

National Humanities Bulletin

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President's Comment

Joseph Baldacchino



Can a Decadent Nation Impose International Peace?

In previous issues of this publication we have assessed American culture and politics and found them to have reached a subterranean ebb. To those diverted by the nation's ostensible financial prosperity, we rejoined that the "destruction of what Burke called 'the unbought grace of life' may not be incorporated in the positivists' quantitative models, but it can be seen—and heard—in the real world every day. . . . In our cultural lives we celebrate banality and worship celebrity. In our political lives we blithely obey and sustain with our taxes a government that violates its constitutional charter with impunity." While claiming the highest benevolence toward all the world, we've become a nation of people who by and large lack even the common courtesy toward our neighbors to dress presentably or speak felicitously in public.

As citizens—nurtured along, to be sure, by those who set the cultural tone in this society: those who determine what can and cannot be said or written, what matters and what does not—we now tolerate the most blatant abuses of governmental power. Travelgate, Ruby Ridge, Waco—all are quickly forgotten. Americans now accept the most hideous injustices to their fellow Americans, just so long as their own friends or loved ones are spared for the moment. The nation's lofty motto, *E Pluribus Unum*, has been replaced in practice by the less exalted, if more pithy, *I've got mine, Jack!* Public expectations have sunk so low that politicians in the United States hardly bother anymore to try to camouflage, when present, a lack of integrity or public purpose. Vice does not even feel constrained any longer, as in the past, to pay to virtue the minimal tribute of hypocrisy.

I reiterate this disheartening tale of moral and cultural implosion not to wallow in misery but to provide necessary background for a question of increasing urgency: In its relations with other sovereignties, can a nation such as the United States in its current metamorphosis be ex-

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NHI Notes . . .

NHI will sponsor three scholarly panels at the **American Political Science Association** meeting in Atlanta, September 2 to 5. Chairing the panel on "**Humanities Education and the Social Order**" will be **Claes Ryn**, Chairman of NHI and Professor of Politics at The Catholic University of America. Papers: "Humanities Education for Business Students?" **Michael Harvey**, Washington College; "The Interrelations among the Humanities, Technology, and Social Change," **John Paul Russo**, University of Miami; "Literary Study and the Social Order," **Stephen Tanner**, Brigham Young University. The panel on "**Leadership and Moral Character**," co-sponsored by NHI and the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, will be chaired by **William D. Richardson**, University of South Dakota. Papers: "George Washington and the Symbolic Dimensions of Executive Leadership," **Gary L. Gregg**, ISI; "Tocqueville on Leadership and Moral Character," **Robert Manzer**, University of Dallas; "Platonic Political Virtue: On Whether the Transcendent Invigorates Leadership," **Claes Ryn**. The panel on "**Topics in Political Thought: Varieties of Historicism**" will be chaired by **Gregory S. Butler**, New Mexico State University. Papers: "Voegelin, Scheler, and the Problem of Lived Time," **Jeff Polet**, Malone College; "Voegelin's Search for Meaning in History," **Michael Federici**, Mercyhurst College; "Value-Centered Historicism and Religion," **Tavis Overstreet**, The Catholic University of America; "Using Gadamerian Historicism as a Corrective to Gadamer's History of Philosophy," **Ted Miller**, Dartmouth College.

NHI Needs Your Support

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NHI in Dialog with Chinese Scholars on *Renwenzhuyi*

In the accompanying article we commend the admonitions of Irving Babbitt early in the twentieth century regarding the road to peace within and among nations. That road, said Babbitt, lay not in a continuation of Rousseauistic expansiveness but in the revitalization of earlier traditions of humane self-discipline and respect for limits—traditions such as, in the West, Aristotelianism and Christianity, and, in the East, Confucianism and Buddhism.

Many may believe that the eclipse of inward morality by sentimental expansiveness has become so ingrained in modern and postmodern culture that Babbitt's prescription is unrealistic for our time. Yet

there are encouraging signs that a new awakening of respect for humane education and civilization of precisely the kind that Babbitt favored is occurring at present in—of all places—China.

Though largely unnoticed in the American media, there is, in post-Maoist China, a major renewal of attention to traditional Chinese philosophy and literature, including Confucianism and Buddhism, and their relation to everyday life and human well-being. Significantly, this interest is not narrowly dogmatic but seeks to apprehend the ennobling spirit of these doctrines and the possibility that the same humane spirit

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pected to promote international civility and justice as a matter of course, or should realistic observers—Americans and foreigners alike—be more cautious in their expectations? The question assumes added urgency in light of America's post-Cold War position as the world's preeminent military and economic power.

Following the Founding Fathers' advice that the best guide to the future is to be found in the lessons of history, I think we can learn much, near the end of the twentieth century, by considering carefully what Irving Babbitt, one of that century's most sagacious American thinkers, had to say on the same subject early in the century.

In a two-part article in the *Nation* ("The Breakdown of Internationalism, Part I," 17 June 1915, and "The Breakdown of Internationalism, Part II," 24 June 1915), and more comprehensively in his 1924 book *Democracy and Leadership*, Babbitt sought to explain the condition of the human will and imagination that had produced the catastrophe of World War I, so soon after world leaders had spoken expectantly of an unprecedented era of peace and brotherhood.

In these and other writings, historian Richard M. Gamble has noted,¹ "Babbitt was most concerned with the displacement in international relations of ethical control by an unrestrained will to power, a tendency he found all the more striking . . . in an age that boasted of its democratic, progressive, and humanitarian principles." While some would argue that World War I broke out in spite of these nineteenth-century ideals, writes Gamble, "Babbitt, in contrast to his age, responded that the war had come about precisely because of this expansive idealism."

Babbitt, like Edmund Burke before him, traced the beginnings of modern nationalism and modern internationalism to the French revolution and the Romantic temperament exemplified by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his admirers. Unlike the English and American revolutions with their limited political goals, the French Revolution waged cultural warfare against inherited institutions, including monarchy and the church, and carried its revolutionary doctrines into neighboring coun-

tries. The French revolutionaries viewed the historical institutions of individual nations as barriers to an instinctive international fraternity that only needed to be set free to express itself. But, Gamble writes, following Babbitt: "By spreading 'brotherhood,' France ironically produced intense nationalism, both within France itself—as the European coalition fought to contain the 'Christ of nations' and reverse the revolution—and outside France as its mass army waged an ideological crusade and sparked nationalist resistance among its neighbors. Sentimental brotherhood in the eighteenth century had ended with all of Europe at war; the 'will to brotherhood' had been revealed as the 'will to power,' externally in empire-building and internally in the ideological imperialism of the Reign of Terror."

Sentimental Morality Brings Chaos

Applying this lesson of history to 1915, Babbitt cautioned against the easy tendency to identify Germany as the sole impediment to peace. Germany's expansive living, and its attempt to export a decadent *Kultur*, he pointed out, was symptomatic of a problem that affected all of Europe, America, and elsewhere. Germany was dominated by a widely held naturalistic view of human nature that since the late eighteenth century had displaced traditional Christianity and humanism. At the heart of the breakdown of internationalism, said Babbitt, was naturalism's revolt against the dual tradition of Christian and humanistic self-discipline.

Traditional humanism and Christianity had recognized the inner struggle between the individual's "permanent self" and "ordinary self," with happiness and true peace possible only through ethical control. By contrast, the naturalistic humanitarians, sometimes known today as secular humanists, stressed humanity's collective struggle for material progress while downplaying the struggle between good and evil within the individual heart. The "lovers of humanity" denied the necessity of this moral struggle, rejecting all "convention" as "unnatural" and "artificial." The basis of morality was no longer the disciplinary virtues, but rather sympathy, benevolence, "humanity"—in today's terminology, tolerance or respect for diversity.

Seeing morality and virtue as matters of the external world rather than the inner person, the naturalistic humanitarians are "expansive" or "imperialistic" in temperament. Not having to reform himself or herself, the humanitarian "beautiful soul" can devote full

¹ Richard M. Gamble, "The 'Fatal Flaw' of Internationalism: Babbitt on Humanitarianism," *Humanitas*, 9:2 (1996), 4-18. The following summary of Babbitt's critique is heavily indebted to Gamble's narrative.

time to reforming the world. The humanitarians made compassion serve as the sum of all virtues. The rationalistic (Baconian) humanitarian hoped to change the world by tinkering with institutions and governmental programs, the emotional (Rousseauist) humanitarian by spreading the gospel of brotherhood. Frequently, the two orientations were found in the same persons.

Having defined the predominant temperament of the modern individual, Babbitt then examined its effect on nations, finding the national temperament of Germany and the rest of Europe rooted in the same humanitarianism that produced indulgent, expansive chaos within individual souls. As the individual in the humanitarian age submitted to no "inner check" or "veto" over his own impulses, so too the expansive nation recognized only its own civilizing mission or its divine calling to "uplift" other peoples. Add to this impulse the increasing pressures of population, limited resources, and economic rivalry, and it was clear, Babbitt continued, that "the problem of adjusting the relations between highly expansive individuals and nationalities is indeed the modern problem *par excellence*." It was a problem that both forms of naturalistic humanitarianism had revealed themselves to be singularly incapable of addressing.

The "fatal flaw" of humanitarian internationalism, according to Babbitt, is its assumption, contrary to Thomas Hobbes, that the state of nature is not a war of all against all stemming from man's continual lusting after power, but rather a Rousseauist dream world. The French Revolution had proved Hobbes correct, Babbitt argued; the "will to power" had overwhelmed the "will to brotherhood." The removal of customary restraints had brought anarchy, not peace.

But if both sympathy and self-interest failed to restrain national ambition and failed to build a new commonality among peoples to replace the lost Christendom of the Middle Ages, did humanity have no alternative to the present anarchy brought by expansive impulse other than Hobbesian despotism? There was hope, said Babbitt, but a monumental effort of will and imagination would be necessary. What was needed was a reversal of the trend toward the "sham spirituality" of humanitarian expansiveness and its replacement with the true spirituality of self-discipline that was central to both traditional humanism and Christianity. Rather

than yield to impulse and assert their temperamental selves, individuals had to come together at "a common center" beyond themselves, whether that limiting, disciplining center be the example of Christ or the humanist's law of measure. For nations, also, only recognition of the "common center" could produce true internationalism, an internationalism built on self-control, not impulse.

Democracy Not Inherently Peaceful

Babbitt was emphatic that the fashionable ideas of his day—which were much the same as in ours—did not hold the key to international peace, nor to producing the kind of leaders essential to that purpose. It was not sufficient to be "progressive"—one had to know toward what one was progressing—nor to talk of "peace" and "liberty" and "humanity"; one had to define these terms or risk wandering in a world of delusion. Carelessness and confusion concerning the meaning and limits of democracy had done particular damage, Babbitt feared. Simply more democracy, mere quantitative democracy, was not the cure for social strife or international war. There was nothing inherently peaceful or unifying about pure democracy; on the contrary, quantitative or majoritarian democracy had shown a manifest historical tendency toward imperialism. Any democracy that abandoned internal moral and constitutional constraints on political will would soon grow impatient with checks on its external imperial will as well. Any democracy, including the American, that abandoned its moral and constitutional "veto powers" in favor of a capricious popular will would only hasten its decline into social anarchy and precipitate a plunge toward an impulsive and dangerous foreign policy.

Leaders of Character Indispensable

Though Babbitt feared that America would follow democracy's tendency toward empire, he did not think such a decline was inevitable or irreversible. The solution lay in the virtue and wisdom of individual citizens and their leaders. Citizens had to be law-abiding, not in a legal sense only but by submitting to self-scrutiny and self-discipline. This inner discipline would not result from the endless multiplication of laws to regulate behavior—a tendency even more pronounced in our own time than in Babbitt's—which Babbitt saw as a sign of moral failure rather than of true control. Nor

would it result from muckraking journalists' pointing an accusatory finger at everyone else and thereby encouraging an attitude directly opposite that of the truly critical spirit; nor from the major news media which tended to trivialize every issue; nor from the modern education system which did not teach critical reading and reflection. Babbitt found hope in education for wisdom and virtue rather than for power and service.

But America's will to power also needed to be restrained by the kind of leader that only a humane education could produce. While the humanitarian pursued peace through external manipulation of the world's material condition, the humanist, said Babbitt, would rather "make sure first that our society has leaders who have imposed upon their impulses the yoke of the human law, and so have become moderate and sensible and decent." Babbitt noted that traditional Christianity—before its transformation into sentimental humanitarianism—also taught that peace in the human heart was prerequisite to peace among individuals and societies. This was true of other traditions such as Buddhism and Confucianism as well. The character of leaders mattered, because character would be translated into policy.

Babbitt's prescriptions were ignored, and the twentieth century became a byword for war, totalitarianism, and holocausts. Now, in America's current national administration we have all of the characteristics Babbitt warned against in leaders. Can it be mere coincidence that in 1999, sixty-six years after Babbitt's death, the exact phrase chosen by the President of the United States to describe his policy toward Yugoslavia was "humanitarian bombing"?

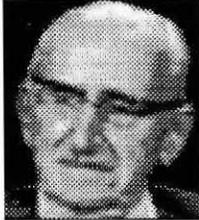
If America is to become a true force for peace, and not the latest successor to revolutionary France as the foremost disturber of world tranquility, it will have to be done not through grand military alliances and international bombast but by revitalizing the institutions and customs of justice and the kind of restraint that is the highest achievement of civilization. That will require redirecting our schools, both public and private, so that they will emphasize the indispensability of humanizing self-discipline, reflection, judgment, and personal decorum. It also will require increased respect for the spirit of constitutionalism at home and for the history, customs, and sovereign immunities of other nations.

NHI Chairman Ryn to Co-Chair Lead Panel at Chinese Comparative Literature Conference

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may be discerned in the best of Western thought as well.

Among the signs of this renaissance is the flourishing of serious publishing, both of books and periodicals, by firms such as the century-old Commercial Press and the fifty-year-old SDX Joint Publishing Company, each headquartered in Beijing. Both publishers produce classic and original works in the humanities by Chinese and Western thinkers. Among titles recently released by SDX, for example, are *The Modern Formation of Regionalized Confucism*, by Yang Nianqun; *The Thought of Heidegger and Chinese Daoism*, by Zhang Xianglong; and *Modern and Confucius Tradition*, by Du Weiming. About half of SDX's books are translations of Western academic and cultural works, including 1998's release of *The Constitution of Liberty*, by F. A. Hayek, from the Constitutionalism Translations Series, and Hans Küng's *On Being Christian*, from the Academic Library of Christian Thoughts in History Series.



F. A. HAYEK
published
in China

Serious Philosophical Discussions

Equally encouraging is the discussion in the popular press of serious philosophical and ethical issues rarely considered on that level in the increasingly "dumbed-down" and sensation-seeking American media. One such article in the *Guangming Daily*, which was excerpted in the *China Daily* of 14 September 1998, argued that literary and artistic works should not overemphasize mere aesthetic form to the exclusion of imaginative wisdom about human nature and human life.

Noting a strong tendency in recent years to stress form at the expense of educational content, the article said the trend was an understandable reaction to the overly didactic writing—which "blurred distinctions between literature and art and politics"—"in the decades before China adopted its reform and opening-up policy."

"However, by wholly denying the educa-

tional function of literature and art, this aestheticism trend has overcorrected the ultra-'Leftism'" of the previous period. "The imagination and readability of literary and artistic works are crucial to the success of works, but they should not be the sole criterion. Content, the embodiment of the soul of an author, a nation and even mankind, is more important for literature and art than form. The function of literature and art is to convey the truth. And a good literary work should neither be a preachment nor a solo by those who would place themselves high above the masses and reality." Critiquing works of mere aestheticism as "one-sided," the article concluded: "Excellent . . . works, characterized by a unity of content and form, must be enlightening to both authors and readers."

Another article in the *Guangming Daily*—by Mao Yushi, director of the Unirule Institution of Economics—discussed the ethics of the free market. "According to economic theory," Mao wrote, "pursuit of personal interests is the motive behind activities in a market economy. But it is absolutely wrong to reach a conclusion that everybody can rampantly pursue their own interests without limits. . . . A market economy is based on the spirit of equality. In other words, it requires people to recognize and respect others' interests while caring about their own, which is known as the basis of morality in China.

"In the past, China gave high praise for altruists who ignored their own interests. As China shifts to a market economy, some officials are abusing their power to pursue personal gains. From the point of view of some people, morals and pursuit of self-interests, just like fire and water, cannot co-exist. These people have misinterpreted what a market economy is about.

"The rule of market economies," Mao continued, "is that economic activities are conducted willingly and on an equal footing. It encourages people to take the initiative in laying down their interests and giving a helping hand to the needy. But it pays more attention to equal exchanges. Government interference will certainly cause an inequality in an economic exchange and, as a result, have a negative impact on development of

the market economy."

At present the Beijing authorities, instead of clamping down on such in-depth philosophical discussion, appear to be actively promoting it, at least for the moment. Though it is seemingly anomalous that a nation governed by a monopoly party that still calls itself "communist" would take the lead in reviving humane studies to a serious degree, there are historical reasons that might explain this hopeful development.

Until early in the twentieth century China remained weakened by its thralldom not to the best spirit of its ancient traditions but to a rigid and moribund traditionalism. This backward condition gave rise to the "May 4 New Cultural Movement," a call for the modernization of China through the large-scale importation of Western culture. While most Chinese intellectuals shared this desire, a split developed in the 1920s between those who looked to the American philosopher John Dewey for guidance and those who preferred the approach advocated by another American scholar, Babbitt.

Babbitt vs. Dewey

Dewey's worldview was in a broad sense "progressive" and perceived as scientific. Believing, as he wrote in *Moral Principles in Education*, that "The child is born with a natural desire to . . . serve" (emphases added), Dewey did not recognize the need for men and women to be disciplined to an ethical law of their own, distinct from the law of physical nature, if the will to serve was not to be overwhelmed by the will to power. Dewey believed that the good society could be molded collectively through the power of social engineering, using roughly the same methods as the natural sciences.

Babbitt, by contrast, taught—in line with insights common to Buddha and Christ, Confucius and Aristotle—that man is not born good but is torn by conflicting desires. Such good as man is able to achieve is created by individual men and women who discipline their natural self or expansive desires to a higher or ethical will—what Babbitt, paraphrasing Emerson, called the "law for man," as opposed to the "law for thing." The goodness thus created exists within individuals and is manifest in their actions and example. In *Democracy and Leadership* Babbitt writes:

The just man . . . is he who, as the result of his moral choices based on due deliberation, choices in which he is moved primarily

by a regard for his own happiness, has quelled the unruly impulses of his lower nature and so attained to some degree of unity with himself. At the same time he will find that he is moving toward a common center with others who have been carrying through a similar task of self-conquest. A state that is controlled by men who have become just as the result of minding their own business in the Platonic sense will be a just state that will also mind its own business; it will be of service to other states, not by meddling in their affairs on either commercial or "idealistic" grounds, but by setting them a good example. A state of this kind may hope to find a basis of understanding with any other state that is also ethically controlled. The hope of cooperation with a state that has an unethical leadership is chimerical. The value of political thinking is therefore in direct ratio to its adequacy in dealing with the problem of leadership. The unit to which all things must finally be referred is not the state or humanity or any other abstraction, but the man of character.

Renwenzhuyi and Rendaozhuyi

In China during the 1920s groups influenced by Dewey and Babbitt coalesced around rival journals. Those in the Dewey mold were led by Professor Hu Shi of Beijing University, who had studied under Dewey at Columbia University. Their articles frequently appeared in the periodical *New Youth*. The Babbitt admirers—led by Professor Wu Mi of Tsinghua University, who had studied under Babbitt at Harvard—wrote for the periodical *Critical Review* (*Xueheng*).

The thought of the *New Youth* circle came to be known by the Chinese term *rendaozhuyi*, while that of the *Critical Review* group was called *renwenzhuyi*. Both *rendaozhuyi* and *renwenzhuyi* are rendered in English as "humanism," but the kinds of life they prescribe are virtually antithetical. *Rendaozhuyi* was militantly anti-traditional and had little use for teachings, whether Eastern or Western in origin, that antedated the Enlightenment Movement of eighteenth century Europe. *Renwenzhuyi*, on the other hand, saw great value in the best strains of both Chinese and Western tradition, provided the insights they offer are applied imaginatively to modern needs and circumstances. (The confusion in China resulting from the designation of two opposing worldviews by words translatable into the English "humanism" was replicated in America, where both Dewey's thought and Babbitt's also were labeled "humanism." Babbitt insisted, however, that Dewey's prescriptions contradicted tradi-

tional humanism, with its emphasis on the virtues of inner restraint, and were more accurately described as "humanitarianism.")

In China, as in most of the developed world, the collectivist and materialist teachings represented by *rendaozhuyi* became, by far, the predominant cultural and political



WU MI (1894-1978)

A renwenzhuyi renaissance?

tendency of the twentieth century. The resulting human misery confirmed the worst of Babbitt's fears. In China the trend culminated in the excesses of the Cultural Revolution of 1966 to 1976, which brought disruption, poverty, fear, and worse to millions of Chinese, including many at the highest levels of the ruling party. In reaction to this traumatic experience—which came closer to the logical extremes of sentimental humanitarianism than anything that has yet occurred in the United States—it may not be so surprising that many in China would turn with new respect to the teachings of Babbitt and *renwenzhuyi*.

Literature and Life

Whatever the reason, a renewal of interest in Babbitt and related thinkers is indeed occurring in China. Evidence includes the publication in 1996 by Beijing's SDX Joint Publishing Co. of the lecture notes of Wu Mi for the course on *Literature and Life* he taught in 1936-37. This book, painstakingly edited by Wu Mi's daughter, Wu Xuezhao, appears partly in English, partly in Chinese, just as the notes therein were first put down

by Wu Mi for his own use. The book, now for sale in China, is suggestive of great philosophical depth and would serve well as a handbook for educational renewal in the United States. Space here will allow only a few brief quotes that are illustrative of the tenor of the whole:

Aim & Purpose of "Literature and Life":

1. To give to the Students the Best of Myself—of what I have read and heard; of what I have thought and felt; of my own Experience of Life, both direct and indirect.
2. To make the Students express themselves freely and happily in intimate and familiar Discussion-in-class.
3. To make the Students read certain fundamental good books which should be read by every good and intelligent man and woman. . . .
4. To present pictures and accounts and criticisms and lessons of life, in the past—in the various periods of history (both in the East and West), in different walks of life, and by men of different temperament and character and social status.
5. To acquire, through practice and experiment, a method of Literary study and Expression (10-11).

Tradition and Progress.

Progress is a Continual assimilation of Tradition.

Organic Growth.

The Value of the Individual depends on the amount and quality of Tradition that he has absorbed (76).

The Nature of Philosophic Reconstruction

1. Philosophy lives, and is to be revived, in each Individual Soul; not in books, nor in the Objective World. Therefore, each man must reconstruct the truth of philosophy in his own Soul. . . (164).

Method of Philosophic Reconstruction

1. Beginning in Destruction . . . Skepticism and Freedom . . .
2. Ending in Construction . . . Belief and Fulfillment
(Christ: "I come not to destroy, but to fulfil." Matthew V. 17
Its intellectual meaning—True Knowledge,
Its moral meaning—Good Example) (165).

Moral Reconstruction . . .

- 1st Convention, Custom, Habit, etc.—Action without Reason and Feeling. . . .
- 2nd Revolution, Upheaval, Self-Assertion, etc.—Action on dogmatic Reason or on rebellious Feeling. . . .
- 3rd Re-construction, Harmony, Synthesis, etc.—Action on true (perfect) Reason and good (kind) Feeling (166).

Preliminaries to Moral Reconstruction . . .

The right and true moral action or attitude is the Mean between (i) extreme formalism

and literal observation of law and convention, and (ii) extreme personal freedom and defying or denying all laws and conventions. . . .

The World of Men, and Life, appears thus to be Confusion, Disorder, Bewilderment and Necessity (in one word Chaos); unintelligible and beyond men's control. We are caught in the web of existence, and swept onward in the current of action, without and in spite of our individual Will and Understanding and Desire. . . .

But, the world of God, i.e. Religion, reveals itself as a Cosmos; as Order, System, Plan, Co-ordination, Purpose, Intelligibility, Beauty, Perfection. It can be understood (though partially) by men; it responds to men's call or prayer; it satisfies both men's mind and heart, it is whole, permanent, and indestructible—and yet does not need or depend on men's efforts to protect or repair it—so it sustains our Ultimate Faith (173-87).

Besides Wu Mi's *Literature and Life*, SDX is publishing his complete five-million-word intellectual diary from 1910 to 1973. The completed work will fill ten volumes.

Translations of books by Babbitt himself, including his 1908 work *Literature and the American College: Essays in Defense of the Humanities*, are being prepared, with the cooperation and encouragement of the National Humanities Institute, for publication in China. Plans also are underway to publish Chinese editions of one or more of NHI Chairman Claes Ryn's books.

Ryn, who is Professor of Politics at The Catholic University of America, has been invited by the Chinese Comparative Literature Association (CCLA), to co-chair with Yue

Daiyun, Professor of Comparative Literature and Comparative Culture at Beijing University



CLAES RYN
to co-chair panel

and President of the CCLA, the lead panel at the Association's International Conference to be held in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, from August 14 to 19, 1999. The topic of the panel is "Facing the New Century: Multiculturalism and

Humanism." Ryn's paper will be on "Unity in Diversity: Culture in Common."

That all of this is occurring with the tolerance, if not active support, of the Beijing authorities is highly significant. Yet prudence cautions that the current trend may not last. The Chinese government, if not totalitarian as in the Mao Zedong period, remains authoritarian by American standards. Previous experience in China has seen "opening-up" periods abruptly halted by harsh "tightening-ups."

Still, the outbreak of humanistic scholarship now underway in China carries potential international import, especially since it contrasts with the continuing dominance in most of the world, including the United States, of education for power under the guise of "service." Scholars at the National Humanities Institute believe the turn toward humane studies in China should be encouraged for as long as it lasts.

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But the financial resources available to NHI are woefully inadequate. The Institute *must* broaden its base of support. We need your financial help *now* to be able to carry through on crucial projects stalled by lack of funding.

Partly because NHI's work does not promise any direct political or economic pay-off but pursues a long-term intellectual strategy toward restoring humane civilization, raising money for its programs is difficult. If you receive our materials and believe in our work, please donate. Contributions are tax-deductible.

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