an account of the evolution of Chinese scientific knowledge bearing on the development of *feng-shui* belief and practice, cf. Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962. Vol. 2, pp. 359-363; and Vol. 4, pt. 1, pp. 239-245 and 293-313. Other definitions and accounts of *feng-shui* can be found in J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, Vol. III. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1897, pp. 935-1056; D. C. Graham, *Folk Religion in Southwest China*. Washington, D.C.: The Smithsonian Institution, 1961, pp. 110-119; and C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961, pp. 263-265. Comments on *feng-shui* and burial practice in the New Territories may also be found in Hugh Baker, "Burial, Geomancy, and Ancestor Worship," in *Aspects of Social Organization in the New Territories*. Hong Kong: Royal Asiatic Society, Hong Kong Branch, [1965?].

- 1 For an understanding of the idea of "change" in traditional Chinese thought, I have relied mainly on Joseph Needham, *op. cit.* vol. 2, pp. 74-86 and 288-291; Joseph Needham, *Time and Eastern Man. The Henry Myers Lecture 1964*. London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Occasional Paper No. 21, 1965. Ch. 1; Hellmut Wilhelm, *Change, Eight Lectures on the I Ching*. New York: Harper & Row, 1960; and Nathan Sivin, "Chinese Conceptions of Time," *Earlham Review*, (1966), 82-92.
- 2 "Modernization," as used in this paper, is seen as a broadly-defined process involving changes in technology, social organization, and ecological-spatial relationships resulting in the alteration of existing values, economic activities, and institutional structures. Cf. Neil J. Smelser, "Mechanism of Change and Adjustment to Change," in Bert F. Hoselitz and Wilbert E. Moore, Eds., *Industrialization and Society*. Unesco: Mouton, 1963, Ch. 2.

existing land use patterns. In the context of Tsuen Wan's urbanization, these beliefs serve as an instrument for "change." But the main inducements to "change" encompass far more than externally-imposed decisions motivated by demands for industrial sites, population growth, new public works projects, or New Territories political activities.

Tsuen Wan: the urban setting

Reliance on *feng-shui* belief as a partial basis for accommodation to the overt demands of urbanization in Tsuen Wan has facilitated the rapid transformation of its rural, agricultural landscape into a modern industrial center. Further consideration of these beliefs as characteristic of a more basic Chinese tradition of "change" can help delimit the dimensions of "change" in the context of Tsuen Wan's urbanization. Let us first, however, point up some salient features of Tsuen Wan's historical development and current urban status.

The urban configuration of Tsuen Wan is not simply expressive of free market competition for economically advantageous building sites with easy access to transport routes. While such considerations appear superficially to be reflected in spatial arrangements of land use, these land use patterns are more significantly expressive of qualitative conditions that are more difficult to isolate and describe. This configuration is the end result of a cumulative process, which has resulted in the transformation of virtually every square foot of land from a rural to an urban use. But this process has not been gradual. It can be more accurately described as revolutionary. In less than a decade, a 19th-century South Chinese agricultural landscape has been radically transformed into a modern city. How did this come about?

The Tsuen Wan-Kwai Chung development area is currently one of several¹ areas in the New Territories that have been designated by the Hong Kong Government as sites for the expansion of industry, high density resettlement housing, and as centers for the construction of coordinated, planned "new towns" or "satellite industrial townships." Together with Tsing Yi Island to the south, Tsuen Wan-Kwai Chung currently forms a cohesive urban-industrial complex, which serves as the administrative, economic, educational, and social center for the twenty-six square mile Tsuen Wan Administrative District of the New Territories. This development area, situated about eight miles to the northwest of the densely populated Kowloon urban area, has a population (1966) of approximately 210,000 (1961, 84,823).² The population is composed

1 Although included for administrative purposes within the planning area designated as "Tsuen Wan and District," the adjacent Kwai Chung development area to the southeast is sometimes referred to separately. Kwai Chung is being developed primarily as an industrial and high density residential center. Cf. David C. Y. Lai and D. J. Dwyer, "Tsuen Wan: A New Industrial Town in Hong Kong," *The Geographical Review*, LIV, No. 2 (April, 1964), 151-169.

2 The 1966 figure is an estimate obtained from the District Office, Tsuen Wan. Also cf. K. M. A. Barnett, *Hong Kong: Report on the 1961 Census*. 3 Vols. Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1962.

of indigenous¹ Cantonese and Hakka, most of whom formerly engaged in agriculture; refugee (post-1949) squatter vegetable cultivators from a number of nearby districts in China's Kwangtung Province; and a highly diverse group of Shanghai² and Cantonese industrial workers originally from Tsuen Wan or migrants from other urban and rural sections of the Colony. By 1978, it is anticipated that Tsuen Wan's population will exceed 1,000,000.³

Although settled originally in the mid-17th century by Cantonese and Hakka immigrants from Kwangtung, the Tsuen Wan-Kwai Chung area has only recently come into prominence as a setting for planned economic and urban development. Prior to 1930, virtually all of the inhabitants of thirteen single and multiple lineage villages⁴ comprising the Tsuen Wan sub-district were primarily engaged in the production of wet rice, sweet potatoes, pineapple, and vegetables, with some subsidiary fishing activities. From 1930 until World War II, agriculture remained as the basic economic pursuit, although there was some limited light industrial development.⁵ The only significant commercial development took place in the mid-1930's. At that time, several square blocks of modified commercial "shop house"⁶ structures were built as the nucleus of a small market center designed to serve the surrounding agricultural villages.

The Tsuen Wan area has traditionally been peripheral to the major centers of agriculture-supported lineage power in the New Territories. It was physically isolated by the slopes of Tai Mo Shan (3141') to the north, and was poorly endowed with the soil and water resources essential for the maintenance of a profitable wet rice economy on a level comparable to that achieved in the fertile Kam Tin and Lam Tsun valleys to the north and east. The backward and poor Hakka villages located in the Tsuen Wan district have also been of minor interest as settings for the historical and comparative study of rural South Chinese social structure, economic, or political life.

1 "Indigenous" agriculturists in Tsuen Wan are those who were resident in the area prior to World War II.

2 "Shanghai" industrial workers are commonly known as "Northerners" in Tsuen Wan.

3 *Tsuen Wan and District Outline Development Plan, Statement to Accompany Plan No. LTW/75*. Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1963, p. 1.

4 A "lineage" village may be defined as a community "composed of the male agnatic descendants of a single ancestor together with their unmarried sisters and wives." Freedman, *op. cit.*, p. 1. In Tsuen Wan, as in other parts of the New Territories, some agricultural villages were composed of more than one lineage. For a detailed account of lineage organization in the New Territories and in other parts of southeast China cf. Freedman, *ibid.*, Chap. 1. and Maurice Freedman, *Lineage Organization in Southeastern China*. London: University of London, The Athlone Press, 1958. Most scholars make a distinction between "lineage" and "clan." A "clan" is seen as "The aggregate of all such [lineage] groups in the area bearing a common surname and recognizing a recent, traceable common origin, but yet not necessarily owning property in common and not united as one leadership unit." Hugh Baker, "The Five Great Clans of the New Territories," *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 6, 1966, 25-47.

5 Cf. Hong Kong, *Report on the New Territories for the Year 1938*. Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1939. p. J(1)3 [Tsuen Wan].

6 Hong Kong, *Report on the New Territories for the Year 1936*. Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1937. p. J(1)5.

However, with the conclusion of World War II and the rapid economic growth of Hong Kong that followed,¹ Tsuen Wan became increasingly important as a center for industrial and commercial expansion and development. By the mid-1950's, the demand for industrial and commercial building sites became so intense, that the Hong Kong Government was compelled to take measures designed to assure a minimum degree of consistency and orderliness in the acquisition, utilization and reclamation of land. By 1958, a number of preliminary land use and expansion plans were formulated, and consultants were appointed to assess the feasibility of several major land reclamation and public works projects. Authority for the preparation of a comprehensive development plan was forthcoming in September, 1960, and by the fall of 1961 a number of construction projects were undertaken under the terms of the "Tsuen Wan and District Outline Development Plan."

This plan seeks broadly "to provide additional land for industrial development within the framework of a balanced land use pattern designed to allow people to live within a reasonable distance of their place of work; to estimate the population and intensities of land use so as to enable adequate public services to be provided in the most economical manner; to make provision for satisfactory lines of communication; and to provide reasonable community facilities for the welfare and well-being of an estimated population of 1,200,000."²

The implementation of the various phases of the Plan has resulted in a basic alteration of Tsuen Wan's agricultural landscape. Many of the individual villages, whether composed of single lineages, or collections of lineages organized in varying numbers of household units, have been resited, and are no longer primarily dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. Although some superficial lineage identity has been retained through the provision of modified "village type houses,"³ the lineage villages no longer function as the cohesive social and economic units essential for the perpetuation of a "traditional" way of life. In its social and spatial structure, Tsuen Wan is rapidly becoming an urban-industrial extension of Kowloon.

Tsuen Wan's continuing urbanization must be viewed as a phenomenon with distinctive social and cultural, as well as economic repercussions. The wide-ranging effects of the Colony's post-1950 industrialization introduced basic changes in the predominantly agriculture-based economy of the New Territories.⁴ Demand for industrial sites led to soaring land values. Collective opinions of rural political leaders relating to land policy led to sometimes heated discussions with Government representatives over the details of exchange ratios

1 Cf. Edward Szczepanik, *The Economic Growth of Hong Kong*. London: Oxford University Press, 1958; Baruch Boxer, *Ocean Shipping in the Evolution of Hong Kong*. Chicago: University of Chicago, Department of Geography Research Paper No. 72, 1961.

2 Hong Kong, *Tsuen Wan... Development Plan*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

3 In constructing new sites for relocated lineage villages, the authorities have sought to retain at least a semblance of village identity by constructing rows of two-story attached residential units, with separate accommodation for individual households or nuclear families.

4 Szczepanik, *op. cit.* Ch. 6.

of agricultural for building land, rates of compensation for land that had to be surrendered for development, and the necessity for removal of ancestral villages. Village leaders were suddenly thrust into responsible positions as representatives of their individual villages in sensitive, lengthy, and complex compensation negotiations with New Territories officials.

Government implementation of the comprehensive development plan for the Tsuen Wan area required the cooperation of Hakka Chinese agricultural villagers who had vested interests in the retention of existing property rights and land tenure arrangements. Persistently recurring objections by these villagers to the implementation of various phases of the development plan were largely based on the contention that physical alteration of the landscape, whether through the construction of new drainage ditches, roads, building sites, or reservoirs, would affect *feng-shui* properties inherent in the topography of the land. It was strongly felt that these properties had a direct influence on their prosperity and well-being.

The implications of tacit Government acceptance of *feng-shui* objections as legitimate grounds for compensation have been widely interpreted. Although there are well-established precedents for the use of *feng-shui* belief as a political weapon in urban, as well as rural Hong Kong, many people still scoff at the suggestion that *feng-shui* belief is anything more than superstition and magic.¹ Individuals in Tsuen Wan, including land brokers and businessmen who stand to gain financially from rapid and complete disintegration of the lineage-based system of land tenure, have questioned the wisdom of Government tolerance of this "glorified extortion." They have claimed that lengthy discussions arising from *feng-shui* disputes delay the implementation of development plans and public works projects which ultimately benefit those who are most outspoken in their objections. In spite of the sometimes questionable logic of *feng-shui* disputes, however, Government officials usually seek honest compromise in their solution. In many instances, official acknowledgement is given to the sincerity of the objections.

An example of public acknowledgement by Government of the legitimacy of *feng-shui* disputes in the Tsuen Wan area concerned the objections of villagers in Sheung Kwai Chung to the construction of a salt water service reservoir.

¹ Numerous references to *feng-shui* disputes can be found in the official literature since the inception of the New Territories Lease in 1899. A typical entry in one of the annual New Territories Administrative Reports points up the generally tolerant attitude of officials toward *feng-shui* objections to village removal. "Six of the eight sites to accommodate the villagers to be removed from the Southern District in connection with the Shing Mun waterworks scheme were completed during the year. One of the greatest difficulties encountered in reconciling these people to these new houses has been the question of 'fung-shui' [*sic*] a pseudo-science which trivial as it may seem to Western eyes, has an all-important bearing in the question of selecting or forming a site for Chinese dwellings. Great credit is due to those officers in charge of the actual construction who, by constantly meeting as far as possible the 'fung-shui' [*sic*] objections raised, succeeded in making completely satisfactory sites for so many villages in so short a time..." Hong Kong, *Report on the New Territories for the Year 1929*. Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1930, p. J2.

It was claimed that the construction of this reservoir on a ridge behind the village would adversely affect the village's *feng-shui* because the veins of the "green dragon" protecting the village would be severed. The solution of the dispute was reported in the *Hong Kong South China Morning Post* of June 9, 1964 as follows: "As a result of these objections, the District Officer, Tsuen Wan, accompanied by PWD [Public Works Department] engineers, visited Kwei Chung [*sic*] and located another site for the proposed service reservoir. This does not interfere with the villagers' 'fung shui' and the issue was thus settled."

An important distinction must be made here in the use of *feng-shui* belief as a basis for accommodation between Government officials and agricultural villagers. In the disputes over alleged *feng-shui* violations cited so far, the injured party (villagers) took the initiative in establishing grounds for the dispute. In these instances, Government officials, by agreeing to compensation terms, gave at least outward support to the legitimacy of the villagers' claims.

In Tsuen Wan, compensation has also been paid to agricultural villagers for damage to local *feng-shui* arising from new building or public works construction, reclamation work, and site formation. Blanket compensation is sometimes paid for a series of religious ceremonies considered as essential prerequisites to the moving of a village. These ceremonies are conducted by professional geomancers¹ with the assistance of village leaders. The choice of new village sites is chiefly the concern of Government, and is primarily responsive to physical site-planning requirements. However, in the actual layout of residences within a given site, in the location of ancestral temples, and in the location of shrines to local tutelary deities on the periphery of the new villages, the villagers can freely voice *feng-shui* objections to Government plans. The willingness of village leaders to enter into lengthy negotiations to decide upon suitable compensation for disruption of village *feng-shui* does not necessarily imply any prior acceptance of these plans.

In 1963-64, for example, the Hakka village of Ha Kwai Chung, located in the path of a major land reclamation project, was relocated in a new village site at a higher elevation several hundred yards from the site of the original village. In this case, the Government paid for three groups of ceremonies, each of which was intended to preserve favorable *feng-shui* for the villagers during the transitional period and after the move had been accomplished. The most important (and most expensive) series of ceremonies were those connected with the siting and construction of a new ancestral temple, or *chi-tong* for that branch of the Tang clan surname group which lived in Ha Kwai Chung.²

In addition to blanket compensation authorized for a series of *feng-shui* ceremonies connected with village removals, Government officials are fre-

1 In contrast to the New Territories situation, professional geomancers in pre-modern China normally had specialized functions for which they became well known. Hence, no single *feng-shui hsien-sheng* (Mandarin pronunciation of term for geomancer) would be expected to have competency in dwelling site selection, grave location, and village removal work. I am indebted to Prof. Hsu Dau-lin for pointing this out.

2 Hugh Baker, "The Five Great Clans..." *op. cit.*

quently called upon to consider the legitimacy of demands for compensation to individuals or villages arising from *feng-shui* objections to isolated decisions or actions resulting in landscape alteration.

Other *feng-shui* disputes in the Tsuen Wan area have arisen over inadvertent interference with the *feng-shui* of graves or groves of trees. In these cases, disputants have usually claimed that the construction of buildings at too close a distance from a particular grave has obstructed the flow of favorable *feng-shui* influences to and through the grave. *Feng-shui* groves are usually situated at the rear of Cantonese and Hakka agricultural villages. Besides serving as shady rest areas, these groves are thought to be the homes of spirits and gods whose undisturbed presence among the trees is considered essential to the well-being of the village. In many older villages, these groves also harbor a temple and one or more shrines to various earth gods. Any cutting or destruction of trees within the groves is considered by many villagers to be highly detrimental to their welfare.

Additional cases could be cited to illustrate the wide-ranging employment and interpretation of *feng-shui* belief in the context of Tsuen Wan's urbanization. Most significantly, however, mutual reversion to these beliefs by British administrators and Chinese farmers as a legitimate and acceptable arena for negotiation is not an isolated phenomenon arising from the specific circumstances of Tsuen Wan's urbanization. *Feng-shui* beliefs have always reflected traditional Chinese conceptions of "change."

Feng-shui and Change: traditional precedents and practical consequences

In his incisive analysis of the idea of "change" in the Book of Changes (the *I Ching*), Hellmut Wilhelm postulates that early in the development of Chinese thinking about the cosmos and the position of man within it, an element of "constancy" or "stability" was implicit in the man-cosmos relationship.¹ This inherent constancy in the position of man was formally recognized by early Chinese philosophers and astronomers through their acknowledgment of spatial, as well as temporal cosmic dimensions. Regular cycles were observed in the movements of heavenly bodies and in the annual succession of seasons.² But it was primarily through the realization that "space, which by its coordinates lends the idea of change the stability it connotes," that a "system of relationships comes into the idea of the world. Change is not something absolute, chaotic, kaleidoscopic; its manifestation is a relative one, something connected with fixed points and a given order."³

Even more germane to our argument is the observation that "the concept

1 Wilhelm, *op. cit.* pp. 23-24.

2 Cf. Wolfram Eberhard, "The Political Function of Astronomy and Astronomers in Han China," in John K. Fairbank, Ed. *Chinese Thought and Institutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957. pp. 33-70.

3 Wilhelm, *op. cit.* p. 23-24.

of change is not an external, normative principle that imprints itself upon phenomena; it is an inner tendency according to which development takes place naturally and spontaneously. Development is not a fate dictated from without to which one must silently submit, but rather a sign showing the direction that decisions take. Again, development is not a moral law that one is constrained to obey; it is rather the guideline from which one can read off events. To stand in the stream of this development is a datum of nature; to recognize it and follow it is responsibility and free choice.¹

In other words, it was assumed that if man could define the limits of his position within the cosmos by going along with a "direction of change," he would ultimately be in a position to achieve personal fulfillment; conversely, human insensitivity to the dictates of "change" would make this fulfillment impossible.

"Constancy" in the minds of early Chinese thinkers did not imply an inevitable determinism in the response of individuals to natural (or cosmic) forces. On the contrary, "the conception of constancy in change provides the first guarantee of meaningful action. The concept takes man out of subjection to nature and places him in a position of responsibility."² Cognizance of this "responsibility" enabled the individual to assume an active role in influencing the course of events beyond his own immediate sphere, for "the individual who is conscious of responsibility is on a par with the cosmic forces of heaven and earth."³

While the details of Wilhelm's analysis of the concept of "change" in the *I Ching* remain open to question, its basic assumption of a relationship between a spatially-dimensioned cosmos and the efforts of man to define his personal position within this cosmos by fixing the limits of "change," is of fundamental interest.

Feng-shui beliefs, arising from early assessments of man's position relative to an ineluctable cosmos, symbolize these notions while simultaneously reducing them to comprehensible and workable proportions. But despite their long tenure in China, these beliefs were officially relegated to an insignificant position and were usually ignored as a respectable body of knowledge.

Yet belief in *feng-shui* endures to the present in the New Territories, and the efforts of both rich and poor to obtain geomantically propitious grave sites and dwelling locations continue to have significant social repercussions. Attention to *feng-shui* tenets is seen as "a means of averting possible evil influences from the dead upon the progeny, as well as being a means of inducing the supernatural influence of blessing." Moreover, *feng-shui* beliefs are seen to bolster individual confidence in the face of the uncertainties of everyday life.⁴

Feng-shui is specifically of interest from a geographic perspective. For in its theoretical form, it serves to translate metaphysical abstractions about the

1 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

2 Wilhelm, *op. cit.* p. 23.

3 *Ibid.* p. 22.

4 Yang, *op. cit.* p. 265.

structure and influence of the cosmos into a series of well-defined (albeit variously interpretable) principles to assure that the choice of geographic locations for burial sites, city walls, water courses, buildings, roads, etc. will be in accordance with the "direction of cosmic change."¹ As such, it might be seen as a theory of location, arising not only in response to the demands of economic need or rationale, but also from an appreciation of the landscape as a living expression of cosmic interaction with the men who arrange themselves on it. *Feng-shui*, as a theory of location, offers man the opportunity to exercise his "responsibility" to the cosmos by fixing the limits of "change" in terms of visible landscape configurations which represent the cosmos in a living, spatial dimension.

The accumulated writings on *feng-shui* stand as much more than descriptive guides or superstitious trappings. Writings on *feng-shui*, (*ti-li*, or *k'an-yü*) suggest that from pre-Han times (prior to 200 B.C.), the Chinese approached the phenomenon of landscape and man's responsibilities to it in a highly sophisticated manner. There is ample evidence to show that in spite of official disfavor, belief in the efficacy of *feng-shui* found ample expression. In China, geomantic considerations were not only the prerogative of the Imperial Establishment. The gentry and those who aspired to the privileges and respect attendant upon the acquisition of gentry status saw in the teachings of *feng-shui* a well-defined body of knowledge which offered the most desired of rewards — a full and distinguished progeny, status, and wealth.

Recognition of *feng-shui* belief as an outgrowth of a Chinese conception of "change" suggests that it could not have arisen as easily from other traditions. We have seen that the Chinese acknowledged "constancy" within "change" through the recognition of rhythmic cycles in the evolution and decline of dynasties, societies, and even landscapes. But what is really distinctive about this particular conception of "change"?

The idea of "change" can be seen to operate in two distinctive ways in any natural or social environment if we accept a definition of "change" as "a making or becoming distinctly different ... [thereby implying] either a radical transmutation of character or replacement with something else."² "Change" can be thought of as a progenitor or inducer of physical transformations over or across any given portion of the earth's surface. Visible alterations in physical or cultural landscapes are therefore taken as tangible manifestations of "change." The idea of "change" is also employed by social scientists to facilitate description and analysis of characteristic "transformations in social systems through time." In this sense, "change" is definitive of the specific transformations that are assumed to occur. Therefore, grounds exist for distinguishing between a notion of "change" which is descriptive of phenomena associated with man's physical activities on earth; or as a noumenal property, to be considered in the abstract.

Let us examine several somewhat different approaches to a definition of

1 Wilhelm, *op. cit.* p. 22.

2 Webster's *New World Dictionary*. College Edition. Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1956, p. 244.

"change" in order to clarify this distinction. In a recent study which is concerned generally with the "dynamics of social and economic change," Manning Nash contributes to a theory of "change" by stressing the need to attain expository balance in the employment of empirically-derived generalizations and testable hypotheses.¹ His skillful commentary on the dimensions of "change" is a model of cogent reasoning. But it is his implicit conception of "change," itself, abstractly conceived, that is of interest here. "Every theory of how social systems operate, every hypothesis on cultural integration, and every assertion about 'what goes with what' in the social realm eventually can be tested against the facts of social and economic change. Change acts like a litmus paper for society, showing up the crucial elements."²

Adjustments within social systems which "bring a society to modernity or cause it to rest somewhere between its initial base and modernity" are crucial because the adjustments are, *in themselves*, manifestations of "change." As Nash puts it, "Because societies are differentiated systems, they are always changing systems. Any society has within it a variety of realistic impulses to change; no known society goes from generation to generation without modification."³ This approach to an understanding of "change" suggests that attainment of a condition of "development" or "modernization" is contingent upon the appropriately-timed release or modification of the "bonds" of tradition – thereby enabling the introduction of more "modern" institutions and values. Propensity for "change," then, is implicit in the "modifications" that are assumed to occur within any society. If we follow this line of reasoning, careful sifting, comparing and classifying the "facts of social and economic change" can lead to a theory of "change" which idealizes "change" as a prerequisite or catalyst for "development" and "modernization."

In another approach to the understanding of "change," concern for theoretical synthesis is replaced by more sweeping cross-cultural surveys to delimit common, "archetypal" characteristics in the response of man to nature or to the cosmos. Definition of "change" is thus less of an attempt to identify a teleological process implicit in the interactions between society, culture, and the natural environment. In contrast, the degree to which man is able to free himself from ritualistic accedance to the unseen power of nature and the cosmos governs his ability to "change."⁴

"Change," in this sense, can also be seen to emerge from a situation of personal conflict. This conflict can be self-generated or responsive (as in the case of Tsuen Wan's urbanization) to external pressures. Frances G. Wickes has described such conflict as the key to ultimate human fulfillment. "Like the dream within the dream, there is a drama within the drama – the no-less-divine drama of man's personal life where he may become increasingly conscious of

1 Manning Nash, *Primitive and Peasant Economic Systems*. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1966.

2 *Ibid.* p. 102.

3 *Ibid.* p. 125.

4 Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History*. New York: Harper & Row, 1959. Chs. 1 and 2.

archetypal forces that act as directors of the human play. Their clash, their opposition, produces conflict, and out of the conflict energy is born. These energies are the universe. The images man has made of these energies become the gods, the tutelary deities acting through him, upon life. If he can perceive them and can understand their action in his own life, they interpret for him the nature and purpose of his choices."¹

A third view of "change" is suggested by Max Black's commentary on the "direction" of time.² Here, "change" is not only the expression – at a particular point in space or time – of the "inexact fit" between society, culture, and personality.³ Neither is "change" the inevitable outgrowth of personal struggle with the unseen forces of Nature. "Change" becomes the manifestation of what *could have* occurred, assuming that what *did* actually occur never happened.

Black points out that logical grounds exist for the understanding of "direction" in time if the notion of "direction" is employed to distinguish between alternative circumstances or conditions which are in motion or are *changing*. "Direction" of "change," then, is meaningful only insofar as it facilitates distinction between opposite, or contradictory, movements or "directions." Black puts it this way: "We can talk intelligibly of the 'direction' of any motion or change, with the understanding that we are referring to ways of distinguishing such motions or changes from their opposites; and we can speak intelligibly of the 'directions' in which a body faces or points with the understanding that we are referring to ways of identifying the possible positions of the body relative to other bodies."⁴

The Chinese conception of "change" through the medium of time combines elements of each of these approaches. In Chinese society, the idea of "change" has stemmed from a deep-rooted tradition, with origins in the teachings of formally-constituted schools of thought, as well as in the more eclectic tenets of a distinctive natural scientific tradition. Chinese society, moreover, has had the wherewithal to maintain a high degree of internal cultural and social cohesion while simultaneously undergoing external modification.⁵ The uniqueness of the Chinese conception of "change," though, lies mainly in its rejection of the idea of "change" as evolutionary, upward-directed, straight-line movement. Assumption of the need for harmonious interaction among the three constituents of the Chinese natural universe – Man, Heaven, and Earth – led to a more flexible interpretation of the idea of "change."⁶

Although early Chinese philosophers accepted the notion of continuous "change" in the abstract, their key contribution was the idea of "change" as rhythmic progression through a series of cyclical stages delimited by the move-

1 Frances G. Wickes, *The Inner World of Choice*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963. p. 7.

2 Max Black, *Models and Metaphors*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962. Ch. X.

3 Manning Nash, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

4 Max Black, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-185.

5 Cf. Barbara E. Ward, "Varieties of the Conscious Model, The Fisherman of South China," in *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*. A.S.A. Monographs 1, London: Tavistock Publications; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1965. pp. 113-138.

6 Joseph Needham, *Time and Eastern Man. op. cit.* Ch. 1.

ment of heavenly bodies and the annual change in seasons. "For the ancient Chinese, time was not an abstract parameter, a succession of homogeneous moments, but was divided into concrete separate seasons and their subdivisions. The idea of succession as such was subordinated to that of alternation and interdependence."¹

The universal acceptance of *feng-shui* considerations as a crucial element in the realization of Tsuen Wan's urban transformation is highly significant. For it suggests that "development," as a corollary of "change," is responsive not only to the internal stimuli of societies as differentiated systems. In this Chinese case, recourse to internalized ideas of "change" partially facilitated the difficult transition from a "pre-modern" to a "modernized" state. Tsuen Wan's urbanization process represents a two-fold response by indigenous agriculturists to this tradition-sanctioned conception of "change" along with a more pragmatic acceptance of the specific demands of the urban development plan for the area. *Feng-shui* beliefs, as an expression of this tradition, have defined a flexible model that has been freely interpreted to assure compliance with alien "development" demands. These beliefs have also led to the realization of personal satisfactions and contentment associated with a conception of "change" as an "inner tendency" according to which development takes place naturally and spontaneously.

Conclusions

A recently formulated assessment of the "spatial aspects of man's behavior" views the "human landscape" as "nothing more, but equally nothing less, than the spatial expression of the decisions of men." These decisions, moreover, "seem to be related, at least in part, to the way in which they [men] perceive the space around them and to the differential evaluations they place upon various portions of it."²

In Tsuen Wan, these "evaluations" of an abstractly conceived "space" are embodied in a consensus between two essentially antagonistic views of an "ideal" urban landscape.⁴ High level planning decisions, codified in the *Tsuen Wan District Outline Plan*, to be implemented by officials of the New Territories Administration, are expressive of one distinct viewpoint. In contrast, it is clear that the indigenous inhabitants of the Tsuen Wan area hold to their own ideas as to the most efficacious use of "space" in conformity with the general requirements of the development plan.

The quest for the inevitable (although not necessarily happy) consensus progresses on two distinct levels. In the practical sphere, where palliatives for the disruptive effects of "modernization" are provided, Government planners

1 *Ibid.* pp. 7-8.

2 Wilhelm, *op. cit.* p. 19.

3 Peter R. Gould, *On Mental Maps*. Ann Arbor: Michigan Inter-University Community of Mathematical Geographers, Discussion Paper Number 9, 1966. p. 2.

4 "Ideal" should be thought of here in Weberian terms as a "theoretically conceived pure type of subjective meaning." cf. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1947, p. 13.

New Territories administrators, and villagers acknowledge that mutual economic benefits are to be gained through the increased availability of industrial, commercial, and residential building sites, the construction of better drainage and water supply facilities, and the improvement of internal and external communication. In this confrontation between Government and villagers, financial compensation and building rights are offered in exchange for surrendered agricultural land and residences in agricultural villages; new temples and shrines are provided for, and provision is made for the employment of promoters (at Government expense) to supervise site construction and village removals, as well as to ameliorate the damaging effect on *feng-shui* resulting from topographic alterations.

This operational consensus involving the Hong Kong Government and agricultural villagers which facilitates the implementation of the development plan is only partially descriptive of the urbanization "process." Accommodation to the demands for "modernization" implicit in the plan has emerged at another, less well-defined level.

We would support the contention that the "image an area has in the minds of a few key people"¹ is carried through in the locational decisions that result in characteristic associations of land use and land values. But the new urban landscape, in its spatial configuration, also embodies concessions by Chinese agriculturists who have viewed their gradual absorption into an emerging modern urban setting with trepidation and uncertainty. Many of the indigenous villagers have expressed their own ideas regarding the manner in which limited urban space should be allocated to accommodate a rapidly growing population. The antecedents to accommodation on this level are quite distinct from those which led to the practical consensus described above.²

Accommodation at this level is governed by ideas of "change," where modes of action and response are sanctioned by tradition, and facilitated by *feng-shui* belief. "Change," as we have indicated above, does not respond simply to causal stimuli, nor is it defined by them. In fact, in the context of Tsuen Wan's urbanization, the usual definitions of "modernization" or "development" implying "interconnected social changes"³ leading to greater social mobility, increased self-reliance in social relationships, wider economic choice, and educational advancement, are only partially valid. "Change," in this Chinese setting, is also responsive to ideas and values with distinctively metaphysical and symbolic origins.

Thus, to write of "change" in the context of Tsuen Wan's urbanization, is not simply a matter of describing the tangible evidence of urban growth or

1 Gould, *op. cit.* pp. 3-4.

2 One farmer, for example, when confronted with the need to abandon his lineage village, could not comprehend the fact that in the "new village" resettlement area there would be no room for individual pigsties attached to each dwelling unit. He felt that pigsties were a legitimate use of "urban space." Personal interview, Tsuen Wan District Office, July, 1964.

3 John W. Lewis, "The Study of Chinese Political Culture," *World Politics*, XVIII, No. 3 (April, 1966), 508 (footnote).

delimiting its parameters. Changes in population and area, mounting levels of capital investment and industrial production, fluctuations in land values, and other measurable indices of urbanization are descriptive of an essentially pragmatic response to the development plan which has defined the broad limits of urbanization. More significantly, the successful application of traditional Chinese conceptions of "change" to the immediate demands of urbanization has facilitated a smooth transition to a modern urban-industrial society.

The Learning of Political Symbols in Chinese Culture

RICHARD W. WILSON

Princeton University, Princeton, U.S.A.

RECENT EVIDENCE from the mainland of China indicates that the most frenzied period of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has passed and a time of re-assessment and consolidation has commenced. No one doubts that serious problems remain for the Maoist leadership group nor that the most lasting repercussions from the "Revolution" are yet to be seen. Nevertheless a period of quiet moderation is now clearly noticeable, both with regard to the internal situation and to Peking's activities on the diplomatic front. Perhaps this is but the eye of the storm, an uneasy moment of calm while new surges generate. Considering the difficulties of assessment that China "experts" have so recently experienced, competent observers are undoubtedly correct in their cautious appraisals of the new situation. While the calm remains, however, an opportunity presents itself for less hurried analysis of these past events.

Undoubtedly the fervor of the Red Guards, the seeming ease with which millions of young people were swept into often violent political participation, remains the most striking feature of the Cultural Revolution. Less apparent but not therefore less important was the revelation of a political system, long thought to be a virtual model for solidarity among top leadership, disintegrating into an often obscure tangle of factional dispute. For what was observed was not merely a struggle for power among the top echelons of authority but also considerable political infighting at local levels between less exalted opponents. One striking feature of this chaos, a situation both puzzling and intriguing, was the continuing lack - or seeming lack - of coordination among the anti-Maoist forces. So significant is this feature, in fact, that one wonders if we have not been misled by our own labeling of these forces, i.e., the anti-Maoists in many important respects may not have been anti-Mao at all and in any case can hardly be lumped together under such an inclusive and simplifying rubric. (Indeed, much local struggle was between groups all of which claimed the mantle of pro-Maoism.) From this niggling doubt is born the question of why lack of coordination among the so-called anti-Maoists existed and why no mass mobilization of the opposition occurred, even presuming that such an event was possible. More theoretically the question arises as to what particular political symbols are available in the Chinese cultural milieu around which