THE 1911 REVOLUTION —
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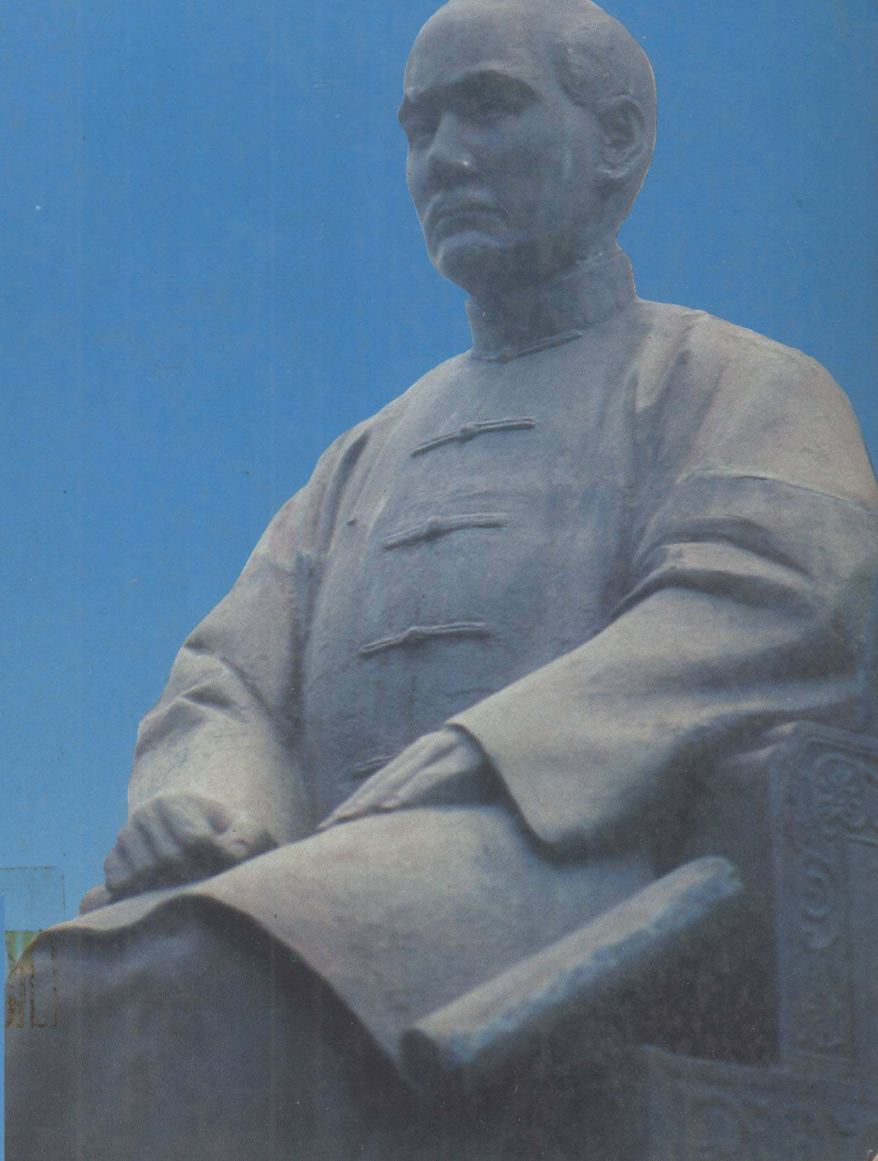

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Sun Yat-sen with his comrades in Singapore, 1907.
Source: The Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations, National Archives and Oral History Department, Singapore.

PREFACE

The seven articles included in this volume were part of the papers presented in a conference on "Hsin-hai Revolution and the Nanyang Chinese" sponsored by the Chinese Historical Society, the Institute of International Relations of National Chengchi University, the Institute of Modern History, *Academia Sinica* and the South Seas Society from 16 to 21 February 1986 in Taipei. Much of the work in organizing the conference was actually done in Taipei, particularly by the local sponsors. For this, we have to thank them for their generosity, support and patience in producing a spectacular conference. We would also like to thank the Lee Foundation for supporting two members of the South Seas Society to take part in the conference.

All the papers in the conference were either written in Chinese or translated into Chinese. As a result, for the seven papers written in English, it was felt that perhaps it might be useful to publish them in a separate volume. The English volume will probably appeal to a different audience thus helping in disseminating some of the research results presented in the conference.

While all the papers written by the overseas participants were solicited by the South Seas Society, seven of which were slightly revised and included in this volume, it must be understood that the views expressed in the papers are those of the authors. As is always the case, they do not necessarily reflect the opinions and policies of the Society or its supporters.

Sun Yat-sen with his comrades in Singapore when T'ung Meng Hui was formed in the Colony.
Source: Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Lee Lai To

The Overseas Chinese are the mother of the Revolution

— Sun Yat-sen

Of the many quotable quotes from Sun Yat-sen, the above highlights the significance placed by Sun on the role of the overseas Chinese in the 1911 Revolution. As such, it is most apt to start off this collection of papers with Shih-shan Tsai's article. In depicting the role of the overseas Chinese in the 1911 Revolution, Tsai surveyed briefly the conflicts that Sun had with the reformists and the kinds of support given to the Revolution. For the latter, the sources of support included those from the secret societies and the mass media and the types of support were mainly in terms of money and manpower. By way of illustration, Tsai demonstrated that these kinds of support were quite substantial. The most interesting aspect of his analysis, however, was the psycho-cultural diagnosis of the overseas Chinese. The marginality of these Chinese in their host countries and their identity crisis gave birth to nationalism. As overseas Chinese nationalism gathered more momentum, it propelled the revolutionary engine, leading to the demise of the Manchu Dynasty. While it is quite common to use the psycho-cultural approach in the social sciences, it is perhaps quite refreshing to see this applied to the orientation of the overseas Chinese towards the 1911 Revolution. Besides, Tsai's article may serve as a general introduction to our study of the 1911 Revolution and the role of the Chinese in Southeast Asia.

Yen Ching-hwang's article on "Nanyang Chinese and the 1911 Revolution" is perhaps one of the most authoritative and scholastic pieces reinforcing the validity of the above quotation from Sun at the beginning of this introduction. His argument is basically a

defence of his book on *The Overseas Chinese and the 1911 Revolution: With Special Reference to Singapore and Malaya* published in 1976 by Oxford University Press in Kuala Lumpur. This was deemed necessary in view of the rise of a revisionist school which challenged some of the traditional theses about the Wuchang Revolution. Yen's major points were firstly that many of the revolutionary activities were carried out abroad although many scholars would accept that the revolution was mainly made at home; secondly, the T'ung Meng Hui was the main stream of the 1911 Revolution; thirdly, Sun Yat-sen played a principal role in the Revolution; and fourthly, the role of the overseas Chinese in the 1911 Revolution was important. To illustrate the last point, Yen highlighted the reasons and ways by which the Chinese in Nanyang had responded to the Revolution. The desire for a strong China no doubt was the key factor for the ample support given to Sun by the overseas Chinese. Yen, however, noted that the responses to the Revolution varied, depending on the class interests of the overseas Chinese. Nonetheless, Yen reiterated that the Nanyang Chinese did contribute in at least three major ways. The Nanyang Chinese communities had served as the centres of revolutionary activities between 1908 and 1911. They also became a *rendezvous* for revolutionary refugees. Last but not least, they contributed financially to the Revolution.

Yen's article is, in many ways, a comprehensive review of the subject matter of this book. Its balanced treatment lends more credibility to its arguments although the points raised were not new, but just a reiteration of some old themes.

Having noted the significant contributions of the Nanyang Chinese, it cannot be taken for granted that it was easy to solicit support from them. In fact, one area which is seldom dealt with in detail is the attitude of the host government towards the revolutionary activities. My paper is thus an attempt to fill in this gap by looking at the government's policy towards Sun Yat-sen in an important part of British Southeast Asia, namely, the Straits Settlements. With a large concentration of Chinese in the area, the Straits Settlements naturally became an important centre of revolutionary activities. However, the governor, as representative of the British government, had to act with caution. By looking at the records kept by the Colonial Office, *CO 273,* I was able to examine closely the reactions and responses of two governors, J A Swettenham and John Anderson, towards Sun. My observation was that the Straits government had a policy of limited tolerance towards Sun's presence in the Straits Settlements. It seems that as long as

Sun stayed in the area as a law-abiding resident, he would be allowed to stay. The upholding of the principle of granting political asylum to political fugitives and perhaps a certain degree of sympathy for the Chinese "reformers" could also give Sun a breathing space in his sojourns in the British colony. However, it would not be acceptable to the Straits Settlements if Sun was known to use the colony as a base to conduct anti-Manchu activities. That would not only strain Sino-British relations but the peace and stability of the colony.

Because of the surveillance of the colonial government, be it the British, Dutch or French, and its possible intervention to make a stop of the overtly revolutionary activities conducted by political or semi-political organizations, it would seem that one alternative was to infiltrate into organizations which were not so political in nature. *Two* such organizations dealt with in this volume are the school and the church. The two systems were quite institutionalized and provided ready forums for the dissemination of ideas. From a revolutionary perspective, the school or the church could provide the organization to reach out to the masses. All that was required was to provide the leadership. In the case of the school, it was through the teachers, and in the case of the church, the preachers, to guide the organization and the masses into the revolutionary cause.

A look at Lee Ting Hui's paper on "Chinese Education in Malaya 1894–1911 — Nationalism in the first Chinese Schools" shows that all political forces, the traditionalists, the reformists and the revolutionaries, tried their hands in exerting their influence in the various Chinese schools. As such, the revolutionaries had from the start to battle with the perhaps more influential forces supported by the Manchu government and K'ang Yu-wei in the blossoming modern Chinese schools established at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. From Lee's analysis, the links between the Manchu government and these schools were strong and clear. One significant way by which the Manchu government could secure the allegiance and service of the schools was to grant the school committee members and teachers titles and rewards. Another way was to inculcate desired values in the curricula for the students. From Lee's paper, it is also noted that Chinese students were asked, among other things, to be loyal to the Manchu government.

The Manchu influence in the modern Chinese schools, however, was challenged by K'ang Yu-wei, especially after the arrival of K'ang in Singapore in 1900. The Confucian Revival Movement headed by Lim Boon Keng and Khoo Seok Wan, also gave K'ang

a golden opportunity to spread his ideas. He also helped in drafting school constitutions, sending his followers to teach in the schools and subverted others. As far as the revolutionaries were concerned, Lee noted that Sun was unable to deal with schools probably because he had no time to do so. However, his followers, especially Yu Lieh, established some new schools in Malaya. They did not infiltrate or subvert schools established by the Manchu government or influenced by K'ang, probably because the revolutionaries found it difficult to manipulate these schools which tended to conform to Manchu policies or requirements. According to Lee, the revolutionary schools were useful in contributing money or manpower to support Sun. As far as the colonial government was concerned, its attitude was somewhat similar to that towards Sun's stay in the colony. As long as the politics of the schools did not disturb the peace and order of the land, it would not interfere into the internal squabbles of the schools. Otherwise, it would act.

A second institution by which the revolutionaries could draw support was the church as analyzed by Leung Yuen Sang. By way of examples, he noted the three major types of religious leaders in terms of their orientation towards the 1911 Revolution after a survey of the Chinese Christian community at the turn of the century in Singapore. They were the raring respondents,the indifferent onlookers and enigmatic enthusiasts. While religion was one of the common bonds of most of these people, the problem is still that it is very difficult to determine the extent to which religion had contributed to the interest or disinterest of these leaders to the Revolution. Other than that, the question is, whether people like Lim Boon Keng were really Christian leaders when they eventually turned against their faith? The church, no doubt served as meeting and recruiting places and hide-outs for revolutionaries. However, as rightly pointed out by Leung, Christianity was not the most important driving force of the 1911 Revolution. Nationalism, as always, was the prime moving force.

As noted earlier, organizational muscles and leadership are the basic tools in reaching out to the masses in a revolution. These were precisely the two aspects analyzed by C.F Yong when he examined the Malayan KMT movement in the wake of the Wuchang Uprising. Yong also looked at the changing British policy towards the Malayan KMT. His major observation was that the 1911 Revolution split the Chinese community in Malaya until the end of Yuan Shih-k'ai's regime in 1916. However, the KMT by then was on the decline. The split in the Chinese community was demonstrated in the rival chambers of commerce, party orga-

nizations, fund-raising bodies and polemics in the mass media. Nonetheless, for the KMT, the 1911 Revolution sparked the development of the party in Malaya. Its development, according to Yong, could be divided into three periods. They were, firstly, its Peking affiliation from 1912 to 1914, secondly, the Chinese Revolutionary Party era from 1914 to 1919 and finally, its revival from 1920 to 1925 when it was proscribed by the British. By following the twists and turns of the fortunes of the KMT and its leadership for the period in Malaya, Yong concluded that external forces, particularly, Sun's political fortunes or misfortunes, were vital in determining the high and low of the Malayan KMT movement. British policy was also critical in influencing the expansion, contraction and demise of the movement. However, for the British, Yong observed that while they were able to check the KMT, they could not forestall the surging waves of Chinese nationalism in Malaya.

While the foregoing papers, except Tsai's, dealt primarily with British Southeast Asia, the last article by Leo Suryadinata concentrated on the Dutch East Indies — an area seldom dealt with specifically. As expected, two of the most important vehicles for soliciting support for the 1911 Revolution in the Dutch East Indies, particularly in Java, were the various reading clubs, some Chinese schools and Chinese newspapers. According to Leo, many of the latter two categories were related to reading clubs. The Dutch colonial government at that time cooperated reluctantly with the Manchu government, tolerated the reformists but was hostile towards the revolutionaries. This may be contributed by the fact that the Peranakan community, especially the elites, were associated with the colonial government. Leo also noted that these elites were also wooed by the Manchus and sympathetic towards the reformists. Moreover, even the totok Chinese elites seemed to be more sympathetic towards the reformists. This might be contributed by the interest of the totok and, for that matter, the Peranakan elites, to strengthen Chinese education. However, the totok community, though heterogeneous, did provide support to the Revolution at least in terms of finance. An interesting area in Leo's paper is his analysis of the impact of the 1911 Revolution on the Chinese in Java. Leo noted that *Sin Po,* a paper which later became the leader of Chinese nationalism in the Dutch East Indies, basically supported the Wuchang Uprising but was critical of some of the policies of the new government. He also analyzed in a somewhat detailed fashion, the Flag Incident, showing that some Chinese, especially the totok Chinese in Chinatown, were respon-

sive to the establishment of the new republican government. Finally, Leo observed that the 1911 Revolution seemed to have awaken the nationalist feeling of the local Chinese making them more China-oriented.

This collection of papers shows vividly that the overseas Chinese in British and Dutch Southeast Asia, although not homogeneous, did play a role, one time or another, in the 1911 Revolution. Many of them were influenced by the Wuchang Uprising not only in terms of their political orientation towards China, but their political identity with their host governments. As far as the colonial governments were concerned, it was clear that they might be neutral, ambivalent and even hostile towards the 1911 Revolution depending on the period of analysis. At no time, however, were they supportive to the revolutionary action which would strain relations with the Manchu government and more importantly, disrupt the peace and stability of the area. It remains to be noted that no colonial government was able to suppress the nationalism of the overseas Chinese at that time, one of the common themes in most of the papers in this book.

The Revolution of 1911 and the Role of the Overseas Chinese

Shih-shan H Tsai

Introduction: the Identity Crisis of the Overseas Chinese

All ethnic minority people confront the issue of their identity in relation to political events which take place in the emigrant homeland. During the past century, the overseas Chinese had the unique burden of responding to several major political changes in China, namely, the fall of a dynasty, the birth of a troubled republic, the turmoil of the warlord period, and the rivalry between the Nationalists and the Communists. These changes divided the overseas Chinese community into various political factions and intensified the identity crisis of the overseas Chinese. Immigrant allegiance to these political groups shifted with changes which occurred in China. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the estimated 7 million to 9 million overseas Chinese were wooed by three major political groups: the Manchu ruling class, the Reform Party (or Pao-huang Tang) of K'ang Yu-wei, and the Kuomintang revolutionaries led by Dr Sun Yat-sen.[1]

Feelings of insecurity are often manifested by identity reaction. Identity reaction is the tendency to reject and disparage those whom one believes to be "inferior", whether this be factually true or not, as in the case of a Chinese merchant in Jakarta dealing with an Indonesian native. It is also an extension of status pretensions and a form of "self hatred", as in the case of this same merchant competing with a Dutch officer for a social honour in the colonial society. Members of the same racial or ethnic group may be the objects of identity reaction, as, for example, the better educated new immigrants' careful distinction of themselves from the old immigrant coolies.

[1] The overseas Chinese figures come from Carl F Remer, *The Foreign Trade of China* (Shanghai, 1926), p. 133.

Status is a component of many interrelated indices, of which social rank, occupation, income, associational affiliations, and eventual probabilities of mobility are a few. Persons living among strangers, possessing an uncertain non-immigrant status without permanent residence, and whose society does not accept them any longer, find their social, occupational, and national status simultaneously unmoored. They suffer from chronic marginality, in other words, a whole cluster of status attributes are threatened. Although the members of the colonial society wherein they resided were sympathetic to their plight, the persons undergoing status reduction must, firstly, revise their conception of self, and secondly, recreate a status in the new society. Both of these approaches were affected by 1) race or ethnic origin and 2) personal attributes of the person concerned, i.e., whether he had a well-integrated life organization, or the reverse. In the process of recreating a status, the displaced persons may exhibit varying degrees of status pretensions. They constantly referred to their "upper class" membership, "traditional Chinese education", "superior background", and "the jobs they would have had, if". These protestations appeared to stem from the declining political health in China which "robbed" them of a promising and secure future.

As repression often breeds resistance and marginality nurtures aggression, those overseas Chinese who had suffered the most persistent affronts to their race and nation usually experienced the most acute identity crisis. As imperialism continued to molest the Chinese people and foreign domination ruthlessly undermined China's economic, social and political foundations, these "marginal" overseas Chinese strongly felt that their status in colonial society and China's fate were intimately related. They were among the first to be awakened and loudly and courageously voiced their disapproval of the manner in which the Manchu government had handled its diplomacy. They wanted dignity and justice in China's diplomacy, which had been marred by a series of concessions and defeats. They wanted changes to improve their lots for them abroad and for their relatives in China. They became the pioneer nationalists and advocates of either reform or revolution.

Competition between the Reformists and Revolutionaries to woo the Overseas Chinese

Nationalism among the overseas Chinese in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not an isolated local phenomenon, for nationalistic movements arose in many other countries during this

period. However, overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia and in North America also encountered the discrimination and hostility of the dominant white ruling society. Because Chinese immigrants attributed their maltreatment to the Manchu government's inability to protect her people, both at home and abroad, the logical remedy was to help make China a strong and independent nation. This explains to a large degree why the overseas Chinese responded quickly and favourably first to K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's reform movement and later to Dr Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary ideas.

The divergence between the reformist and revolutionary trends widened during the early 1900 and their disputes became increasingly bitter. The core of the dispute was the question of supporting the young emperor Kuang-hsu as a constitutional sage-king. The revolutionaries rejected monarchy in principle. During the early stage of this competition, some of the more militant members of the Reform Party also entertained republican ideas. Even Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, the theoretician of the reform movement was at one time doubtful about the wisdom of installing Kuang-hsu as the constitutional figure-head like the British queen. This is why during 1899–1900, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao was able to collect hundreds of thousands of dollars from among the overseas Chinese who thought they were giving the money for the revolution to overthrow the Manchus. Later, when Dr Sun Yat-sen learned of this news he directed the full force of his attack at Liang: "Liang had used the name of revolution to swindle people out of their money. He has taken the money only to protect the Emperor and to make the Chinese people forever the slaves of the Manchus. This sin is as high as Heaven." Sun continued: "If indeed he had been as straight-forward as K'ang Yu-wei and had opposed me openly, he would be a man even though he had abased himself by supporting [the ruler] of an alien race."[2]

It is evident that during his early revolutionary career, Dr Sun Yat-sen not only had to admonish overseas Chinese to maintain an interest in the welfare of their motherland, but also had to wage an uphill battle against the K'ang-Liang reform group. In order to crush the Reform Party, Sun even appointed the controversial American Homer Lea, formerly a military adviser to K'ang Yu-wei, to be his general chief staff in charge of military affairs. Homer Lea's defection was to be kept in top secrecy as demonstrated in a

[2] "An Open Letter to Fellow Provincials," in *Kuo-fu shu-hsin hsuan-chi* ed., T'ang Tseng-ch'u (Taipei, 1954), pp. 22–25.

letter Dr Sun wrote to Homer Lea in the fall of 1910: "Watch for all the Chinese you make contact in America. Also never reveal our relationship to anybody." In a different letter to Charles Boothe, an American banker, Dr Sun wrote: "K'ang Yu-wei is in Singapore right now. He arrived here two days before I did."[3]

During the competition from 1899 to 1905, the K'ang-Liang group captured a large part of Dr Sun's base of support. Feng Tzu-yu, the foremost Chinese writer on the role of the overseas Chinese in the 1911 Revolution described the early phase of this fierce competition:

Canada: "Following the establishment of the Imperial Reform Party by K'ang Yu-wei in 1899, most of the prominent Chinese merchants became members and branch societies were established everywhere. A large number of Chinese Freemasons (Triads or Hung League) also joined."[4]

Hawaii: "Many of the overseas Chinese, not knowing the truth, were deceived by him so that almost the whole weight of influence of overseas Chinese organizations and newspapers came under the control of the Imperial Reform Party. This was a severe blow to Hsing Chung Hui. Of its members only a little more than a dozen men remained true and did not transfer their allegiance."[5]

U.S.A: "After the One Hundred Days Reform failure of 1898, K'ang Yu-wei established the Imperial Reform Party in Canada and sent his students . . . and others to the United States to establish branch societies. These men joined the Chee Kung Tong in order to befriend its leaders. The Chee Kung Tong members were deceived, and in every city the progressive-minded members became officers of the Imperial Reform Party."[6]

On the other hand, some of Dr Sun's followers resorted to underhanded tricks to embarrass the reformers. The revolutionary paper in Hong Kong, *Chung-Kuo Jih-pao* published a malicious story that K'ang T'ung-pi, using her father's name K'ang Yu-wei, defrauded the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia as well as in America. Although this story was later proven untrue in a court suit, the misuse of funds by the leadership of the Reform Party was well known and troubled many prominent overseas Chinese, among them Yung Wing, who had been a supporter of K'ang's reform movement.[7] Yung Wing helped to collect funds for K'ang

[3] Sun to Lea, August 11, 1910; Sun to Boothe, September 4, 1910, in Boothe Papers, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California.

[4] Feng Tzu-yu, *Ke-ming i-shih* (Taipei, 1965), Vol. I, p. 230; Vol. III, p. 338.

[5] Feng Tzu-yu, *Kai-kuo-chien ke-ming shih* (Chungking, 1944), Vol. I, pp. 40–41.

[6] Feng Tzu-yu, *Ke-ming i-shih*, Vol. II, p. 122.

[7] Feng Tzu-yu, *Kai-kuo-chien ke-ming shih*, Vol. I, p. 165.