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Reform Versus Revolution: A Reappraisal of Sun Yat-sen's Early Thoughts on National Salvation

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The sanctification of Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) as the "father of the Chinese Revolution"[1] has obscured his true personality, and indeed his own thoughts about solving China's problems. Although there may be more studies about him than any other figure in Modern Chinese History,[2] his story continues to be a paradoxical one. His teacher and mentor, Sir James Cantile, once described him as "the most perfect character I ever knew,[3] but at the same time, another contemporary criticized Sun for his "vanity" and "hunger for flattery."[4] His family opposed his interest in Christianity, but Sun told some of his closest Western friends that his parents were avowed Christians. Sun was born in the village of Ts'ui-heng, Hsiang-shan (now Chung-shan) county of Kwangtung Province, and yet there exists a document certifying that he was born in the Hawaiian Islands in 1870.[5]

While Sun Yat-sen's personal qualities are marked by historical controversies, the canonization effect has made it even more difficult to place the man in his own times. The orthodoxy surrounding Sun Yat-sen should be an interesting study in itself, but it does not help to give a better picture of the origins of the Chinese revolution, or Sun's role in it.

In recent years, the "Sun-Centered Orthodoxy"[6] has gone through a debunking process. Revisionist scholarship discusses the "myth of Sun's contribution to the founding of the Republic,"[7] and that "Sun Yat-sen was clearly not the leader needed."[8] One influential argument suggests that "against the background of the heroic mold in which he [Sun] has usually been cast, Sun emerges as a pallid figure . . . he was also a poor organizer."[9] Contrary to the findings of the orthodox school,[10] many China scholars now believe that Sun and his group of revolutionaries never became the main revolutionary current of Chinese society.[11]

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[1] Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 552.

[2] C. Martin Wilbur, *Sun Yat-sen: Frustrated Patriot* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 1-10.

[3] James Cantlie and C. Sheridan Jones, *Sun Yat-sen and the Awakening of China* (London, 1912), pp. 24-25.

[4] Huang San-te, *Hung-men ko-ming shih* (A history of the Hung-men in the Chinese Revolution) (San Francisco, 1936), pp. 11-15.

[5] Cantlie and Jones, *San Yat-sen*, frontispiece.

[6] Joseph Esherick, "1911: A Review", *Modern China*, Vol. 2 No. 2 (April 1976), 142-151.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 143.

[8] Mary Wright ed., *China in Revolution: The First Phase, 1900-1913* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1968), p. 52.

[9] *Ibid.*

In their search for the real Sun Yat-sen, revisionist historians have perhaps unwittingly over-reacted to existing literature. Their response is directed at the historiography of Sun Yat-sen, and not what the man had written himself. Indeed, the latest interpretation is that Sun was a "reluctant revolutionary" and that in 1894 "had he been employed by Li Hung-chang as a secretary or in some other capacity he might well have developed into a different person, and had a different career."[12]

Writing in the *Cambridge History of China*, Professor Michael Gasster suggests that Sun had never intended to become a revolutionary. In terms of Sun's reform proposal to Li Hung-chang in 1894, "most of what Sun wrote had been said for thirty years or more by Chinese reformers, and none of it was meant to be revolutionary." But then, why did Sun become a revolutionary after 1894? Curiously enough, Gasster's only remark is that "the sharp turn in Sun's thinking has never been clearly explained. . . "[13]

According to Professor Harold Schiffrin's study, however, the reason for Sun's turn to revolution in 1894 is quite clear: Sun became a revolutionary because he was rejected while "seeking acceptance into the ranks of China's elite."[14] Like Gasster, Schiffrin also argues that Sun's ideas for change were not different from those of the other reformers. But unlike reformers of gentry status and Confucian backgrounds, Sun was "merely an ex-peasant with a foreign diploma."[15] Here Schiffrin seems to be subjecting Sun to the same kind of explanation for understanding Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, leader of the Taiping Rebellion. Both men turned to revolt because of a rejection by the Confucian tradition.

Such an interpretation not only belittles Sun's propensity for revolution; it helps to explain his revolutionary style, his "unrevolutionary"[16] qualities during his later career. But when tested against evidence, this psychoanalytical approach is basically a-historical. If anything, the Confucian repulsion should confirm Sun's inkling for revolt: so many times before in Chinese history, at the end of a dynasty, it was a commoner who led others to overthrow the gentry, the ruling class. Perhaps Sun's

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[10] See, for example, Professor John Fairbank's evaluation of Sun: "Felt by many to be a magnetic personality, Sun at thirty-nine was not only the eldest but also the most famous, the most widely traveled, and the most experienced among this revolution band. . . . " John K. Fairbank, Edwin Reischauer and Albert Craig, *East Asia: The Modern Transformation* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1969), p. 637.

[11] Winston Hsieh, *Chinese Historiography on the Revolution of 1911: A Critical Survey and A Selected Bibliography* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1975).

[12] Ssu-yu Teng and John Fairbank, *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839-1923* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), p. 225, quoted by Harold Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), p. 38.

[13] Michael Gasster, "The Republican Revolutionary Movement," in John Fairbank & Kwang-ching Liu ed., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume II, Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911, Part 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 463-534; 466.

[14] Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen*, p. 37.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[16] Harold Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen, Reluctant Revolutionary* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1980), p. 270.

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"nongentry status [had] cut him off from the only legitimate channels for political recruitment and action in traditional China,"[17] but the same status had also given him legitimacy in his clamour for a new Mandate of Heaven.[18]

Even more important, a closer analysis of the available documents suggests that Sun's decision for revolution was not a "sharp turn." By late 1894, Sun had decided that the Manchu government had to be overthrown not because of what it had done, but because of what it was not able to do; it was a hindrance for national salvation, and Sun's programme towards achieving such a goal.

Thus the purpose of this essay is to re-examine and reappraise Sun's early thoughts on his solutions for an ailing China. The attempt is to provide a more historical answer to the question: Why did Sun Yat-sen become a revolutionary? In the limited space available, I would like to argue that because of Sun's multi-faceted background, his approach towards solving China's problems was syncretic, drawing solutions from a variety of backgrounds. Moreover, I am prepared to demonstrate that Sun's theories for change were not identical to the "reformist posture."[19] The young Sun Yat-sen had his own unique formulas drawn from his own unique, and not particularly Confucian, upbringing.

BACKGROUND OF THE 1894 PETITION

On 19 February 1923, when addressing the student body at the University of Hong Kong, Sun Yat-sen announced that he "got the revolutionary idea in this very place, in the colony of Hong Kong." As to how he became aware of the "idea", Sun claimed that he was struck by the differences between the city of Hong Kong, and his native village. He could not help but "wondered why Englishmen could do such a thing on this barren rock within seventy or eighty years. Why could not China, in the last four thousand years, have a place like this?" Indeed, in Hong Kong corruption "was the exception, purity the rule," and even more important, "things were quite the reverse in China." Once Sun realized that "good government in England and other European countries was not natural and did not grow up by itself," he decided to "spend his time curing the country."[20]

Sun's praise of British law and administration has received sharp criticisms from Chinese Marxist historians. Ch'en Hsi-ch'i, a noted scholar of the 1911 Revolution, criticizes Sun for losing his "proper stand" against foreign imperialism and his failure to appreciate the decadence and "evilness" of Hong Kong under British colonial rule.[21]

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[17] Harold Schiffrin, "The Enigma of Sun Yat-sen", in Mary Wright ed., *China in Revolution*, pp. 443-474.

[18] Traditional rebel leaders often tried to rationalize their right to rebel precisely because they came from non-gentry backgrounds; founders of new dynasties also often came from non-gentry families, for example, Chu Yuan-chang. See also Yuji Muramatsu, "Some Themes in Chinese Rebel Ideologies" in Arthur F. Wright ed., *The Confucian Persuasion* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), pp. 241-267.

[19] Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen*, p. 27.

[20] *China Mail*, 20 February, 1923.

[21] Ch'en Hsi-ch'i, *T'ung-meng-hui ch'eng-li ch'ien ti Sun Chung-shan* (Sun Yat-sen before the founding of the T'ung-meng-hui) (Canton, 1957), p. 30.

Ironically, some Western historians have argued that Sun exaggerated his indebtedness to Hong Kong because he wanted to please his audience. In other words, Sun's overture to Hong Kong students was part of his public relations effort. Why Sun should choose to announce his debt to Hong Kong just two years before his death can not be adequately explained by such a simplistic interpretation. Sun was banished from Hong Kong in 1895, and there was no particular reasons why he needed to appease the local authorities by this time. In the same speech Sun also insisted that "people misunderstood that the Chinese revolution was only moderate as compared with European politics," and as demonstrated by his total revolutionary career, Sun was telling the truth to his audience.

In a recent article on the background of Sun Yat-sen's petition to Li Hung-chang, Ng Lun Ngai-ha suggests that Sun's years in Hong Kong "had a significant influence on his intellectual development."[22] Ng's study, however, does not break new grounds. Other historians have also emphasized Sun's Hong Kong connections.[23] What needs to be discussed is precisely how Hong Kong had influenced Sun's intellectual development.

As a matter of fact, Sun had spent the decade before his approach to Li Hung-chang in the Hong Kong region (including Macao and Canton). He was baptized in Hong Kong, and received his medical training at the College of Medicine for Chinese in Hong Kong (1887-1892). It was also during this period that he developed a life-long friendship with Dr. James Cantile, the second dean of the medical school. Sun also became familiar with some of the Chinese community leaders in the colony, amongst them Dr. Ho Kai (Ho Ch'i, 1859-1914), a founder of the college.

Indeed, the new environment only helped to reinforce Sun's "iconoclastic" tendencies. In 1883 Sun was sent back to Ts'ui-heng by his brother in Hawaii on the verge of his Christian conversion. But upon his return, Sun continued his practice of desecrating wooden idols in local temples.[24] At the age of eighteen, Sun formally embraced Christianity, and was baptized by an American Congregationalist missionary, Dr. Charles Hager. After the baptism, Ch'u Feng-ch'ih, a Hong Kong Protestant minister who later supported Sun's revolutionary activities, gave Sun his new name, Yat-sen. Sun remained a Christian all his life.

Surprisingly, few historians have tried to analyse the relationship between Sun's Christian conversion and his revolutionary ideas. If Christian tracts and Western liberal ideas had influenced men like Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, K'ang Yu-wei and T'an Ssu-t'ung,[25] then Sun, who was closer to the missionaries than all three men, must have been influenced by the same kind of ideas.

In the same vein, very little attention has been paid to the influence Sun's teachers had on him during his medical school years. Certainly Sun had learned more than medical knowledge from his mentors Patrick Manson and James Cantlie, who were both impressed by Sun's potentials. To be sure, the latter even kept some of Sun's examination scripts.[26] But even more important, Manson and Cantlie were not just scientists of international repute. They had other opinions as well. In a pamphlet written in 1898, Cantlie discussed the history and background of Hong Kong (and its 99-year New Territories lease), and wrote several comments about the Hong Kong style of government. He was so critical of the Hong Kong system that he called it ". . . a regime of autocratic rule paralleled only with political life in Russia." Moreover, the public's belief "that they are represented on the Legislative Council is a pure fiasco. . . ."[27]

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[22] Ng Lun Ngai-ha, "The Hong Kong Origins of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Address to Li Hung-chang", *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Volume 21 (1981), pp. 168-178.

[23] See, for example, Michael Gasster, *Chinese Intellectuals and the Revolution of 1911: The Birth of Modern Chinese Radicalism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), p. 11.

[24] Jen Yu-wen and Lindsay Ride, *Sun Yat-sen: Two Commemorative Essays* (Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, 1970).

[25] Richard Shek, "Some Western Influences on T'an Ssu-t'ung's Thought" in Paul Cohen and John Schrecker ed., *Reform in Nineteenth-Century China* (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1976), pp. 194-203.

During the course of his medical studies, Sun also found time to study the French Revolution and Chinese dynastic histories.[28] He went with Cantlie to Chinese leper villages as a translator for his teacher's research, and developed an understanding of the Chinese agricultural system. He was on his way to becoming an enlightened professional, ready to use his expertise to help solve the problems faced by individual members of society, for example, he raised objections to his sister's foot-binding.[29]

Although Sun Yat-sen's relations with his teachers await further research, it is my contention that the combination of his Christian conversion and the liberal tendencies of his mentors did instill in him a strong belief in the importance of the individual. A strong faith in science, and an awareness that he was at the frontier of scientific knowledge (at least in the Chinese setting), gave him optimistic ideas about the possibility of egalitarianism in Chinese society. All these factors, plus his understanding of the local scene of Hong Kong-Macao-Canton, are vital in understanding precisely what Sun meant by the "maximum use of human talent, the fullest exploitation of the benefits of land and resources, and the unrestricted flow of commodities"[30] in his 1894 petition.

SUN'S 1894 PETITION

The approximately twenty-thousand character document Sun Yat-sen prepared for Li Hung-chang is one of his most well-known writings. Strangely enough, except for the first few passages, the petition has yet been fully translated into English. Perhaps even more unfortunate, because of stylistic corrections made by Ch'en Shao-pai and Cheng Kuan-ying, the main themes of the letter have been misinterpreted by historians in general. Although Sun had borrowed some terms and phrases from reformist literature, a closer scrutiny of the documents reveals that Sun's arguments for changing China had gone beyond those made by scholars like Feng Kuei-fen, Wang Tao, or even his teacher, Dr. Ho Kai.

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[26] Stored at the Welcome Institute, London.

[27] Manuscript 1488, Welcome Institute.

[28] Lo Hsiang-lin, *Kuo-fu chih ta-hsüeh shih-tai* (The university days of Sun Yat-sen) (Taipei, 1954), p. 28.

[29] Paul Linebarger, *Sun Yat-sen and the Chinese Republic* (New York, 1925), pp. 79-82.

[30] Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen*, p. 35.

According to Professor Schiffrin, Sun's emphasis on the recruitment and encouragement of men of talent was discussed by Feng Kuei-fen thirty years earlier. Indeed, Cheng Kuan-ying, a contemporary reformer of Sun's, also believed in three of Sun's themes: "Let human talents be fully used; let the land be fully used; and allow for the free flow of materials."[31] In his effott to show that Sun was not "a great thinker,"[32] Schiffrin insists that there was nothing "original"[33] in Sun's petition.

Feng Kuei-fen's ideas for reform and those of men like Wang T'ao and Cheng Kuan-ying were quite different, to say the least. Feng believed in using "the instruments of the barbarians," but not adopting "the ways of the barbarians."[34] By the time Wang and Cheng came on to the scene, most leading reformers knew very well that Western wealth and power were closely connected to Western institutions and values.[35] In their zeal to demonstrate that "what Sun wrote had been said for thirty or more years by Chinese reformers,"[36] Schiffrin and others seem to have forgotten the changes in China which took place between the 1860s and the 1880s. Once again, their approach is a-historical.

Sun certainly shared some of the ideas of the reformers, hence the similarities in language and vocabulary.[37] But nowhere in his petition did Sun mention anything about a "revival of the past"—a theme which dominated reformist thinking.[38] While the reformers were still committed to the ideal of individual morality (i.e. in the Confucian sense), Sun showed no concern for such a kind of commitment whatsoever in his petition. What dominated his thinking was the importance of individual equality and professionalism.

What Sun actually meant by men of talent was quite different from the beliefs of his contemporary reformers. He argued that there should be no distinction between men, who should pride themselves upon their contributions to the state. Whilst Cheng Kuan-ying was suggesting that "a merchant should be treated as a member of the gentry,"[39] Sun tried to convince Li that "in the West there was no social ranking based upon professions"—so long as a person could perform his duties well, he would be rewarded by society.[40]

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[31] Quoted in Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen*, p. 36.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[34] Feng Kuei-fen, *Chiao-pin-lu k'ang-i* (Straightforward words from the Lodge of Early Chou Studies) (Taipei: Hsüeh-hai reproduction, 1967), 'chih yang-ch'i i', pp. 58b-60a.

[35] Kwang-ching Liu, "Nineteenth-century China: the disintegration of the old order and the impact of the West" in P. T. Ho and Tang Tsou ed., *China in Crisis*, Volume One, Book One (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 126-149.

[36] Michael Gasster, "The Republican Revolutionary Movement", p. 466.

[37] Key Ray Chong, "Cheng Kuan-ying (1841-1920): A Source of Sun Yat-sen's Nationalist Ideology?" *Journal of Asian Studies*, V. XXVIII, No. 2, (February, 1969), pp. 247-267.

[38] James T. C. Liu, "The Variety of Political Reforms in Chinese History: A Simplified Typology" in Paul Cohen and John Schrecker ed., *Reform in Nineteenth-Century China*, pp. 9-13.

[39] Yen-p'ing Hao and Erh-min Wang, "Changing Chinese Views of Western relations, 1840-95" in Fairbank & Liu ed., *The Cambridge History of China*, p. 193.

[40] Sun Yat-sen, "Shang Li-fu-hsiang Shu" (Petition to Li Hung-chang), *Wan-kuo kung-pao* (Review of the Times), V. 69 & 70 (September-October, 1984), reprinted by Hua-wen, Taipei (n.d.), pp. 14703-14715; 14787-14793.

Like the reformers, Sun also believed that education would be the key towards the maximization of individual potentials. In the West, the citizens never spent money on useless projects. But in China, the ignorant worshipped ghosts and spirits, and spent fortunes on wasteful festivities. Proper education would help people to become more enlightened, and perhaps even enable them to become interested in Western science. Sun cited the example of Japan to argue that in China, the real problem was not the lack of men of talent, but the abundance of men of ignorance who did not understand China's plight. For Sun, one of China's first priorities was to enlighten the minds of its people so that they could become useful citizens.[41]

But even more important, according to Sun, what China needed the most was the training of "specialized" men of talent. Western learning, in fact, meant the learning of specialized subjects (*chuan-men chih-hsüeh*). To be specific, Sun called for the institution of specialized official posts: different professionals for trade and commerce, for agriculture, and for science and technology.

On the surface, Sun's proposal for the free flow of commodities was similar to that made by Cheng Kuan-ying and others. Like some of the reformers, Sun also advocated for the commercialization of China, and that the status of merchants should be raised accordingly. But here again there was a subtle difference. Sun argued that in the West merchants were the key to a nation's success. Western merchants were given special protection by their governments, whereas in China merchants were exploited. Like other men of special knowledge, Sun reiterated again and again that merchants should be given equal treatment in society.[42]

Sun's Christian background, scientific training, and exposure to Hong Kong's urban-commercial setting are all important factors in helping to shape his belief in the intrinsic worth of a (useful) individual. Unlike Ho Kai and other coastal-based comprador types,[43] however, Sun also paid particular attention to agricultural matters, and almost half of his petition was devoted to the question of Chinese agriculture. Instead of confining himself strictly to the littoral or the hinterland culture,[44] Sun seemed to have been able, at least during his early career, to appreciate the link between the two settings. A conscious effort to deal with the urban and the rural simultaneously was clearly a reflection of Sun's syncretic tendencies.

As early as 1890, when Sun was a third year medical student, he submitted a proposal for agricultural reform to a local official. In this short essay, Sun called for government assistance to revive sericulture in order to improve people's livelihood. He advocated the organization of agricultural societies to disseminate new information on farming methods, as was the case in Western countries. Also, there should be a ban on opium-smoking, and instead, rehabilitation centres should be established to assist opium adicts. Finally, rural society would be much improved if men and women were given an education and taught how to read and write.[45]

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[41] *Ibid.*, p. 14789.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 14787,

[43] Linda P. Shin, "Wu T'ing-fang: A Member of a Colonial Elite as Coastal Reformer" in Cohen & Schrecker ed., *Reform in Nineteenth-Century China*, pp. 265-271.

[44] Paul A. Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity: Wang T'ao and Reform in Late Ch'ing China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 241-252; 264-266; 271-276.

In his appeal to Li Hung-chang, Sun further elaborated his programme for the organization of agricultural matters in China. He discussed at length the importance of scientific knowledge—in chemistry, botany, plant physiology, geology and other related subjects—to maximize agricultural output. But even more important, agriculture in China should be mechanized, under the supervision of agricultural officers. To be sure, although students had been sent overseas to pursue Western studies, none of them had specialized in studying agriculture. To remedy the situation, the government should establish agricultural learning centres (*nung-cheng hsüeh-t'ang*) to train agricultural officers. After all, if China was to become strong, the most urgent task was to ensure the success of agricultural activities.[46]

All in all, what Sun was attempting to do in his petition was to outline a modernization programme for saving China. Even more dangerous than the over-population issue,[47] the problems China faced were unprecedented: China must transform itself totally. Instead of trying to sell himself, Sun was trying to sell what he believed to be a fail-proof programme. The Manchu dynasty had to be overthrown not so much because it was an alien government, but because it was standing in the way of Sun's vision. Sun had no choice.

THE AFTERMATH: TOWARDS REVOLUTION

After his futile attempt to approach China's leading reform-minded official, Sun Yat-sen embarked on a course of action. In two years time he was to become one of the most wanted "criminals" of the Ch'ing government. By early 1897, Sun had made himself internationally-known, as a Western-trained Chinese physician conspiring to bring down the Chinese imperial system.

Sun's founding of the Hsing Chung Hui (Revive China Society), his role in the 1895 Canton Uprising, his subsequent exile, and his kidnap in London at the Chinese Legation, are all well-known episodes in his revolutionary career. His distinctive revolutionary style—raising funds from overseas Chinese, recruiting secret society members, and appealing for help from foreign nationals—has been studied amply. What have not been discussed, however, are Sun's own thoughts about his revolutionary work during the earlier period of his activities. In fact, from the meager information which has recently become available, it seems clear that Sun's ideas about national salvation in the first few years after 1894 were most consistent with those he outlined in his letter to Li Hung-chang. What he continued to champion were elaborations of his 1894 modernization programme. Of course, his anti-government stand and his dissatisfaction with Manchu rule were more openly expressed, but his diagnosis of China's problems remained the same. In short, there was no "sharp turn" in Sun's ideas about changing

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[45] Letter reprinted in *Chung-shan Ch'uan-chi* (Collected Works of Sun Yat-sen) Volume 1 (Peking, 1982), pp. 1-3.

[46] Sun Yat-sen, "Shang Li-fu-hsiang Shu", pp. 14788-14901.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 14791.

China. When he took concrete steps, he was merely supplementing and implementing his syncretic approach.

The new evidence which gives a new perspective on evaluating Sun's early writings is a Chinese-language newspaper published in Macao entitled *Ching-hai Ts'ung-pao*. This weekly newspaper was funded by a Portuguese publisher, Francisco Fernandes, a close friend who sheltered Sun in his Macao home after the 1895 Canton coup. According to Professor Schiffrin's research, this Chinese weekly was a supplement to the Portuguese newspaper, *O Eco Macaense.*[48] An article in Hong Kong's *Ta Kung Pao* dated 29 January 1965 further suggests that Sun was the anonymous editor, but that the weekly stopped publication in early 1894. What I have seen so far is the inaugural issue dated 18 July 1893. It was apparently an independent newspaper, and not a supplement, and this first issue not only publicized Sun's medical work, but informed readers that the newspaper could be subscribed at Sun's East-west Apothecary. The second issue available (19 December 1893) reported Sun's special care for his patients and his expertise in medical work. Unfortunately, many of the other issues are missing and the bulk of the extant material runs from 26 September 1894 to 25 December 1895.

At this stage of research, it is difficult to ascertain whether Sun Yat-sen was the actual editor of this rather progressive newspaper. It is clear, however, that Sun had close ties with the weekly, and if Sun did not actually write many of the more radical editorials, he was responsible for the thoughts behind them.[49] Even more important, a general persual of the content of the paper gives a sense of consistency to Sun's concerns and interests: superiority of Western medicine over Chinese herbs, the importance of an enlightened citizenry, the urgency of agricultural and commercial modernization, and the recognition of intensification of foreign threats to China.

Although no information is available on circulation figures, the number of distribution centres of the *Ching-hai Ts'ung-pao* does give some indication. The weekly was available in various regions of Kwangtung province, including Canton, and Hong Kong. Even more interesting, the paper was distributed in Foochou, Amoy, Shanghai, Peking, Singapore, San Francisco, and even in the Philippines and Japan.[50]

What is most interesting about the *Ching-hai Ts'ung-pao* is the anti-Ch'ing stand of the editorials. In some cases, the criticisms were quite harsh, although they fell short of calling for open rebellion against the Manchu dynasty. In one editorial dated 31 October 1894, the anonymous author called for basic and fundamental changes of outmoded institutions: buying Western guns and building Western ships were superficial measures to cure China of its problems. To face "internal rebellions and external threats," there must at the same time be the existence of good officials, and yet they were hard to find.[51] In fact, there were many editorials attacking the abundance of corrupt and

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[48] On its background, see Manuel Teixeira, *A Imprensa Periodica Portuguesa no Extremo-Oriente* (Macao: Noticias de Macau, 1965), pp. 52-56.

[49] Wu Ya (pseud.), "Sun Chung-shan tsai Ao-men so ch'uang-pan ti pao-chih" (The newspaper published by Sun Yat-sen in Macao) *Ta Kung-pao*, 29 January, 1965.

[50] *Ching-hai Ts'ung-pao*, founding issue (18 July 1893), p. 1.

[51] *Ching-hai Ts'ung-pao*, 21 November, 1894.

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incompetent officials in government.[52] Commenting on China's defeat in the hands of Japan, several editorials actually called for the removal of Li Hung-chang from office. Li was mainly responsible for the defeat of the Ch'ing forces; his only abilities were his abuse of power and his waste of useful men.[53]

As China was becoming weaker by the day, Western nations were generally progressing towards "wealth and power." The main reason, the anonymous editor explained, was because in the West the people had self-autonomy (*chi-chu*) and they all worked together for the common good (*kung-i*). Other than the free circulation of commodities, there was also flowing of ideas between the top (officials) and the bottom (the ordinary people).[54] Because Western governments were "more open," and because of their keen concern for education, there was a good supply of men of talent in the West. Indeed, in China the existence of "corrupt officials" and the lack of educational opportunities only helped to keep people ignorant and "unsanitary."[55]

In the 6 November 1895 issue, the weekly published the manifesto of Sun Yat-sen's short-lived Agricultural Study Society. The editor's short preface expressed admiration for Sun's ideas, and suggested that Sun's programme should be implemented immediately. Interestingly enough, in the manifesto Sun once again referred to the importance of men of speciality: the training of agricultural officers to deal with agricultural matters. In China, only the literati were respected, but in the West, all groups worked for the common goal of strengthening the nation.

Sun's foreign faith, his foreign-style education, and his iconoclastic behaviour—all make it difficult to accept the interpretation that he wanted to join the reformers in 1894. The tone and content of the *Ching-hai Ts'ung-pao* further clarify Sun's 1894 petition. For practical and obvious reasons, the editorials of the newspaper did not call for a revolution. For the purpose here, however, they are extremely important in that they elaborated upon Sun's 1894 programme to Li.

By late 1896, far away from Ch'ing jurisdiction and just-released from the Chinese Legation in London, Sun carried one step further the anti-Ch'ing editorials of the *Ching-hai Ts'ung-pao*. He gave a most detailed analysis of the state of corruption in China in two pieces of writing published in early 1897, *Kidnapped in London*, and "China's Present and Future".[56] The two works are important in that they reveal Sun's first-hand knowledge of local situations in China. Once again, however, historians have chosen to neglect the content of Sun's writings, and have emphasized instead that Sun wrote them to arouse Western public opinion.[57] Actually Sun's call for revolution in these two short pieces was a logical extension of his earlier ideas. Sun was finally able to conclude his findings on the Chinese state of affairs.

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[52] *Ching-hai Ts'ung-pao*, 27 February, 1895.

[53] *Ching-hai Ts'ung-pao*, 12 & 19 December, 1894.

[54] *Ching-hai Ts'ung-pao*, 6 March, 1895.

[55] *Ching-hai Ts'ung-pao*, 1 March, 1895.

[56] Sun Yat-sen, *Kidnapped in London* (Bristol, 1897); "China's Present and Future: The Reform Party's Plea for British Benevolent Neutrality", *Fortnightly* Review (New Series), 61:363 (1 March, 1897), 424-440. Both reproduced in *Kuo-fu Ch'uan-chi* (Collected Works of Sun Yat-sen) (Taipei, 1973), Volume 5. Pagination follows reproduced edition.

[57] Michael Gasster, "The Republican Revolutionary Movement", p. 469.

In his 1894 petition, Sun had already referred briefly to the problem of official corruption. Almost three years later, he explained what he really meant: "so universal and deep rooted is the corruption from which . . . evils spring, that partial and gradual reform is impossible and no change for the better can be hoped for except from a radical alteration in the administrative system."[58] To be more exact, Sun was convinced that "China can not be reformed by the introduction of material civilization, but only by the extirpation of official corruption."[59] After all, in China public life meant corruption, and "to renounce corrupt practices is to renounce public life altogether."[60]

To illustrate the extent of institutionalized corruption in China, Sun repeatedly gave many interesting examples. Very often, since officials were practically "without salary," and had purchased their posts at immense costs, they created "accidents" to make profits. According to Sun, many deliberately broke the dykes of rivers in order to collect fees for repair work. Officials could also falsify the actual number of workers employed, deduct the salaries of those actually hired, and cheat on the cost of repair material. Furthermore, because of flood damage, relief funds would be collected, and somehow those funds would never reach those in need. Finally, Sun concluded, because of the role they had played in relief work, these corrupt officials would also get promotions.[61]

The real problem China faced, Sun reiterated over and over again, was not the lack of introduction of Western things—arsenals, telegraphs, steamers. The modern improvements had no effect on the actual situation because those in charge had no idea of what they were supposed to do. Senior officials were ignorant because they had purchased their positions in the first place. Li Han-chang, brother of Li Hung-chang, had actually "fixed a regular price for every office in the province of the two Kwangs."[62]

Sun Yat-sen later disavowed these two works in English most likely because he was embarassed by his call for "European administrative assistance"[63] in these essays. Nonetheless, together with the earlier writings, they do give a total picture of what Sun meant by a revolution in early 1897. On the one hand, the aim of the Chinese revolution was to remove the imperial Chinese system, which was the source of China's backwardness and corruption. To replace it, on the other hand, China must introduce a modern type education for all its people, to help transform them into enlightened citizens with special abilities. Just as important, all of them must participate in a national effort to succeed in realizing the twin objectives of industrial and agricultural modernization.

To be sure, Sun Yat-sen had embarked upon the road of revolution initially as a man on the periphery of nineteenth-century Chinese society. But the unique setting of the Hong Kong-Macao-Canton region, and Sun's own Western experience, enabled him to study China's problems from a wide range of perspectives. Perhaps even more interesting, for Sun the solutions could be drawn from a large pool of possibilities. Sun's approach was therefore syncretic—different formulas for different needs. Indeed if Sun was not an original thinker, it is because he was working from too many sources simultaneously.

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[58] Sun Yat-sen, "China's Present and Future", p. 92.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 108
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 103.
[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 108
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

Thus Sun's revolutionary activities must be understood within the larger context of his own vision for saving China. As far as his early career was concerned, for Sun the purpose of a revolution was to replace a useless structure with his own programme, vague but comprehensive. And since Li Hung-chang was unwilling to implement his modernization goals, Sun was compelled to sweep aside the obstacle for national salvation. He had no alternative, but to become a professional revolutionary.

改良及革命：孫中山先生的早期救國思想

（中文摘要）

楊　意　龍

要了解孫中山先生的早期思想，史學家必須明白孫中山成長的環境及當時社會的思潮。但因爲種種非歷史性的原因，一般研究孫中山的論者都忽略了孫中山成爲革命家的思想來源和背後因素；一些西方史學家更認爲，孫中山其實是改良思想家，一八九五年孫中山轉向革命，實因上書李鴻章失敗，得不到朝廷的重視而起。

從思想史角度分析，孫中山早期的著作和改良派有顯明的不同，他表揚西方的管理學，主張農業機械化，推崇個人自主之權，社會由專門人才帶領，贊成男女教育平等。雖然，其中若干論點和改良思想有相似的地方，但從筆者所見的《鏡海叢報》啓示，孫中山先生在一八九五年已有一套救國的現代化計劃。

《鏡海叢報》在澳門出版，由孫中山的葡籍朋友資助，於一八九三年七月十八日開始發行。根據資料顯示，《鏡海叢報》發行地區包括福州、厦門、香港、上海、北京、新加坡、舊金山、菲律賓及日本。這一份報章，對了解孫中山早期思想可說是有一定的幫助，而其中的特點，是社論對「自主」和「公義」的鼓吹，中國需要的，不單止是西方的先進科技，整個社會制度，也要進行現代化。孫中山和《鏡海叢報》的深層關係，更待進一步研究。

從孫中山早期思想中，至少表明了一八九五年的孫中山已有一套改變中國的現代化計劃，而孫中山當時的革命思想，就是在掃除障礙（腐敗的清政府），早日促成中國現代化的理想。