

# philippine studies

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**Beyond East and West**  
by John C. H. Wu

**Introduction by Frank Sheed**

Review Author: Daniel Clifford

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bers of the Kuomintang. "They are dying for the Faith in all its naked, daylight clarity."

A little Catholic boy, taunted by Red playmates, was told, "If you step outside this circle, it means you have renounced God." Then they drew a chalk circle around him on the sidewalk. After long hours the boy had to cross the line; he made his way several miles to the nearest priest, tearful because he feared he might have deserted the faith.

In this book we have the truth from eye-witnesses, not from hearsay; from those who have lived the experiences of which they speak, have lived in China and known its people not from a six weeks trip, a conducted tour. They speak of the China which Mr. Moraes never visited, the China of the prisons, concentration camps, forced labor camps. They have lived in the villages which were not carefully rigged up for the Indian Delegation's visit. And they tell us that the mass of the people hate the regime. And when the precious nuances of Mr. Moraes' "reasonable" report are forgotten, these missionaries will return.

DANIEL CLIFFORD

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BEYOND EAST AND WEST. By John C. H. Wu. With a Note of Introduction by Frank Sheed. Sheed and Ward, New York. 1951. Pp. xi-364.

This book is not in the ordinary sense an autobiography, but a spiritual Odyssey. John Wu gives us only those external facts necessary to an understanding of his spiritual development. Yet in five careers,—Law, Education, Diplomacy, Literature and Politics—he achieved success such as would content most men in one. At the age of 28 he was already a judge, at 29 chief justice and president of the Shanghai Provisional Court, whose delicate task (complicated by extraterritoriality, lack of precedents, varieties of nationalities and prejudices against Chinese justice) was to decide disputes arising between Chinese and non-Chinese in the International Settlement in Shanghai. At 30 he was lecturing in Law at Northwestern University, Chicago, and had been granted a research fellowship in law at Harvard, and was offered a professorship. The same year he refused a place on China's Supreme Court, and went into private practice with such success that he could take only a fraction of the cases offered to him. Besides all this, no matter what his other occupations, he was turning out articles and books on law. He was on terms of intimacy with the greatest jurists of the thirties, Justices Holmes, Cardozo, Brandeis of the United States Supreme Court, Roscoe Pound and many others.

In diplomacy, he was chairman of the Foreign Affairs Com-

mittee of the Executive Yuan, for years special adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one of China's delegates to the San Francisco Conference in which the United Nations was founded, China's first Minister to the Holy See.

In politics, a member of the Executive Yuan, he was the principal drafter of the 1933 Constitution of the Republic of China, and might have been the Minister of Education in the last national government formed on the mainland of China.

In letters, besides his numerous articles and books on law, he was one of the founders and a frequent contributor to an excellently edited literary magazine in English called *Tien Hsia*, whose purpose was to explain Chinese culture to the West. It was in this magazine that he wrote the first of his articles as a Catholic, *The Science of Love*, an article on St. Therese, the Little Flower, which was later translated into nine languages. His paraphrase of the psalms in the difficult verse-forms of Chinese classical poetry became a best-seller in China. Since then he has translated the Missal and the New Testament into Chinese in a style in which the literate Chinese feels himself at home.

Since the Communist take-over in China he has taught at the University of Hawaii and at Seton Hall, New Jersey, and has done a great deal of writing.

Wu Ching-Hsiung grew up in that easy, nature-loving humanism which is compounded of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, characteristic of many educated Chinese, from whose opposing elements each makes a more or less personal synthesis. As a student of law in a Protestant school, he became an enthusiastic Methodist, but by the time he had finished his studies in the United States, France and Germany, little of that faith remained except a belief in God.

Like Lin Yu-Tang and other of his friends working on the *Tien Hsia*, he had a truly astonishing capacity for absorbing books and ideas. Again, like Lin Yu-Tang and all his group, John Wu was concerned with the differences in mental attitude between the East and the West. At a period when China was seeking a synthesis between the old and the new, between its own age-old culture and the selection of what was best in the civilization of the West, this group was concerned with the question of true culture, which would be reached when educated men would enlarge their horizons to embrace in their humanism the whole of man's cultural achievement, and not content themselves merely with the cultivation of one small section of it. Such a synthesis would be beyond the differences of East and West.

It was only after his conversion that he realized how this synthesis had been made centuries before in the Catholic Faith. He found that embracing the Faith did not imply, as so many educated

people in China thought, a betrayal of his cultural heritage. By entering the Church he found that he lost nothing of what he had, but that he had gained new treasures; that by being a Catholic he could be totally Catholic, totally Chinese, totally himself. One is reminded of St. Justin, the Philosopher and Martyr, in his apology to the Roman Emperor: "Everything true that has ever been said is ours." For the Word is "the true light which enlightens every man who comes into this world," and whatever of truth there is in any philosophy or religion, whether of the ancient Greek, or Chinese or Indian philosophers, must necessarily have come from the Source of All Truth.

This book traces the steps of this spiritual journey, to the depths of unhappiness and dissatisfaction in the early 1930's, when he was at the most successful (from a material point of view) period of his life, through the beginning of the war, his readings, his chance encounter in the home of a Catholic friend with a pamphlet on the Little Flower, St. Therese of Lisieux, through the trials and dangers of the war, his arrest by the Japanese, his escape to China, the conversion of many members of his family and of friends, to his ambassadorship to the Vicar of Christ. It is an intimate story, sometimes as poignant in his pouring out of his heart in love and gratitude to God as some passages of the Confessions of St. Augustine. For in the Church he has found himself in the one truly universal synthesis of man's cultural heritage. He was looking for a universal culture. He found that Catholic means universal. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice and all these things will be added to you."

DANIEL CLIFFORD

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THE MORAL OBLIGATION OF VOTING. By Titus Cranny, S. A. Catholic University, Washington, D.C. 1952. Pp. xxvii-155. \$2.00.

In an age when the Kremlin and the White House, the Wall Street Banker and the common Tao, the Holy Father and the lowly Cleric, wait anxiously for the votes to be counted in Italy or England, in Germany, Japan or the Philippines, it was fitting that the moral obligation of voting be given its meed of investigation by a student of Catholic Social Thought. The era of Democracy with its suffrage has also been, most unfortunately, the era of Communism and of atomic warfare. Against the urgency of this background the author has given us a very readable thesis which will be useful for the scholar or any student of political and social affairs, and of interest even for the ordinary reader because of its many "quotable quotes" culled from the writings of the Catholic Hierarchy through-