

The Use of Analogy by Kang Youwei in His Writings on European History

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Kang Youwei as a Historian

Western sinologists have seen Kang Youwei 康有為 almost exclusively as a reformer and an utopian thinker. Consequently, primary attention has been paid to his numerous memoranda and pamphlets on the reform of the Chinese monarchic system as well as to writings laying the philosophical foundations for these reforms by reinterpreting the teachings of Kongzi, and last but not least of course to *The Book of the Great Equality* (*Datongshu* 大同書).

Much less, however, is known about Kang as a historian. But as early as 1898 he had tried to convince the emperor Guangxu 光緒 of the necessity of introducing reforms with arguments from comparative reflections on historical events in countries of the outside world. In doing so, he was simply following the pattern of traditional Chinese historiography according to which the past is regarded as a mirror for the presence and the present situation is understood as the reflection of historical precedence. Kang Youwei was one of the first Chinese thinkers to apply this traditional approach to the history of non-Chinese regions. As a result, not only the different levels of time existing between the past and the presence were eliminated, but the different levels of space were eliminated too with various geographical zones being incorporated into the traditional Chinese concept of history. Thus in a certain sense world history had been sinicized.

According to the traditional understanding, one should learn two things from the mirror of history: first, to perceive instances of wrong behavior and bad developments as warnings in order to avoid their recurrence in the presence; and second, to take instances of right conduct and developments as standards or models.

Historical Writings of 1898

Focusing on the problem of reforms and following the first function of the mirror principle, Kang Youwei submitted a lengthy essay on the French revolution, criticizing it very strongly, and on the reasons for the overthrow of the regime of Louis XVI who in Kang's opinion had ignored the will of the

people and had been unable to carry out reforms in time.¹ In another essay on the partition and decline of Poland he argued along similar lines. Kang believed that China at the end of the 19th century was threatened by conquest and division by foreign powers as Poland had been a century earlier.² As far as the second function of the mirror is concerned, Kang had addressed the question of a standard or model in his studies on the reforms of Peter I in Russia³ and of the Meiji period in Japan.⁴ Kang proposed “to take Japan and Russia as a model in order to give stability to the country”.⁵ He argued that both countries, like China at the time, had been controlled by foreign powers in the past but afterwards achieved national strength through reforms. Because both had a monarchic order, one could learn something about the transition to constitutional monarchy from their history. Kang saw another prerequisite for comparison with China in the fact that Russia, like China, was a large country and had much in common with China in terms of language, manners and customs. Japan in particular should be perceived by China as a model because following the Meiji period it had adopted Western sciences and technology selectively but with great success.⁶ To explain the necessity of reforms, a few common features were reason enough for Kang to qualify Russia and Japan as countries belonging to “the same category” (*tonglei* 同類) and to draw conclusions from this analogy. Through the mirror of Russian and Japanese history the Chinese should become aware of their own problems and potential.

Although Kang Youwei claimed in his autobiography that at the end of August and the beginning of September 1898 he had submitted two essays to the emperor on the reforms in Germany and in England (neither piece has

- 1 “Jinsheng Faguo geming ji xu” (Preface to the Record of the French Revolution, Presented to the Emperor), in: *Kang Youwei zhenglun ji*, vol. 1, Beijing 1981, pp. 308–310. However, Kang’s note in his autobiography that he had already presented two essays to the emperor in June 1898 entitled “Faguo geming ji” and “Faguo bianzheng ji” (see Jung-pang Lo, *K’ang Yuwei. A Biography and a Symposium*, Tucson 1967, pp. 100–101, 116) has been doubted by scholars recently (see Kong Xiangji, *Kang Youwei bianfa zouyi yanjiu*, Shanghai 1988, pp. 383–389).
- 2 “Bolan fenmie ji” (Record of the Partition and Fall of Poland), August 10, 1898. The original text is preserved in the Palace Museum in Beijing; see Ma Honglin, *Kang Youwei dazhuan*, Shenyang 1988, pp. 238–243.
- 3 “E Bide bianzheng ji” (Record of the Reforms under Peter the Great), March 11, 1898; see “Jinsheng Eluosi da Bide bianzheng ji xu” (Preface to the Record of Peter the Great from Russia, Presented to the Emperor), in: *Kang Youwei zhenglun ji*, vol. 1, pp. 225–229.
- 4 “Ribei bianzheng kao” (Examination of the Reforms in Japan), April 10, 1898; see “Jinsheng Ribei mingzhi bianzheng kao xu” (Preface to the Examination of the Meiji Reforms in Japan, Presented to the Emperor), in: *Kang Youwei zhenglun ji*, vol. 1, pp. 222–224.
- 5 “Shang Qingdi di liushu” (Sixth Memorandum to the Qing Emperor), in: *Kang Youwei zhenglun ji*, vol. 1, pp. 211–217.
- 6 See “Jinsheng Ribei mingzhi bianzheng kao xu”, op. cit., pp. 222–224.

been discovered as yet),⁷ these two countries undoubtedly seemed to him at least during the Hundred Days to be much less suitable for comparison with China than Russia and Japan.⁸

The pragmatic and political character of Kang's historical essays of 1898 was quite obvious in that they focused exclusively on the reform issue. They were based mainly on sources about Western countries available in China starting in the 80s such as news, articles, reports and translations published, e. g., in the Shanghai journals *The Compendium of Current Events in Western Countries* (*Xiguo jinshi huibian* 西國近事彙編) and *The Globe Magazine*, and as of 1889 in *The Review of the Time* (*Wanguo gongbao* 萬國公報). The historical writings which Kang composed seven or eight years later were also based on translations of Western historical surveys. They were no longer restricted to descriptions of reform events but generally covered the entire history of a country from its inception to the present time. Furthermore they were characterized by the addition of Kang's own impressions and images he had obtained while traveling around the countries he was later to describe.

The following essays belong to the second period of Kang's historical writing: *Studies on the Historical Evolution of Sweden, 1905* ("Ruidian yange kao" 瑞典沿革考), *The rise and the Historical Evolution of France, 1906* ("Faguo chuangxing yange" 法國創興沿革) and *Studies on the Historical Evolution of Germany, with a Supplement on the Historical Evolution of Austria and Hungary, 1906* ("Deyizhi yange kao, Aodali Xiongyali yange fu" 德意志沿革考—奧大利匈牙利沿革附).⁹

Each of the three works dealing with the history, economy and political situation of the respective country included numerous comparisons with the situation in China and also Kang's own evaluations in this context.¹⁰ The pres-

7 "Deguo bianzheng ji" (Record on the Political Reforms in Germany) also mentioned by Kang as "Deguo Weilian disan neizheng ji" (Record on the Domestic Politics of (Friedrich) Wilhelm III of Germany); "Yingguo bianzheng ji" (Record on the Political Reforms in England), see Jung-pang Lo, *K'ang yu-wei*, pp. 100-101, 116. Recent research assumes that these two essays which nobody has yet seen presumably had been prepared rather than actually composed during the Hundred Days; see Kong Xiangji, *Kang Youwei bianfa zouyi yanjiu*, pp. 383-389.

8 See Roland Felber, "Das Deutschlandbild Kang Youweis von der Hunderttagereform bis zur Xinhai-Revolution 1911", in Kuo Heng-yü and Mechthild Leutner (eds.), *Deutschland und China*, Munich 1994, p. 170, note 22.

9 *Wuxu bianfa qianhou. Kang Youwei yigao*, Shanghai 1986, pp. 321-339, 340-359, 360-406.

10 Kang found, e. g., that Sweden in the 14th century, i. e. at the beginning of the Ming dynasty as he explicitly stressed, was still subject to socioeconomic conditions which China had undergone several thousand years before under the rule of Gonggong, Yandi and Huangdi. He noted that Sweden had risen only in the 17th century, i. e. at the end of the Ming and the beginning of the Qing. In Kang's opinion, this phenomenon verified a saying of Kongzi according to which the latecomer will threaten the world. Kang depl-

ent paper, however, in trying to study Kang's method of using historical comparison and analogy, refers mainly to the essay on German history, because the latter is indeed rich in analogy (*leibi* 類比) and therefore is well suited to this purpose.

“Studies on the Historical Evolution of Germany”

This essay is a remarkable document of intercultural history. It shows the aims and the methodological instruments which determined the reception of German history achieved by one of the greatest Chinese intellectuals at the beginning of the 20th century.

Depicting the history of Germany from its Germanic origins to the formation of an unified state under Bismarck and its rise as a dominant great power, the essay is by its nature very complex. It represents a new style of historical writing and reflects both Kang's efforts to provide a new view of world history and his attachment toward patterns of traditional Chinese historiography.

The first thing we notice is that Kang's essay was written in a new style different from the texts of official historiography. In the place of the traditional form, he employed a narrative form both presenting and explaining history in one and the same text. While in the texts of 1898 Kang had still used prefaces (*xu* 序) to express political views and arguments, we find them now within the text itself which is rich with the author's own observations, reflections and evaluations.

The beginnings of a new approach found further expression in Kang's conception of history as no longer to be viewed in a retrospective-cyclic manner but primarily as an evolutionary process. German history is described as an evolution from the primitive stage of the Germanic period to the modern highly developed stage reached after the unification of 1871.

red the fact that a culture as old as the Chinese was not esteemed in the West and that even the Japanese and their products were more appreciated than the Chinese who were often even taken as Japanese. See Kang Youwei, “Ruidian yange kao” in: *Wuxu bianfa qianhou*, p. 327. In his article on France he did not restrict himself to condemning the French revolution as he had done in 1898, but tried to address the question of why the historical preconditions for the rise of democratic ideas and revolution had arisen in France whereas they had never appeared in China. He saw one of the main reasons for this in the fact that the feudal lords (*zhuhou*) in France had already lost their influence and were therefore not in a position to save the king who was the sole holder of power. Other factors evident in France but not in China which he mentioned included the oppression of the people by the aristocracy and the clergy as well as the philosophy of the Enlightenment. In China, he argued, the time for revolution and a democratic republic was not yet ripe, all the more so as Kongzi had said in his teachings on the Three Ages that the dignitary (*dafu*) would be eliminated during the Age of Chaos, the lords (*zhuhou*) would be removed during the Age of Approaching Peace (*shengping*) and only during the Age of Great Peace (*taiping*) could the Son of Heaven be condemned. See Kang Youwei, “Faguo chuanguxing yange”, in: *Wuxu bianfa qianhou*, pp. 355–356.

The attempts to go beyond traditional historiography became particularly evident when Kang elaborated on the substantive differences between Germany and China in their economic, social and political structures. These included, e. g., his analysis of the importance of the fiefdom system for the birth of independent cities and for the flourishing of science and philosophy. But in spite of the vast deficits which Kang granted to China in this area, he still regarded the traditional society of imperial China as more beneficial to the people. Finally, one cannot overlook the fact that the views themselves on the course and prospects of German history projected by this essay, especially the glorification of the Germanic element and the role of Prussia, were borrowed from abroad and reflected the standpoint of a greater German historiography.

However, as far as the overall structure, main aim and method of argumentation are concerned, the essay remained largely influenced by traditional historiography.

First of all, Kang simply applied a Chinese view and a Chinese yardstick to German history. Primary emphasis was not placed on describing German history per se but on its evaluation (commendation and condemnation - *baobian* 褒貶) and on the conclusions that must be drawn from it to benefit China. In a certain sense, a sinicization of German history took place. It had already found expression in the chronology. Each historical date was given according to Western chronology as well as to the era of Kongzi. For example: "In the 2422nd year of Kongzi, i.e. in 1871 of the Western calendar, Germany gained victory over France." Another indication of this Chinese way of viewing German history was the periodization by dynasties (*chaodai* 朝代) and the attempt to construe the unified centralized Prussian-German state as the completion and fulfillment of the legacy of Charlemagne. The influence of the Chinese scheme of periodization as well as the traditional view of the legitimacy of rulership (*zhengtong* 正統) seem quite apparent here.

Kang distinguished the following German dynasties: "The first Germanic dynasty of the Salic Franks"; "The second Germanic dynasty of the Franks founded by Charlemagne who unified the country"; "The third Germanic dynasty of the Saxonian heroic rulers"; "The fourth Germanic dynasty which restored the power of the Franks" (Henry II, III, IV); "The fifth Germanic dynasty" (Staufers, Frederick I, II); "The Austrian dynasty (Habsburgs) which after the interregnum took up the German emperorship for generations"; "The rise of Prussia under the dynasty of the Hohenzollerns which ended Austrian dominance, defeated France and brought about the unification of Germany".¹¹

11 Kang Youwei, "Deyizhi yange kao", in: *Wuxu bianfa qianhou*, pp. 366, 371, 375, 381-382, 387-391, 394-398.

Second, corresponding to Chinese historiographical tradition, Kang's concern with German history was much more motivated by ethical or pragmatic-political than purely scholarly intentions. The aim was to guide Chinese readers to the right behavior, i.e. to let them acknowledge the correctness of Kang's political program and framework for China's development while looking into the mirror of German history set before them by the author. Two and a half millennia before, Kongzi had also written the *Chunqiu* 春秋 for the purpose of laying down the standards for a perfect government because he saw no other way to implement his ideas.¹² Kang's central idea in his essay was as follows. In a relatively short time China would be able to achieve prosperity and strength, overcome oppression by foreign powers and rise as a dominant force in Asia, if the Chinese would concentrate all their energy on this task as the Germans had done, and if, while relying on the authority of the supreme ruler, they would introduce constitutional reforms in order to ensure modern development. In his "Supplementary Report on Travels Around Germany" (*Bu Deguo youji* 補德國游記) written in 1908 and praising the political order under Wilhelm II as the most stable (*pingzhi* 平治) and as a model for China, he summarized his programmatic approach in the following manner: "To take the people's rights as the base, and the power of a talented and mighty ruler as the instrument for their realization (*Yi xianfa zhi minquan wei ti yi yingjue zhi junquan wei yong* 以憲法之民權爲體以英絕之君權爲用)."¹³

Third, because Germany after 1904 began to play a very important role in Kang's political thinking, it qualified at least in Kang's eyes as a mirror like Russia and Japan had done in 1898. But whereas the writings of 1898 analyzed Japanese, Russian, French and Polish history mainly by focusing on the presence or absence of reforms, the essay of 1906 raised the entire history of Germany to the level of a mirror. The main concern now was the question of the high and low points in German history and the historical reasons for the success of the Germans who had overcome their weakness and disunity and built up a powerful state. Kang wrote that "during a short period the Germans became successful in extending their own (culture and influence) and in subduing others. Great China, however, with its rich culture of five thousand years today, is still forced to accept the instruction of others, bowing its head and lowering its eyes. There is no shame greater than this! The reasons for progress and recession, ups and downs, gains and losses in history are as manifold as the trees in a forest. Investigating the past to verify the present, analyzing the reasons for the consequences and taking this as a mirror for our country in order to make the (necessary) changes evident – how can one not

12 See *Shiji*, Beijing 1959, chapter 47, pp. 1943–44.

13 Kang Youwei, "Bu Deguo youji", in: Jiang Guilin (ed.), *Kang Nanhai xiansheng youji huibian*, Taipei 1979, pp. 433–434.

take such a task seriously (*Yuangu zhengjin tuiyin qiuguo yi wuguo jian guan bianhua zhi ji qike lüeye* 原古証今推因求果以吾國鑒觀變化之計其可略耶?)¹⁴

Kang was not the only Chinese at that time who took Germany as a mirror and a model. In the preface to the book *History of the Germans* (*Rierman shi* 日耳曼史), a translation into Chinese published in 1903, the editors argued that China at the center of Asia must regard Germany, situated in the center of Europe, as a mirror in order to receive an intellectual stimulus in studying the law governing the rise of states.¹⁵ Even in 1915 the author of a booklet entitled *The Origins of Germany's Wealth and Power* (*Deguo fuqiang zhi youlai* 德國富強之由來) presented his analysis as “nourishment” for the Chinese. He called on the Chinese people “to take the powerful Germany as a model for surviving under their own steam”, because “those who in the presence world are seeking a model for strengthening their own country cannot ignore Germany (*ran ze dangjin zhi shi yuqiu qiangguo jiuwang zhi jian gu she De moshu yi* 然則當今之世欲求強國救亡之鑒固舍德莫屬矣).”¹⁶

Fourth, in order to use the history of Germany as a mirror for China's presence, some basic similarities between the historical development of Germany and the present situation of China must be elaborated at least on the level of comparison chosen by the author. The appropriate conclusions and analogies can only be drawn if assignment to “the same category” (*tonglei*) is acknowledged. If an association with the concept of *tonglei* is given, the historian might hope to achieve the same effect as Kongzi had with the *Chunqiu*, namely “relying on the reality of other events to record the past in order to teach the people to acknowledge the events of their time as the same”.¹⁷ The author of the preface to the *History of the Germans* cited above perceived a *tonglei* situation in the fact that both the Germanic state and the state of Huaxia had originated in the centers of Europe and Asia¹⁸ (*Rierman guo yu ouzhou zhongyuan yu Huaxia guo yu yazhou zhongyuan tong* 日耳曼國於歐洲中原與華夏國於亞洲中原同). Kang Youwei expressed a similar idea. He traced the birth of most European and even North American states back to a Germanic origin and compared the Germanic era with the Zhou era (*bizhi wuguo guzhe Rierman ren you tong chengzhou* 比之吾國古者日耳曼人有同成周). He saw an analogy between the dominant role of the Germanic tribes in

14 Ibid., p. 362.

15 Sha An, *Rierman shi*, Shanghai 1903, preface, pp. 1–2.

16 Zhu Zhangbao (Yansi), *Deguo fuqiang zhi youlai*, *Xin zhishi congshu* 4, Shanghai 1925, preface, pp. 1–3.

17 See Otto Franke, “Das Problem des Tsch'un-ts'iu und Tung Tschung-schu's Tsch'un-ts'iu fan-lu”, in: *Mitteilungen des Seminars für orientalische Sprachen*, vol. XXI, 1918, p. 22. Franke is citing Zhu Xi.

18 Sha An, *Rierman shi*; preface, p. 1.

Europe and that of the Ji 姬 clan in Zhou China. Political hegemony and a flourishing culture had been achieved only under their rule, he argued.¹⁹ The real point of departure for the affiliation of German history as being of the same category with China, however, was the following postulate: During a long history of numerous high and low points, following centuries of weakness, dissolution and oppression by foreign powers, the Germans had finally succeeded in unifying all the German states into a great power which had not only thrown off every external interference but had become a dominant force in Europe based on military strength and an unprecedented rise in economic, technical and cultural development. Such a success had been the result of the great patriotic authority of wise rulers who had introduced reforms and thus enabled the transition from an autocratic to a constitutional monarchy. Such was the message conveyed to the Chinese reader who was asked to learn from Kang's essay that in spite of many specific dissimilarities between Germany and China, China must nevertheless see her own potential in the path taken by Germany's historical evolution.

Minor Analogies

This basic supposition according to which Germany and China must belong to the same category, *tonglei*, enabled Kang to draw analogies with China even for various details, events and figures in German history. Examples of these kinds of analogy are surprisingly numerous. The so-called Germanic states in Europe such as England, Sweden, Denmark, etc. were seen as analogous to the Chunqiu states under the Ji clan. Italy was compared with the Song 宋 state of the Chunqiu period, Russia with the state of Qin 秦, France with Qi 齊 (because it had lost dominance at the *zhongyuan* 中原), Spain with Chu 楚. The "unification" of Europe under Charlemagne was compared to the achievements of Zhou Wuwang 周武王 and Qin Shihuang 秦始皇. The interregnum of the 13th century in Europe was seen as analogous to the era of *Gonghe* 共和 in China (9th century B.C.), the rivalry between Prussia and Austria in the struggle for hegemony during the 19th century as analogous to the endless wars between Jin 晉 and Chu 楚 in late Zhou times. The rise of the Salic Frankish state under Chlodwig at the periphery of the Roman Empire was seen as comparable to the rise of the Southern Xiongnu 南匈奴 under Liu Yuan 劉淵. The removal of the capital from German soil to Rome under Otto I in the 10th century was seen as analogous to the removal of the capital by Wei Wenwang 魏文王 to Yanjing 燕京 under the rulers of the Liao 遼, Jin 金 and Yuan 元 dynasties. The acceptance of the Roman emperorship by Otto I was construed as the entry of the Germanic people into the era of civilization and

19 Kang Youwei, "Deyizhi yange kao", p. 360.

as the assumption of the legacy formerly pursued by the Eastern Roman Empire. Kang saw an analogy here with the transfer of the *zhengtong* legacy to the South during the period of the Northern and Southern dynasties in China. Prior to that removal of the capital, the Germanic people like the Xiongnu, Kitan and Jurchen in China had lived on the Northern side of the Alps and the Shamo, respectively, from where they threatened the Roman and Chinese empires. The Frankish and Saxonian rulers were compared to emperors of the Southern Chinese Song 宋, Qi 齊, Liang 梁, and Chen 陳 dynasties, the partition of the Eastern Frankish state to the division of the Northern Wei 北魏 into the Western and Eastern Wei on one side and Qi 齊 and Zhou 周 on the other. Germany and France had struggled for hegemony in Europe as the states of Eastern and Western Wei had struggled with Qi and Zhou for the *zhengtong* legacy in Northern China. The states at the periphery of Europe were compared to the peripheral states Koryo (England), Annam (Spain), and Fuyu, Bohai, Silla, Paekche (Sweden, Norway, Poland, Holland and Russia!).

Sometimes, however, Kang himself admitted that there was a limit to his attempts to identify parallels and analogies to Chinese history, such as when he pointed out that European peripheral states like England and Spain had reached a high level of development and yet made war against each other. In contrast, neither the Asian states of Koryo and Annam, though very close to the Chinese culture, nor Japan had ever taken part in wars for hegemony at the center (*zhongyuan*). And so he remarked in an almost disappointed manner, “therefore one cannot compare (the peripheral states of Europe and China) (*gu wude er bi yan* 故無得而比焉)” and “only if we compare them with the Sixteen States (of the 5th century) will we find both belonging to the same category (*wei bizhi yu shiliu guo ze xianglei* 惟比之與十六國則相類)”. But such an analogy, Kang continued, does not make sense because the European peripheral states had existed for centuries but the Sixteen States only for a short time.²⁰ Although the partition of the Frankish state had been of the same kind (*tonglei*) as the division of the Northern Wei, one should take into account, Kang noted, that the Germanic state had been quite different from France because it controlled a much larger territory including that of several vassal states and had even been granted the crown of the Roman emperor. England as an island appeared to be a peripheral state, but militarily it had been very strong and made war nearly as much as France and its activities could be compared only with the military occupation of the Yanyun 燕雲 territories by Yelü Chucai 耶律楚材. But such an analogy, Kang pointed out again, seemed tenable only from the perspective of the theory of evolution, because in substance both phenomena had been quite different. As far as the comparison between Spain and Annam goes, Kang also noted that Spain at its

²⁰ Ibid., p. 377.

greatest time had ruled over a large territory and competed even with Rome, and its geographic position “was not of the same kind as that of China (*yu wu-guo bulei* 與吾國不類)”.²¹

As can be seen from these comments, Kang himself was already aware that many of his historical analogies referred only to superficial aspects of the phenomena and could not conceal the substantive differences and dissimilarities existing between the historical developments of Europe and China. Kang saw such differences, e. g., in the fact that in China after the Chunqiu period, the conquered territory of the feudal lords and states had always been incorporated into the administration of the conquering state. In the interest of the unity of the centralized state in China, the barbarians of the border regions had never been allowed to maintain either their rulers or their states. But unlike China, the Europeans had been unwise enough to let the conquered feudal states continue to exist, thus hindering unity.²²

When analyzing the use of these kinds of minor analogy in Kang's essay, several points can be noted. First, neither chronological principles nor the different stages of socioeconomic development played a role. Events of modern times were compared with those of ancient Zhou times very freely. Second, the examples of *leibi* often referred to the Chunqiu period because Kang clearly regarded this time as a key era, all the more so because Kongzi had worked out the basic principles of traditional Chinese historiography only in his *Chunqiu*. Third, the closer to modern times the less Kang's use of direct and concrete analogy and the more he concentrated not on the similarities but on the differences in the historical developments of both countries. He saw feudal disunity and wars in Europe and centralized unity and peace in China, but economic and political progress there and stagnation here. This attitude is quite understandable as Kang simply wanted to show the different route Germany had taken in modern times in reaching wealth and power and which China still had to travel following the example of Germany.

Associative Thinking and the Concept of *tonglei*

In a previous article the author of the present paper pointed out that many of Kang's *leibi* analogies are untenable from a scholarly standpoint, and expressed the view that Kang's sole purpose in using this kind of *leibi* was to make an unknown subject more familiar to the Chinese reader, i.e. simply to make the text more readable.²³ But this explanation seems incomplete because it accords insufficient consideration to the importance of the method of *leibi* in

21 Ibid., pp. 377–378.

22 Ibid., p. 379.

23 Roland Felber (Fei Lu), “Kang Youwei yu Deguo”, in: *Wuxu hou Kang Liang weixinpai yanjiu lunji*, Guangzhou 1994, pp. 87–98.

Chinese historiographical tradition in connection with the key concept of *tonglei*.

Joseph Needham has shown with reference to traditional associative (or correlative, coordinative) thinking: "The symbolic correlations or correspondences all formed part of one colossal pattern. Things behaved in particular ways not necessarily because of prior actions or impulses of other things, but because their position in the ever-moving cyclical universe was such that they were endowed with intrinsic natures which made that behaviour inevitable for them. [...] They were thus parts in existential dependence upon the whole world organism."²⁴ Unlike the concept of causation the universe of things and events thus was systematized into a pattern of structure by which all the mutual influences of its parts were conditioned.²⁵ And further, "Instead of observing successions of phenomena, the (ancient) Chinese registered alternations of aspects. If two aspects seemed to them to be connected, it was not by means of a cause and effect relationship, but rather 'paired' like the obverse and the reverse of something, or to use a metaphor from the Book of Changes, like echo and sound, or shadow and light."²⁶ A consequence of such thinking was that things if they are connected not by causes but by one other aspect could be regarded as things which belonged to the same classes and therefore resonated with or energized each other.

Jurij L. Krol', the author of an excellent monographic study on Sima Qian 司馬遷 who construed the term *lei* as the basic concept in associative thinking, has studied the influence of so-called *lei* thinking on Sima Qian and his *Shiji* 史記.²⁷

In associative thinking, things belong to the same category (*tonglei* 同類) if they are similar in any one aspect or somehow connected. Therefore, as Krol' pointed out, even things which are substantially different from the standpoint of causation can be regarded as being of *tonglei*. Krol' cited Du Qin 杜欽 of earlier Han times who in his commentary on the *Chunqiu* had expressed the view that even such different things as the invasion by the barbarians, the transfer of the power of the Son of Heaven to servants and inferior men, the humiliation of the husband by his wife, the turning of the back against the ruler or the father by an official or a son could lead to earthquake and solar eclipse and therefore had been regarded by Kongzi as being of *tonglei*.²⁸

24 Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. II, Cambridge 1956, p. 281.

25 See *ibid.*, pp. 281, 288.

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 290–291.

27 Jurij L. Krol', *Sima Qian – istorik*, Moscow 1970; ders. "O vlijanii 'associativnogo myslenija' na 'zapisi istorika'", in: *Istoriko-filologičeskie issledovanija. Sbornik statej pamjati akademika N. I. Konrada*, Moscow 1974, pp. 370–380.

28 *Hanshu buzhu*, Beijing 1960, chapter 60, p. 4199, cited in: Krol', *O vlijanii*, p. 372.

Krol' further showed that this conception of *lei* and *tonglei* constituted an important part of Sima Qian's view of the "harmonious organism" and the "homogeneous continuum" of the Han era and thus had influenced very much the composition of the *Shiji*. In the *Shiji* Sima Qian more than once stressed the point that things of the same category induced each other. In chapter 61 he cited phrases from the *Yijing* such as "things of the same brightness will reflect each other, things of the same category (*tonglei*) will seek each other", or: "The clouds follow the dragon, the wind follows the tiger. If a wise man is doing his work, all the things appear to become visible in their essence."²⁹ The same idea had been expressed by Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒: "The goodness is following the goodness and foolishness is following foolishness."³⁰

First of all, Sima Qian regarded people of the same clan name as being of *tonglei*. These people were characterized by the same moral force (*de* 德) and the same aspirations. These types of *tonglei* personalities were described in the Basic Annals (*benji* 本紀) as well as in the treatises on the Hereditary Houses (*shijia* 世家) but also in several biographical chapters. However, people with different clan names but who were connected either by their moral behavior or by their function and activity in the society could be regarded as being *tonglei*, too.³¹ We find this second type of *tonglei* in the so-called Collective Biographies (e. g., chapters 65 and 73) where related and unrelated people were dealt with in one and the same chapter only because they shared the same business or displayed the same behavior. As Krol' pointed out, even the arrangement of the *Shiji* chapters had been influenced by the concept of *lei* insofar as people of *tonglei* were treated in consecutive chapters (ch. 5-6, 8-12, 53-54, 55-57, 69-70, 87-88). While chronological principles were generally observed, chapters 119 and 122 broke this rule as we find people of different clans together here who lived during different periods.³² And finally, even in separate biographical chapters dealing only with a single individual, we also often find references to other persons to whom the hero is related in Sima Qian's opinion at the level of *tonglei*.³³ For Sima Qian, being of *tonglei* meant striving for the same things as had been expressed by Ying Gao in early Han times. "Those who have the same hatred will help each other, who have the same like will be bound together, who have the same feeling will complete each other, who

29 Takigawa Kametarō, *Shiki kaichū kōshō*, Beijing 1955, chapter 61, p. 3244; Krol', *O vlijanii*, p. 374.

30 *Hanshu buzhu*, chapter 56, p. 4014.

31 See Derk Bodde, Types of Chinese Categorical Thinking, in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 59, no. 1 (March 1939), pp. 200-219.

32 Krol', *O vlijanii*, p. 380.

33 Krol', *Sima Qian - istorik*, pp. 67, 128, 153, 196.

have the same desire will hasten after each other and who have the same interests will die for each other."³⁴

Conclusion

As one can see from the short excursus on the relevance of categorical thinking for Sima Qian, the affiliation of persons, things, behavior and events to a certain *lei* appeared to be a constitutive element of traditional historiography. This phenomenon was derived from the structure of associative thinking itself as well as from general historiographical principles which had already been laid down by Kongzi. According to the latter, history and historical writings are charged above all with teaching the people and guiding them to the right conduct. But such an effect could be achieved only if it became apparent which persons and which actions met the ethical standards and which did not. Thus it became necessary to categorize them. This categorization and the affiliation to certain *lei* did not require a comprehensive analysis of the historical circumstances and surroundings of the respective persons and events. The only thing needed was an ethical and political standard established by the historian himself. This was the reason why persons and historical events which were quite different and non-comparable from the standpoint of causation and of historicism could nevertheless be characterized as being of the same category.

If we keep in mind the traditional function of the *tonglei* concept then it becomes clear why from simply relying on the historian's postulate that Germany and China allegedly shared the same striving for prosperity, strength, independence and dominance, Kang was able to regard the history of both countries as *tonglei*. At the level of *tonglei* the components in some way induced each other and became attractive for each other. This type of attraction probably also took place in 1919 after Versailles when some Chinese began to speak about a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* or shared fate of Germany and China as the community of losers.

It was the level of *tonglei* which made it possible to ignore the substantive dissimilarities between the components as well as the specifics of development and to focus only on those aspects which fit into the picture of comparison drawn by the historian. In Kang's essay on German history the *tonglei* concept played a key role. This concept was the basis for the large-scale comparisons and seemingly also enabled him to draw *leibi* analogies on a minor scale even for concrete events (i.e. to compare things by means of their affiliation to a category) while referring to non-substantive aspects. The use of this kind of *leibi* thus not only aimed to make the text more readable but also to confirm and to emphasize the basic precondition for the whole comparative treatise.

34 *Shiki kaichū kōchō*, chapter 106, p. 4407, cited in: Krol', *O vljanii*, p. 378.

Having lived in a time of transition when the change from a traditional to a modern historiography had just begun, Kang's historical writings inevitably still bear signs of both. His essay on German history demonstrates explicitly in how complex and contradictory a manner this transformation took its course and how persistent the traditional approaches appeared to remain even in writings on historical affairs outside of China while the form and the style of the text had already changed to the new.