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**DAWN OF MODERN CHINA:
THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHINA'S 1911
REVOLUTION AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF
THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

**Luncheon Address by Dr. Mary Backus Rankin:
Key Themes of the Revolution**

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KEY ISSUES IN THE 1911 REVOLUTION

BACK GROUND OF CHANGE AND NEW IDEAS AFTER END OF THE TAIPING REBELLION.

The end of the Taiping war gave way to a period of reconstruction that involved both officials and local social leaders and for many survivors required a period of self-examination to move beyond the traumas of the of the Taiping years. Local men who took responsibility for reconstruction then moved into continuing involvement in local affairs such as permanent welfare organizations, positions in new academies. The establishment of Shen bao in 1872 was a landmark in the movement away from post-Taiping personal concerns toward new issues that soon arose. By the early 1880s it had become a national paper that played an important part in fostering local activities and broadening public opinion.

Besides providing information on domestic affairs it encouraged nationalism by disseminating news about major and minor foreign incursions. One of the first had been the Japanese brief expedition against Taiwan in retaliation for the deaths of some of their sailors from the Ryukyu Islands. The Chinese government thought it unnecessary to take a strong stand against claims to such an insignificant island, thus opening the way for further conflict. The next year Shen bao presented the news of the British interpreter, A. R. Margery in Yunnan. England did not take that lightly. The paper published news of all the British demands, negotiations, and naval or troop movements. The next year it informed its readers about the dispute with Russia over control of the distant Ili region, including the anchoring of Russian ships off Dinghai on the Zhejiang coast. This was also a minor matter, but the newspaper brought out the larger need for military preparations and coastal defense. Already uneasy about foreign threats, coastal elites were ready to defend the country, aware of the need for better military equipment, and at least some doubted that the bureaucracy would be able to modernize effectively.

These were all minor incursions, but they were followed the much more serious Sino-French War from 1883 to 1885 and the Sino-Japanese War during 1894-95. The military aspects of the Sino-French War were less complex. French colonial expansion from Annam across the ill-defined Chinese border led to hostilities that by 1883 had become full-scale battles. The French then moved their fleet north to attack Taiwan, then blockaded Chenhai to keep Chinese ships in the Yong River before moving south to

destroy the Fuzhou naval yards. The Chinese government was sufficiently impressed to sign a peace treaty in 1885. Within Beijing the war was complicated by furious attacks on Li Hongzhang and others by the Qingliu group who blamed Li in particular for China's defeats. Along the coast elites lead militias, contributed money, and ran the French blockade.

I have previously used the term of "participatory self-strengthening" to distinguish views of Zhejiangese within the province from those of high officials within the government. These two groups might favor similar reforms but with different implications. Official self-strengthening was a forerunner of state-building during the last Qing decade in which leaders did not encourage widespread social initiative, whereas participatory self-strengthening assumed social mobilization and cautiously raised the idea of giving administrative authority to local men and greater weight to public opinion. Elite reformers hoped for a less tyrannical and corrupt government.

The public response to The Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) was in many respects similar to the social response to the Sino-French. Rumors, militias, individual and guild donations were part of the usual issues. Piracy increased as did anti-missionary sentiment. Leaders in Beijing were again blamed for defeat, but this time questions were being asked about Cixi's role in governance. The short-lived Taiwanese Republic and the men who sought to prevent Japan's appropriation of the island lacked the numbers and military equipment to prevail. By the 1890s, there was little distinction between patriotism and nationalism. Jing Yuanshan explicitly related patriotic mobilization and suggested a further threat. Chinese land was being cut up, and the people's wealth was being used for indemnities. He wished that the people would "contribute voluntary donations to aid in attaining voluntary supplies and to call together voluntary troops to raise a voluntary army." They would thereby save the country and requite the people."

THE 1898 REFORM MOVEMENT

During the short period after the end of the Sino-Japanese War and the beginning of the Hundred Days, both social elites and officials—including some like Zhang Zhidong who were very highly placed—undertook a large number of reformist activities such as establishing schools, new associations, news paper reading societies, agricultural and anti-footbinding societies, chambers of commerce, cotton Mills, sericulture institutes, silk filatures, debating societies, and more. New journals like Shiwu bao (The Chinese

Progress) appeared and the large park known as Zhang's Garden became a popular meeting place for the new societies.

During 1897 Hunan became another center of reformist activity with the encouragement of Governor Chen Baozhen. Young enthusiasts like Tang Caichang and Tang Sitong pushed reform and the retired Jiangsu education commissioner, Wang Xiangjian advocated investment in commercial projects. He also encouraged students to read Shiwu bao and more boldly suggested the establishment of the Academy of Current Affairs with Liang Qichao as dean of Chinese studies. After this modest beginning the educational reform soon became more radical. By the fall of 1897 the School of Current Affairs was in the hands of the young scholars who had been invited to Changsha and who also were involved in publishing a new Hunan Journal (Xiangxue bao). By the end of the year the writings were supporting the controversial of Kang Youwei and had an anti-Manchu tone. In early 1898 the South China Study Society (Nanxue hui) was established along with the Xiang bao, which published many of the study society debates. These included ideas of parliamentary government, people's rights, and political parties, among other things. Liang suggested that Hunan should prepare for independence. This seems to have meant gaining understanding in how self-government worked, not separation from the Qing. At this point many new societies were appearing within the province that may have been indicative of intentions to create basics leading to creation of a provincial assembly.

Whatever the case, Zhang Zhidong and more conservative gentry like Wang Xianqian had had enough. Chen Baozhen was replaced as governor, the South China Study Society was closed and the Hunan Journal ceased publication and the reformers responsible for the brief experiment left Hunan.

THE DISASTER OF THE 100 DAYS

The "Hundred Days" of Reform began in mid-June after the Kang Youwei's interview with the Guangxu Emperor and ended on September 21, 1898 when Cixi with the support of Yuan Shikai and others executed a coup. Regrettably the this coup had been precipitated by Tan Sitong who had called on Yuan and asked if he would join in removing Cixi from her continued supervision Guangxu. Not surprisingly Yuan told Cixi about Tan's plan. The emperor's political power was transferred back to her. Few changes had effectively been put into place before the Cixi's coup so very little had actually changed. However, Tan's rash move resulted in his immediate execution along with five others who seemingly had not been involved at all.

Extreme conservatives maneuvered gained power within the court, and ushered in about two years of extreme political stability. The announcement on January 24, 1900 that Prince Tuan's son, Pujun, was to be heir apparent immediately aroused fears that Guangxu was about to be deposed. The resulting protests were not limited to officials. Clear evidence that public opinion could now sometimes be expressed came from a telegram with 1,231 signatures collected by the Shanghai director of the Imperial Telegraph Administration, Qing Yuanshan, who was well known by elites in Jiangxi and Zhejiang. Somewhat astonishingly, Qing's bold move ended further open discussion of that possibility. However, high-ranking Manchus were replacing Chinese officials. Gangyi spent six months travelling about south China to demand payments to the government and people suspected also to look hidden enemies. Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei had fled to Japan.

THE BOXER REBELLION AND AFTERMATH.

So had Tang Caichang by seeking to lead an unsuccessful secret society uprising. Some of his less adventurous friends were satisfied to have organized the first public discussion meeting since the end of the 100 Days.

RESUMING STUDENT AND SECRET SOCIETY UPRISINGS

After deciding to plan a revolutionary rising Tang Caichang made contact with central China Gelao hui. The in the late winter of 1900 he established the Independence Society (Zili hui). That summer he took another step by establishing a "National Assembly" (Guo-hui) which held two meetings in Zhang's Garden on July 26 and 30. Chang Zhitong urged Tang to flee, but he did not. Tang told Chang ZT that the revolt was an alliance of followers of Kang YW and was urged to flee, Chang also took measures to crush conspiracy the conspiracy and had all 20 men executed including Tang. A fair number were students. In following rebels caught and executed. Bay thinks the severity was because the rebels were part of a branch "Guo hui." Also believed there was an alliance between Kang's Bao-huang hui and Sun's revolutionaries (There was not.)

By 1901 the worst of the danger had passed. Students were being sent to school in Japan. In Shanghai the Educational Association, Patriotic School with Cai Yuanpei as principal, and Patriotic Girls' School attracted numerous students who devoted a good deal of time to military drill and calisthenics. This radical educational complex also acquired the newspaper Su-bao that

reached students in a number of cities. Then in the spring of 1903, a rumor circulated that Kwangxi Governor Wang Zhichun had asked for French troops to help suppress a persistent secret society rebellion in Guangxi in return for mining and railway concessions. At the same time there was news of Russian troops in Manchuria were seeking control mining interests in Manchuria. As a result, mass meetings attracting many students from Shanghai Schools were held at the well-known meeting place, Chang's Garden. At the same time At this point the growing radicalism of student circle caused a rift between the reformers and revolutionaries. Some students began to began to distribute revolutionary literature along the Yangtze. During the spring Su-bao also became increasingly radicalized to the extent of advocating killing Manchus and publishing a review of Zou Rong's Revolutionary Army.

As is well known, the result of all the turmoil at the schools was that officials closed the Patriotic School in June, arrested a few of those at the school including Zhang Binglin and Zou Rong. The Shanghai officials had been extremely reluctant to take action against this group, but eventually had to do so. In the end Zhang was sentenced to three years in jail and Zou to two. For unknown reasons, Zou died before being released.

Revolutionaries continued to come to or pass through Shanghai, but it did not really remain a revolutionary center. It was perhaps too close to Japan where revolutionaries and others Chinese came for good military or other educations before seeking employment in the new schools and army brigades being established back home. Moreover, Shanghai was a very protean city where such organizations as new schools and chambers of commerce were beginning to play an important part. Before long it would become a center for major political movements like the 1905 protests against the American government's decision to prevent Chinese from entering the United States and the long drawn-out fight over local control of construction of a railway between Shanghai and Hangzhou. There were also the many cultural, artistic, and intellectual attractions for those less interested in politics. The literary Southern Society was one such example. It had been established in late 1909 and continued into the republic. Some members were still politically active, some were not, and others came and went.

What did happen was that many more students now went to school in Japan, either being sent by the government or on their own. This meant that they were often in close contact with one another and thereby might encourage each other or form groups to protest specific complaints. This happened in the spring of 1903 when students enflamed over the problems of

Russia behavior in Manchuria undertook to form an Anti Russian Volunteer Corps. They bombarded Yuan Shikai in Peking with telegrams expressing their intentions of stopping Russian encroachment. Meanwhile students in Tokyo were drilling their small Student Army, but soon the Japanese Foreign Office made it clear that they would not be allowed to train militarily on Japanese soil. Finally they sent two student representatives to see Yuan who not surprisingly refused to see them. The final result was that the student's views shifted to anti-Manchuism. At a July meeting in July they remade their association into a secret radical organization. About half the members left. Those who remained maintained their secrecy and concentrated on overthrowing the Qing.

There was one more major disagreement between students and Japanese educational officials who drew up a list of regulations to better control their behavior. After months of discussion agreement was reached. The issue was settled amicably although unfortunately not before Chen Tienhua drowned himself after reading derogatory articles about Chinese students in the Japanese press.

After the Tongmenghui was established students were given more encouragement to return to China and continue revolutionary work in schools, new armies, or various associations. More than in any other province Revolutionaries who looked to Sun Yat-sen launched a long series uprisings beginning in 1895 and ending with the Canton revolt of April 17, 1911. Depending on how one counts there were twelve attempts altogether. Sun was given credit for many, but was seldom actually involved in fighting, which frequently fell to Huang Xing. Some were called off at the last minute, others ended very quickly. The fighters taking part were mostly members of secret societies (usually Gelao hui) or sometimes from the agrieved local populace. The most important efforts were the in the Ping-Liu-Li uprising on the Jiangxi-Hunan border, Huang Xing's unlikely attempt to end French incursions into China from Annam, which led him into a longer effort to gain followers in the countryside of western Guangxi and a futile effort to win support of two army officers who never committed to the Tongmeng hui. Finally, the much-lauded New Army Mutiny in April 27, 1911 might have had a significant outcome, but again there was confusion over the timing that gave the government troops a chance to gain control. 72 soldiers were captured and executed. The Guangdong revolutionaries were so weakened that they did not revolt again until the Second Revolution.

Guangdong was not, of course, was not the only province to start building up its military, but most other provinces did so under governmental

leadership. They were one part of a concerted reform movement after 1902 that arose both within the Qing government and society to establish a hierarchy of new schools, chambers of commerce, self-government schools to prepare people for local councils to be established near the end of the decade, agricultural societies and, of course, military schools at close to a complete listing (which is impossible here). My purpose in this paper is to look at the new schools and chambers of commerce that were encouraged by the Qing but were often established and controlled by prestigious, wealthy merchants and gentry.

Two books particularly useful to his topic are Xia-hong Xiao-Planes, Education et Politique en Chine: Le role de des elites du Jiangsu, 1905-1914 Editions de l'Ecole des hautes etude en sciences social, Paris, 2001 and Zhongping Chen, Associational Networks and Sociopolitical Change, Stanford University Press, 2011. Probably out in July.

Xiao-Planes argues that the Jiangsu Education leaders headed by Zhang Jian tended to accept ideas and duties –especially the rights of society to dispose of their own “goods,” thereby promoting reform of culture and the rights of the people. Popular opinion was radicalized. Only educational progress and local autonomy could save China. Rights of the people were identified with reform. At the same time Darwinistic principles stressed the need for a state that could compete against other countries. Within China provincial assemblies would offer a way to communicate between state and people. The schools became part of a new arena of local influence. In 1905 Zhang Jian created Bureaus of Education that in 1906 were renamed qunxue suo. The press gave education a lot of coverage. Merchants financed new schools founded by gentry and then started to finance their own. Lower Yangtze commercial development already had done much to bring together merchant and life styles and values. Confidence was so strong that the General Education Association was also established with Zhang Jian as president in 1906 before requesting permission from Beijing and the provincial Government.

Men in the new educational assoc. claimed semi-official functions which initiated division of power between monarchy at the top and local self-government below. Local autonomy meant right to protect local interests. The Jiangsu General Education Association had a central place in promoting reform culture and rights of the people. Directors of the Association promoted the Society to Study Constitutional Government and the Yubei lixian Gonghui.

The Chambers of Commerce studied by Zhongping Chen had a good deal in common with the Jiangsu Education Association. They began to be established a few years sooner, but they, too, had contacts and interests that went beyond commerce and they were much involved in the protest against Exclusion of Chinese from America, the Jiangsu-Zhejiang Railway Movement, and the issues of Constitutional reforms. The Chambers also established a strong three-tiered hierarchy in which there were a few roughly equal chambers at the top, followed by secondary ones in prefectures, and a third level one in counties or large towns. Chambers of Commerce also proliferated in Zhejiang, although not to the same extent as in Jiangsu.

At about the same time gentry and merchant began a series of demonstrations against the insulting American Chinese Exclusion Act of 1904 and earlier agreements with America to build a railway from Canton to Hankow and England to build one between Nanjing, Shanghai and Hangzhou. After America pulled out of the Canton it was reconstructed without too much trouble. Soon thereafter, however, huge protests began against the Exclusion Act, particularly in Shanghai and Canton. In May 1905 the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce announced a boycott of American goods, although it was put off for two months to allow time for negotiation. Not surprisingly the United States government did not back down and Boycotts began in Shanghai and Canton in late July. A large meeting took place in Shanghai after which a Chinese man named Feng Xiawei who had been living in the Philippines committed suicide in front of the American consulate. The boycott was still more pronounced in Canton and some other coastal cities in Guangdong. By the end of the year it had begun to fade, but still had much support in Canton. Moreover there was a considerable amount of support from poorer households who were willing to avoid certain products to protest. Although the boycott effectively ended by November in most places it kept being revived in Canton until the end of 1906. The largest revival occurred in July when the remains of the boycott martyr Feng were disinterred and carried to Canton where it was greeted by a large crowd of over 1,000 merchants, gentry, students, and representatives of the 72 Canton Guilds.

By the end of the year, the movement was essentially over and was soon replaced by more controversy over the Canton Railway. Meanwhile, the question of the Zhejiang Railway had come to the fore. It had been established in 1905 with Tang Shoujian as president and began collecting money through 1906. Meanwhile the Jiangsu Railway had been established in that year and by 1907. A compromise on the loan issue had been worked out in 1908, but the question of the British loan was never fully solved. Particularly the

Zhejiang company managed not to use that money. There was a major demonstration in Hangzhou in November 1907 and continuing protests for many months. Subscription bureaus were established in several prefectures. Some small shares were sold on the street and large pledges, never fully filled, were made at a special meeting. Despite the difficulties the Zhejiang Company had raised five to six million yuan by the end of 1906. The railway companies pushed ahead on construction. By early 1912 it had 10,600,000 yuan, making it the most successful of the railways at that time.

The railway construction was clearly tied up with nationalism and railway advocates also took part in protests against expansion out side of treaty ports, usually by Japan but also by missionaries. The injury of a Chinese boy in a fight at Japanese cake shop produced demonstrations in Hangzhou in 1910. However, it also became mixed up with political alienation. There was a short lull after a nine-year schedule for establishing constitutional government was broken when the main enemy of the railway Sheng Xuanhuai was appointed a vice -president of the Ministry of Communications. Tang memorialized objecting and referring to public opinion. Sheng's appointment was a step toward nationalization plans that had not yet been adopted. Tang was strongly backed by the Railway stockholders and managed to hold on to his position until the second petition for a national assembly. Then he accused Sheng of corruption and was dismissed by imperial edict the next day. Four days after Tang was dismissed, Four days later Shibao printed an editorial entitled "On the distinction between Centralizing Power and Tyranny." By then in mid-1910 there was already an almost irreconcilable gap between the throne and the elite populace.

I have essentially run out of time, but would like to refer briefly to a few other aspects of the last years of the Qing.

First, during the 1900s there was a steady stream of annual floods and droughts, or both, in many parts of China. The Huai River, for instance, routinely overflowed its banks turning the whole basin into a vast lake. The government did not have funds needed to provide the needed relief and in localities such money was likely to be used up—or stolen. Families fled their home with few possessions and little food. They were prey to bandits. Many starved to death. Cannibalism was rampant and the misery was terrible.

There were a large number and variety of revolutionary organizations, that pursued their own radical aims, even after the establishment of the Tongmenghui. So there was not necessarily strong direction from the top.

One such example was Liu Kuansan who established an elementary school in Shandong with some other patriotic young men. Before long, however Liu became tired of remaining in one place and set off on his own stopping at schools where he sold copies that he made of elementary text and at the same time spread revolutionary arguments that the people had suffered terribly under the rotten Qing government, which must be over thrown. After three years of traveling about Shandong, he moved on to Shanxi, and continued to visit private schools in the cities, towns, villages, hamlets in over 300 counties of five north China provinces. The number of old-style schools he visited was beyond reckoning. However, in all those provinces some men from the schools he visited joined the revolution and in Shandong he is said to have inspired well over one thousand.

The Revolution itself mainly proceeded province by province without central leadership. By 1911 provinces had military schools and varying numbers of New Army troops, but most still relied on older military units that had still not been disbanded. Gelao hui or other secret societies also continued to play an important part in the fighting. The battle over Wuchang was perhaps the most cohesive military campaign. Some provinces like Zhejiang declared independence with little difficulty. In other provinces like Yunnan, however, the competition between constitutionalist leaders of the provincial assembly and the revolutionaries infused the independence movement. In the north, Taiyuan, the capital of Shanxi, changed hands three times before the fighting was over and the very loyal Manchu governor of Gansu refused to give in until there was absolutely no alternative.

The treatment of the Manchu garrisons was one of the most unfortunate aspects of the revolution. In some provinces the Manchu inhabitants were not much harmed, but in others there was much bloodshed. In Jiangsu the Chinese officials had assured the Manchus that they would not be harmed, but soon after other Chinese troops entered the city and killed many of the Manchus in the city. In Sian the Manchu garrison was bombarded. When the inhabitants surrendered the men and women were separated. Attractive women were separated to become concubines or slaves. The others were evicted from the city with little food or clothing and told to return to their Manchu homeland. Since it was already late in the year, many must have died.

So by the time representatives of fourteen provinces met in Shanghai to demand the abdication of the emperor, political circumstances had had indeed changed. However, there was no general consensus over how to proceed in establishing the new republic.