Commemorating the Xinhai Centennial:

A Political-Science Perspective

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Throughout 2011, Chinese both at home (including Taiwan and the mainland) and overseas celebrated the centennial of the Xinhai Revolution, which ended the dynastic cycles in China’s long monarchical history. It ushered in a republican form of government under the banners of the newly minted Republic of China (ROC). But, its initial period turned out to be what sometimes was pejoratively known as the “Phantom Republic” in English. In the absence of an effective central government, the nation was immediately plunged into periods of instability and division, amidst rivalry of the warlords vying for control.

A hundred years later, China still sees division, albeit of a different sort, between a mainland under the control of People’s Republic of China (PRC) and a Taiwan where the ROC regime is now seated, physically separated by a body of waters over 110 miles in breadth. Interestingly enough, the Xinhai centennial was celebrated on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, and by some measures with no less zeal on the mainland than in Taiwan. By implication, both sides are a “descendent” of the Xinhai Revolution.

This paper is an attempt to refocus on the origins, and ramifications, of the Xinhai Revolution, with a view to rethinking its real significance-- viewed from hindsight-- for the subsequent developments that, among other things, anticipated the present division across the Taiwan Strait. We will re-examine the broad background underscoring the Xinhai Revolution and the key factors behind its victory. First, we have to bear in mind that the Xinhai Revolution (1911) was not a one-shot event, but the tenth, or last, of a series of revolts waged by dedicated patriots in a drawn-out revolution aimed at overthrowing the Manchu Dynasty. Hence, by “background” I mean such qualities as the make-up of the Manchu Court and its fortunes (or mis-fortunes) at the time of the West’s coming to China in the 19th century. The timing of the latter event coincided with a down cycle of the Manchu Dynasty, marked by a series of internal unrest, from the Bailianjiao (White Totus Sect) unrest, the Muslims revolt, the Ren rebellion, to the Taiping insurrection. Equally, we will note the Manchu Court’s resistance to change, even under the impact of the West’s inroads. After the Taiping uprisings, as we shall see below, there was all the more reason that the Empress Dowager, Cixi (the de facto ultimate ruler for 47 years), did not want to change. One thing led to another, and the Xinhai Revolution was the last straw that broke the camel’s back. The Manchu dynasty simply crumbled under the combined weight of domestic turmoil and the pressures of foreign encroachments.

The Times and the Odds[[1]](#footnote-1)

( I ) The morphology of the Manchu polity.

The Manchus came in as an alien ethnic group in 1644, after they had conquered China and established a minority rule over the Han majority. They instituted what was typically a “garrison state,” in which they, from early on, took extensive “homeland security measures”—if we can borrow from modern terminology. For example, Manchu *baqi* (八旗Eight Banners) garrison forces were widely stationed at strategic points throughout the land, to ensure against rebellions by the Han majority. In the government hierarchy, the Manchu Court introduced a diarchy of Han and Manchu officials, where Manchus occupied all key positions. At the provincial level, a Manchu viceroy (總督zongdu) would, as a rule, oversee two Han governors （巡撫） in as many provinces. Other measures to ensure absolute loyalty to the Court included the “rule of avoidance” (避諱) under which no Han official, from the magistrate level and on down in a province, would be appointed from among the natives of the same province, to preclude cliquing. In the event of a serious local rebellion calling for action by the provincial constabulary forces, an imperial superintendent (欽差大臣qinchai dachen) would be dispatched by the Emperor to serve as his eyes and ears in the local suppression campaign.

To make sure that the intellectuals would have little time to plot a revolt, they were encouraged to indulge in four intellectual pursuits known as *qin qi shu hua,* or playing music instruments and chess (or go) games, and doing calligraphy and brush painting. All members of the intelligentsia were made conscious of having to perfect a peculiar form of fine *lettres* known as eight-legged essays (八股文), which were required in the official *keju* (科舉) examinations that all enterprising intellectuals had to take in order to get on and move up the social-political ladder in what had become a one-career society. In this system, the only meaningful career was to join and move up in the officialdom, all other professions being trivialized. Another indication of the Court’s distrust of the intelligentsia was the high frequency, during the early decades of the Manchu Dynasty, of literary inquisitions （文字獄）, in which many writers were purged for literary blasphemy, involving hints of disrespect or disloyalty to the Court,.

( II ) Demographics, etc.

At the time of the Manchu Dynasty’s founding, the country had a population of only half a million, but by the early 1800s it increased by eight folds, to a total of four hundred million, causing undue strains on the economy.[[2]](#footnote-2) In contrast to the mean in previous Chinese dynasties, the Manchus kept an inordinately large body of hereditary and non-productive nobility ranks, enjoying extensive privileges, arbitrary power, and a sizeable largess. Their existence disadvantaged the Han elites, whose status had to be verified by the *keju* merit system but was in no case inheritable. This discrepancy in effect undercut the principle of fairness intended to be upheld by the *keju* system in ensuring elite circulation in society.[[3]](#footnote-3)

( III ) Onset of decadence of the Manchu officialdom; and aftermath

In the initial stage of the Manchu Dynasty, the Manchus serving in government maintained discipline like a priesthood, and some of the early emperors, especially Kangxi (K’ang-hsi, 康熙，1662- 1722) and Qianlong (Ch’ien-lung, 乾隆，1736-1795), endeavored to master Chinese classics and orchestrated a campaign to assimilate Manchus into Chinese culture. But, by the later years of the Qianlong reign, decadence began to creep up, as graft and corruption among officials, high and low, became rampant and entrenched. For example, during his twenty years as Emperor Qianlong’s chief minister, Heshen (Ho-shen, 和珅) amassed so much wealth that it was said to be more than ten years’ worth of the total state revenues.[[4]](#footnote-4) Widespread corruption in officialdom, however, did not stop after Heshen’s suicide ordered by Emperor Jiaqing (Chia-ch’ing, 嘉慶，1796-1820). Nor did the rebellions that had been elicited by the misdeeds of government officials.

The Making of the Xinhai Revolution & Victory[[5]](#footnote-5)

From a political-science perspective, the following ingredients were essential in the making of the Xinhai Revolution qua a revolution and its success: (a) the quality of the leaders of the anti-Manchu revolution (e.g., Dr. Sun Yat-sen, etc.); (b) the clarion calls and rallying points of the Revolution (Sun’s slogan of “Expel the Aliens; Revive the Chinese Nation; Establish a Republic; and Equalize Land Rights”); ( c ) the organizations that helped wage the revolution (the Revive-China League, 興中會; the Revolutionary Alliance 同盟會; the Party of Revolutionaries 革命黨; the Literary Guild 文學社；and the Common Cause Group 共進會); (d) strategy for waging the revolution (e.g., urban uprisings, plus political assassinations); and (e) exigencies and coincidences (e.g, that Empress Dowager Cixi and the younger Emperor Guangxu died in the same year,1908). Because of time constraint, we can elaborate below on points (a) and (e) only.

\*At the beginning of the anti-Manchu revolution, most of the leaders were from among the Western educated elites, like Sun Yat-sen, who was trained in Western medicine in Hong Kong as a surgeon. The reason was that among the Chinese traditional-type intellectuals, especially the younger ones, the lure and incentives of the government *keju* system became an inhibitor, blocking them from joining the revolutionary ranks. But, the *keju* was terminated as from 1906 by order of the Empress Dowager, who ironically at that late date thought that ending the keju in favor of a new emphasis on Western education would save the fortunes of Manchu rule. Quite unexpectedly, to so many thousands of the young intellectuals who had spent the proverbial “ten years by the wintry window” (十年寒窗) in preparation for the keju examinations, the end of the keju dashed all their hopes of a reliable and fair avenue of social mobility. Out of despair, many of them joined the revolutionary ranks without a second thought. Many more did so, after the deaths of both the Empress Dowager and the young Emperor Guangxu in 1908, which cast a pall over the nation, raising severe doubts about its future. Thus, joining the revolution became synonymous with saving the nation. This is one of the several reasons why the anti-Manchu revolution succeeded during its tenth uprising three years hence, in October 1911, after all previous nine tries had ended in failure.

\*Another exigency that helped the cause of the revolutionaries was the ferocious disputes that erupted in July 1911 over the government attempt to nationalize the newly built railways (鐵路國有化), in Sichuan (Szechuan) and Guangdong provinces plus the Wuhan metropolis. When private individuals (merchants) who had invested money in building these railways closed in on the tracks to assert their rights of ownership, the government ordered indiscriminate killings as a deterrent, resulting in a massacre that pushed the merchants (and the secret societies in league with them) to the cause of the revolutionaries.

\*Still another factor that helped the fortunes of the revolutionaries was the support that they were able to rally among the new military contingents (known as the New Army 新軍) that the Manchu Court had recently recruited and trained in the modern military science (including the use of modern weapons). Exposure to modern ideas and technology in these military trainings had made many of the new recruits very “modern” in their thinking. Some were susceptive to the ideas spread by agents of the revolutionaries and, hence, were won over to the latter’s cause. In other words, there were “closet revolutionaries” hiding within the ranks of the government’s New Army.[[6]](#footnote-6) In the autumn of 1911, the revolutionaries organized a Wuhan revolutionary command plotting an uprising with the aid of the New Army supporters. As a result of an accidental leak-out of the plans for revolt, however, the revolutionaries along with their “new army” sympathizers had to take arms ahead of schedule. Under the cover of night, on October 10, the New Army men led by XIONG Bingkun (熊秉坤) from the engineering corps were the first ones to rise up. Joined by other New Army cohorts, they sacked the Wuhan Viceroy’s headquarters, sending all government officials (including the military leaders) fleeing for life. They soon ran over the nearby Hanyang and Hankou in the tri-city complex. The revolutionaries set up a Hubei Military Government (HMG) and drafted LI Yuanhong, a New Army associate commander to be the HMG’s Viceroy for Hubei Forces under a newly declared Republic of China (ROC). The HMG issued a declaration calling on all other provinces to support the revolutionary cause and secede from the control of the Manchu Court.[[7]](#footnote-7) Many provinces responded and defected to the revolutionary forces. In isolation and despair, the Court abdicated, crowning the revolution with its final victory. The Xinhai Revolution thus ended China’s dynastic history and ushered in a new Republic, the first ever in China and the first republic in Asia.

The Manchu Legacy & Its Adverse Effects

While the Xinhai Revolution overthrew the Manchu Dynasty, ending China’s long dynastic cycle, the Manchu legacy left certain adverse effects in the post-Manchu period, some recurrent and long-lasting, which we should take cognizance of in order to properly comprehend modern Chinese political developments.

1. After the decade-long Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), the government coffers were depleted. An idea concocted by the Manuchu Court to raise revenue was to sell (yes, sell) the much envied Keju certified degrees (and status) and government positions for a handsome fee. Half-baked intellectuals who could not make it through the Keju examinations would be able to purchase a certified degree, known as Jiansheng (監生), a euphemism for Juansheng (捐生，or “acquired degree from donations”), thus qualifying them for a government position. This precedent inspired similar practices in the future, for example in the various warlord governments during the Phantom Republic and at other times. As recent as the eight-year tenure of President Chen Shui-bian in Taiwan (2000-2008), a total of 732 military officers, some of a general’s rank, owed their promotion to donations they each made to Chen’s government, according to subsequent investigations by the independent Control Yuan.
2. During the Taiping Rebellion, all the Manchu *baqi* (eight banner) garrison forces proved to be not up to the job of fighting the rebels. The Court had to turn to a number of outstanding loyal Han officials, like Zeng Guofan (曾國藩), Li Hongzhang （李鴻章）, Zuo Zongtang （左宗棠）, etc., to help put down the rebellion, commanding the armies they raised from their own native provinces of Hunan and Anhui. And, these troops were known as *zidibing* (子弟兵), or private home-town troops, thus beginning a legacy of “private armies” that was duplicated during the warlord period of the Phantom Republic and beyond.
3. Another spill-over effect from the experience of the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion was even longer lasting. To understand it, we have to begin with a question, as to why the Han officials, such as Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang, and Zuo Zongtang, rallied to the support of a dynastic house founded by a (formerly) alien ethnic group (the Manchus), turning against an equally Han (*hakka* ) group that was the Taipings, whose avowed goal was to topple the (alien) Manchu rule. Vincent Shi found the reason, which also explains why Empress Dowager Cixi became all the more adamant in refusing to change while stubbornly adhering to the Confucian tradition, after the defeat of the Taiping Rebellion. The reason was that while the Manchus may have (and indeed did) come as aliens, they nevertheless faithfully abided by, and even revered, China’s Confucian tradition. On the other hand, although the Taipings were made up of hakkas, a subgroup of the Han majority, the movement was led by a hakka named Hong Xiuquan who claimed to be a brother of Jesus Christ, or another son of God sent down to undo the injustice of the Manchu conquest in 1644 and rule over China ever since. Armed with this quasi-Christian ideology, the Taipings denounced Confucianism as heterodox.[[8]](#footnote-8) The Han officials who rallied to Manchu Court’s support, were all faithful Confucianists. Thus, faced with a choice as such, they decided to stand up against the Taipings for the sake of saving the Confucian tradition. That was not all. This “secret” proved a revelation for the Empress Dowager, who learned that when the *baqi* forces were already decadent by the mid-19th century, the Manchu Court’s future survival depended on the loyalty of the Han officials. And, the only sure way she could count on their loyalty and support was to put up a dauntless, unflinching posture of upholding Confucianism. While she was realistically correct on this point, she mistakenly thought that adherence to Confucianism would mean making absolutely no change. Hence, her stubborn resistance to change, until the very last moment. Ironically, when as late as 1905 she believed that abolishing the Keju system (beginning the following year) would save her Dynasty, she unwittingly hastened its downfall.[[9]](#footnote-9) Another ironic development was that to many observers, especially the Western-educated elites in China, Cixi’s refusal to change became a perceived fault of Confucius. Hence, a growing number of intellectuals at the time, and well into the Republican period, believed it was Confucianism that caused the mess that the Manchus got China into, refusing change when change was needed most, in order to cope with the Western inroads. The ani-Confucian ethos that peaked in the May 4th Movement in 1919 was a natural result of this misperception, which in turn stemmed from a confusion attributing Cixi’s refusal to change to Confucianism as a hindrance to change.
4. The legacy of the inordinate Manchu autocracy. Western diplomatic missions in the 19th century found the Manchu Court extremely arrogant (this contrasted with the congenial way in which the Ming Dynasty Court received the Jesuits a century before[[10]](#footnote-10)). Modern Chinese liberals also blamed the Chinese political tradition as unreasonably autocratic. But, I would like to raise two cognate questions for further reflection. Did any Chinese dynastic house before the Manchus ever call itself *Tianchao* (天朝), the “Heavenly Court”? Similarly, did any Chinese emperor before the Manus require his officials to call themselves *nucai* (奴才), or “your slaves,” either when they appeared in Court or when memorializing the emperor? The answer is, of course, “No” to both questions. This shows that the kind of autocracy found in the Manchu Dynasty was probably tied to a peculiar culture indigenous to the Manchus. Apparently this Manchu culture permeated despite the conscious efforts of emperors like Kangxi and Qianlong to Sinify and to assimilate the Manchus into Chinese culture. Another indicator of the Manchu’s contribution to the autocratic political legacy that was passed on to the post-Manchu era was in the banishment to non-importance of the traditional Chinese Censorial system.[[11]](#footnote-11) Although the Manchus kept the Duchayuan (都察院) in name, as the ancient censorate was known, it did not function as effectively as a curb on monarchical license.[[12]](#footnote-12) Other measures meant to keep the emperor’s power totally unrestrained, like no emperor in Chinese history before, included the abolishment of the position of the Prime Minister, the practice of not naming a crown prince, installation of a ubiquitous espionage network, etc. In short, this atypical autocratic tradition rubbed off on almost all governments beyond the end of the dynastic history of China, although few people are aware that it was largely of Manchu origin.

The Xinhai Legacy, Sun Yat-sen, and Political

Developments in Post-Manchu China

On January 1, 1912, two months after the Xinhai Revolution overthrew the Manchu Dynasty, Sun Yat-sen was inaugurated as the Provisional President of the new Republic of China (ROC).The most important icon among the earliest leaders in the saga of the anti-Manchu revolution, Sun was the catalyst and unquestioned bridge of the various revolutionary groups united finally into the Revolutionary Alliance that he headed. The idea of a republic to follow the end of the dynastic history was primarily his brainchild. And, his San Min Chu I (三民主義，The Three Principles of the People) provided the ideological guide and the vision of the revolution; and it eventually became the platform of the Kuomintang (KMT) party that he founded.[[13]](#footnote-13) Although he stepped down as the Provisional President shortly after, he was nevertheless considered by many both in and outside his own KMT party to be modern China’s g*uofu (k*uo-fu, 國父), literally “national father.” Mao Zedong and his Chinese Communist Party acknowledged Sun as a “precursor of the revolutionaries” (革命先行者) of Modern China。The point is that the legacy of the Xinhai Revolution is inseparable from the legend of Sun Yat-sen. Three generalizations can be made as of particular significance, in terms of the Xinhai legacy.

<>First, the revolutionary nationalism canonized by the Xinhai legacy, in retrospect, anticipated the growth, in tandem, of two variants of Chinese nationalisms. The variant upheld and expounded by Sun Yat-sen in the first of his three principles (i.e., San Min Chu I), was the more moderate of the two variants of revolutionary nationalism that, in retrospect, guided political developments of post-dynastic China. It was the spirit that guided and moved the KMT (and the ROC throughout its governance on the mainland until 1949 and in post-1949 Taiwan). The other variant, the more radical revolutionary nationalism, as later associated with Mao Zedong and his cohorts, powered the movement of the Chinese Communist Party from its birth in 1921 onward. The two variants of Chinese revolutionary nationalism had their differences and similarities. They differed most in their respective outlook on the question of social engineering, or the realignment of social classes and re-inculcation of social values, to fit the need of Modern China. Furthermore, they also differed on the distribution of rights and duties between state and society: Sun Yat-sen in the second principle of his San Min Chu I (i.e., 民權主義,”principle of people’s rights”) was looking to a polyarchic form of government, in contradistinction with the CCP’s party-state governance structure. But, the two shared a distinct commonality in one thing, the spirit of “anti-imperialism,” which Sun succinctly explained in his will to mean a “national revolution” aimed at establishing a “free and equal China” without the shackles of foreign bondage. In addition, the two forces also similarly favored a state-sponsored socialist economy, until, that is, the ROC/Taiwan veered off to a more capitalist-oriented economy after the 1950s.

We will better understand the nature of Chinese nationalism by conducting a

broad comparison of the world’s nationalisms, in Europe, Japan, and the Third World. First, we will find that Chinese nationalism, either as upheld by Sun Yat-sen at the time of the Xinhai Revolution or as later flaunted by Mao and his CCP, both shared something in common and yet differed with European nationalism. In Europe, modern nationalism emerged with the rise of the modern “nation state,” following the end of the earlier imperial and ecclesiastic order. Hence, it was anti-imperial (and for separation of church and state) and, pending the arrival of modern democracy, was preoccupied with state-building. Chinese nationalism was anti-imperial (i.e., anti-dynastic) and pro-state building, thus reminiscent of European nationalism. But, unlike the latter, it was also anti-imperialistic (and anti-colonial) in addition. Second, on this score, Chinese nationalism has much in common with that of the post-colonial nations in today’s Third World that became independent after World War II. Third, by contrast, the Japanese nationalism that emerged during the Meiji period (1868-1912) was both pro-imperial (hence, the Meiji Restoration after the downfall of the Tokugawa shogunate) and pro-colonial (it ruled Korea as a colony, 1895-1945).

<>Secondly, since as early as the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-220 A.D.), and more especially in later times when the Keju system was in full swing, China saw a solid unholy alliance of three classes: the ruling class, the literati, and the landlord class. Because Keju made the state into an authoritative certifying agent of social mobility, all intellectuals had to depend on the state-sponsored Keju system for their status and career; hence, they were unquestionably behind the government (the ruling class). The educated elites invariably hailed from the landlord class, because education was expensive, and the landlord class was the wealthy group that mattered in the traditional agrarian economy. It followed therefore that the landlord class was also unquestionably behind the ruling class. The triple alliance, thus formed, perpetuated throughout dynastic history. But, the Xinhai Revolution registered a break between the intellectuals and their government, as the bond was unstuck with the termination of the Keju system five years before. The change made it possible for a new pattern to emerge, where free-standing students were found on the opposite side of government. This new pattern was found in the mammoth May Fourth movement (1919), and again in the student demonstrations against the KMT government during its war with the Communist insurrection, otherwise known as the Chinese civil war of 1945-1949. The same pattern resurfaced in 1989, when a million students converged on Tiananmen, demonstrating against the Beijing government.

<>Thirdly, in its long political history, until the Xinhai revolution, China only had what some analysts called “culturalism,” but not nationalism. The former term refers to the Chinese ready acceptance of alien rulers like the Mongolians, who founded the Yuan Dynsty (1260-1368) and the Manchus, who established the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), after they conquered China. The reason was that these aliens soon became fully assimilated into Chinese culture, hence accepted by the Chinese nation without much of a grudge, unless they misruled. But, Xinhai Revolution was waged under the specific call of “Expel the aliens” – an immediate reference to the Manchus, although it could likewise be extended to foreign predators in China. (It was further elaborated in the first principle (“Nationalism”) of Sun Yat-sen’s *San Min Chu I* ). Hence, after Xinhai, Chinese nationalism replaced the earlier culturalism for good.

Sun Yat-sen as an Inspiration

For Chinese Socialism

In addition to “anti-imperialism” that Sun’s nationalism shared in common with Mao’s and CCP’s nationalism, certain other essentials in Sun Yat-senism either distantly anticipated or inspired important developments in post-Mao China. For example, his advocacy of a quasi-state capitalist economy, spelled out in the third principle of his *San Min Chu I* and elaborated in his other writings, like *Jianguo fanglue* (建國方略, Guiding Principles of National Consttruction) and *Jiangguo dagang* (建國大綱，Outlines of a Plan for National Construction), in effect anticipated Deng Xiaoping’s “socialism with Chinese characteristics.” Specifically, Sun’s plan looked to an economy in which a state-owned sector would have the leeway to develop in full, while private capitalism would be allowed but under restraint (發達國家資本；節制私人資本). It distantly anticipated Deng Xiaoping’s marketized socialism in that the public sector consisting of the state-owned enterprises (SOEs) will lead over the non-state (i.e., private) sector. Sun’s ideal society was based on the utopian *datong* concept, taking a leaf from the Datong chapter of the ancient *Book of Rites.*  In a way, it provided a harbinger for the goal of building a *hexie sehui* （和諧社會，harmonious society）, floated in 2006 by Hu Jintao, CCP’s general secretary and PRC’s President.

Concluding Remarks

As we have seen, two legacies devolved from the Xinhai Revolution. First, the adverse effects of the Manchu legacy may resurface at times, such as in the sale of government offices, even military ranks, under Chen Shui-bian’s presidency in Taiwan not long ago. Second, the most important feature of the other legacy, or the Xinghai legacy, was the rise in tandem of two variant forces of modern Chinese revolutionary nationalism. Their current descendants are represented, respectively, by (a) the KMT and other non-Communist parties and individuals now located in Taiwan, and (b) the Chinese Communist party, now in control of the mainland of China. Their differences can be narrowed to the respective views of Sun Yat-sen and Mao Zedong on the nature of the Chinese revolution. For Mao, the Chinese revolution was actually two in one: a national revolution and a social revolution rolled together. Purging China of all past injustices wrought by foreign “imperialism” was only the beginning of a social revolution that entailed a societal restructuring.[[14]](#footnote-14) In retrospect, however, Mao’s social revolution turned out to be at the expense of economic growth, a neglect only reversed by the Dengist reform after Mao’s demise. By contrast, for Sun Yat-sen, the Chinese revolution was three in one: a national revolution, with similar anti-imperialist connotations, dovetailed with a political revolution (i.e, democratization), to be followed by the building of a state-led quasi-capitalist economy (an economic revolution). Sun did not live to see the realization of his political revolution, nor the economic addendum, both of which, along with the national revolution, were outlined in his San Min Chu I. The implementation of the latter two phases of his revolution had to wait until the KMT government was relocated in Taiwan following 1949.

In commemorating the centennial of the Xinhai Revolution, our greatest discovery seems to be that both the CCP rule on the mainland and the ROC regime in Taiwan today, in spite of their past conflicts and hostility, are linked to the spirit of modern Chinese nationalism whose germ was contained in the Xinhai legacy. Until recently, their main difference continued to lie in Mao’s and Sun’s respective ideals of what the modern Chinese revolution should consist of. To reiterate, their main difference boiled down to Mao’s social revolution emphasis vs. Sun’s political revolution bent. But, with the newfound prosperity that fast and sustained economic growth has brought to the Chinese mainland during the post-Mao period, which more than matches Taiwan’s laurels as the one-time leader of the four Asian Tigers in the 1980s-1990s, the old distinction across the Taiwan Strait seems to be wearing down. The remaining difference thus far lies in Sun’s democratic vision, as inherited in Taiwan since the last years of Chiang Ching-kuo’s presidency. The gap with the mainland, however, may not be forever. According to Deng Xiaoping’s vision, which offered a post-Mao addendum, development in mainland China would follow three stages: economic growth, cultural revival, and political development.[[15]](#footnote-15) Under his stewardship, Deng paved the way to China’s enormous economic growth of the last three decades. In 1995, under the leadership of General Secretary Jiang Zemin, the CCP for the first time officially celebrated the birth of Confucius, ushering in the return of Confucianism (in what Deng would call “cultural revival”). Since 2005, the CCP under Hu Jintao has not avoided talks about “political reform.”[[16]](#footnote-16) Like Sun Yat-sen, Deng seems to agree on a “democratic revolution” and an “economic revolution,” to follow from the CCP’s national revolution, except in a reverse order between the two phases, if compared with the Taiwan experience. That being the case, the future generation that will be commemorating the bi-centennial of the Xinhai Revolution, another 100 years from now, will probably find the two parts of China now separated by the 110 miles of water across the Taiwan Strait will no longer be separated by their ideas and institutions. (End).

1. For more information and discussions, see Edward J.M. Rhoads, *Manchus & Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861-1928* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001); Hsiao I-shan, *Ch’ing-tai Shi* (History of Qing Dynasty) (Chongqing, 1944). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
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3. Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berekely, CA: University of California Press, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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6. Edmund S.K. Fung, *The Military Dimension of the Chinese Revolution: The New Army and Its Role in the Revolution of 1911* (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 1980). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Joseph Esherick, *Reform and Revolution in China: The 1911 Revolution in Hunan and Hubei* (Berkele: University of California Press, 1976). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Cf. Vincent Shih, *The Taiping Ideology: Its Sources, Interpretations, and Influences* (Settle: University of Washington Press, 1967). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. X. L. Woo, *Empress Dowager Cixi: China’s Last Dynasty and the Long Regin of a Formidable Concubine: Legends and Lives During the Declining Days of the Qing Dynasty* (Algora Publishing, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See Ssu-yu Teng and John K. Fairbank, *China’s Response to the West* New York: Atheneum), p. 12f. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. For the importance of the censorial system, which included the “remeonstrators,” see Franklin Houn, *Chinese Political Traditions* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), pp. 31-32; 63-68; and Charles O. Hucker, “Confucianism and the Chinese Censorial System,” in *Confucianism and the Chinese Civilization,* ed. Mary Wright (New York: Atheneum, 1965; first published in 1959 by Stanford University Press). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Li, *op. cit.*, p. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. C. Martin Wilbur, *Sun Yat-sen: The Frustrated Patriot* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Cf. James C. Hsiung, *Ideology and Practice: The Evolution of Chinese Communism* (New York: Praeger, 1970), pp. 85-105. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Deng spelled out his vision as such to me in my six-hour audience with him at his Beidaihe sumer resort, July 29, 1987, 3-9 p.m. Deng also said that an open, democratic China must begin with a drastic transformation of the Chinese Communist Party, in his “Eight Warnings to Posterity,” available at <<http://digest.creaders.net/articleViewer.php?atid=2290148id=284376>>. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The official *People’s Daily* carried an editorial, on April 28, 2011, titled “To Greet Dissenting Views with Magnanimity,” quoted a passage from Deng Xiaoping, to the following effect: “Discordant noises are not to be feared; but dead silence is most dreadful.” The editorial went on to suggest: “I may disagree with you, but I will defend your right to speak your mind with my life.” [↑](#footnote-ref-16)