

**Sun Yatsen in Hong Kong, 1883-95:
A Report of my Findings in Stage 1**

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Preamble:

This report is based principally on the materials I have collected to date. I have already handed over to the Lord Wilson Heritage Trust copies of these materials.

My Report:

In 1883, Sun Yatsen went to study in Hong Kong. Twelve years later, in 1895, he mounted from Hong Kong an abortive *coup* in Guangzhōu. This was the first of a series of attempts which ultimately terminated dynastic rule of some 2,000 years standing – quite a watershed in Chinese history. This 12-year period in Hong Kong witnessed the transformation of Sun Yatsen from an ordinary student to someone determined to bring China into the modern world. Yet very little is known about this pivotal period. My findings furnish the following sketch.

The first school in Hong Kong which Sun Yatsen attended was the Diocesan Home,¹ whose full name, I have discovered, was The Diocesan Home and Orphanage for Boys.² It was run by the Church Missionary Society, whose members were almost exclusively Anglicans from the British Isles.³ As such, it would have come under the auspices

¹ L. Sharman, *Sun Yat-sen: His Life and Its Meaning* (New York, 1934), pp. 19-20.

² I have seen references to Rev. W.T. Featherston's *A History of the Diocesan Home and Orphanage for Boys* but have so far failed to locate the book itself. This is a line of inquiry I shall pursue in the future. 見林友蘭(著):《國父在香港中央書院》。轉載於秦孝儀(編):《國父年譜》一套2冊(台北:中國國民黨黨史委員會, 1985), 上冊, 第33頁。以後提到的《國父年譜》, 皆指此版本。而中國國民黨中央黨史委員會則簡稱中央黨史會。

³ L. Sharman, *Sun Yat-sen: His Life and Its Meaning* (New York, 1934), pp. 19-20.

of the Anglican Bishop of Victoria in Hong Kong. An archivist of Church records in London thinks that 'Anglican bishops could be very independent and obtained money for their work from a wide variety of sources ... it is possible the home was entirely locally run and funded, so any records would be in Hong Kong, if surviving.'⁴ It is also said that while Sun Yatsen was studying at the home, he was privately tutored in classical Chinese by Ou Fengchi 區鳳墀.⁵ This point awaits verification because I have reason to doubt its accuracy.⁶

On 15 April Sun Yatsen enrolled at the Central School in Hong Kong. The enrolment number was 2746. He did so under the name of Sun Dixiang 孫帝象. He registered his address as No. 2 Bridges Street.⁷

well known that Dr Hager baptized Sun Yatsen towards the end of 1883; well-known because this information is printed in 《國父年譜》, a source widely quoted by writers.⁸ On the other hand, Dr Hager recalled that after baptism, Sun Yatsen lodged with him – Sun Yatsen and a few others staying on the first floor while Hager himself lived on the third floor. He did not specify the exact address his lodgings, however.⁹

⁴ Catherine Wakeling to Rosemary Seton, e-mail, 9 January 2003. Mrs Wakeling is the archivist at the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and Mrs Seton the archivist at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London. At my request, Mrs Seton kindly wrote to Mrs Wakeling inquiring records on the home. This was her reply

Now we know that the address was No. 2 Bridges Street.

More important, Dr Hager made a startling observation. Sun Yatsen was such a fervent Christian that, had there been a proper theological college and had the right sponsor come forward for the necessary funds, Sun Yatsen would undoubtedly have become the most famous preacher of the Christian faith of his time.¹⁰ But we also know that, after his days in Hong Kong, Sun Yatsen was observed by his close comrades to have seldom gone anywhere near a church or preaching hall except to preach the salvation of China.¹¹ Why? This important change merits further investigation.

After Sun Yatsen had finished his studies at the Central School in Hong Kong in 1886, Dr Hager introduced him to Dr John G. Kerr of the Canton Hospital. There he began to study medicine.¹² According to a manuscript kept in the KMT Central Archives, entitled 《總理年譜長編鈔本》, it was here that Sun Yatsen befriended a translator of the Hospital, Yin Wenjie 尹文楷, who was the son-in-law of Ou Fengchi 區鳳墀.¹³ Thus another valuable link in the jigsaw puzzle of Sun Yatsen's early life has been established: that between Sun Yatsen and Ou Fengchi. However, the same source described the following circumstances: 'Ou Fengchi had just returned from Berlin and was temporarily living with his son-in-law.'¹⁴ I know this is inaccurate. I remember from my quick and hurried survey of the London Missionary Records during my last visit to London that Ou Fengchi did not go to Berlin until 1890. How could he possibly have returned from Berlin in 1886? Should my memory prove faulty, then there is at least one piece

公理堂慶祝辛亥革命七十週年特刊》(香港: 公理堂, 1981), 第 4-7 頁。該件似乎是從馮自由的《革命逸史》第 2 集, 第 12-17 頁搬字過紙。馮書在 1943 年就由上海商務印書館初版了。

¹⁰ 馮自由:《革命逸史》第 2 集, 第 14 頁。

¹¹ 馮自由:《革命逸史》第 2 集, 第 12 頁。張永福:“孫先生起居注”, 載尚明軒、王學莊、陳松(合編):《孫中山生平事業追憶錄》(北京: 人民出版社, 1986), 第 820-3 頁。

¹² Paul Linebarger, *Sun Yat-sen and the Chinese Republic* (New York, 1925), pp. 172-173.

¹³ 中央黨史會:《總理年譜長編抄本》, 第 10 頁。載《國父年譜》, 上冊, 第 43-44 頁。

¹⁴ 同上。

of evidence in my support. The February issue of Shanghai's 《中西教會報》 published a poem farewelling Ou Fengchi who had just gone to teach in Germany.¹⁵

《總理年譜長編鈔本》 also alleged that Sun Yatsen and Ou Fengchi were old acquaintances.¹⁶ I doubt it, because that source did not specify when, where and how they had become acquainted previously. That source also stated that while at Canton Sun Yatsen studied classical Chinese with Chen Zhongyao 陳仲堯 in his spare time.¹⁷ Study classical Chinese he no doubt did; but probably with Ou Fengchi instead or as well. Thus another plausible link is established: all that mention of Sun Yatsen's studying classical Chinese with Ou Fengchi probably happened at this time at Canton, and not in Hong Kong as is commonly believed.

In 1887, the College of Medicine for Chinese was established in Hong Kong. Sun Yatsen returned to Hong Kong to pursue his medical studies in this College. Classes were held in the Alice Memorial Hospital, which was located at Hollywood Road, quite close to Bridges Street. Thereupon one author has claimed that 'When Sun Yatsen studied at the Alice Memorial Hospital, he lived one floor below Dr Hager.'¹⁸ Again I know this to be untrue, from the impression I have formed from my cursory survey of the London Missionary Society records. I cannot wait to return to London to verify this and other points in my report.

As for the five years Sun Yatsen was a student at the College of Medicine for Chinese, the standard reference is 羅香林:《國父的大學時代》. It was written principally on the basis a collection of papers belonging to the College of Medicine for Chinese, including lists of examination results. A mere percentage mark appearing therein does not tell us how much Sun Yatsen had actually learnt. My discovery of the original handwritten answers by Sun Yatsen in one of the examinations does. The level of accomplishment was a far cry from

¹⁵ 陳建明. "孫中山早期的一篇佚文 — 《教友少年會紀事》". 《近代史研究》, 3 (1987): 185-190.

¹⁶ 中央黨史會:《總理年譜長編抄本》, 第 10 頁。載《國父年譜》, 上冊, 第 43-44 頁。

¹⁷ 同上。

¹⁸ 王誌信編著《道濟會堂史》, 第 30 頁。

what one would have expected of an MB BS of today. That explains why Sun Yatsen was awarded a licentiate only, and not a proper medical degree. Thus the title of Dr, which has prefixed his surname since graduation, may only be regarded as a courtesy title. And it is certainly wrong to call him 博士, as so many have done, because as far as I know there is absolutely no record of his having been conferred a doctoral degree. The title of 博士 was probably invented by someone who twisted Sun Yatsen's courtesy title of a medical doctor to mean a Ph.D.

After graduation, Sun Yatsen practiced medicine in Macao and then Canton, culminating in the Canton *coup* of 1895. Much of our knowledge about his activities in this period has come from 鄒魯:《乙未廣州之役》,¹⁹ 馮自由:《革命逸史》, and 陳少白:《興中會革命史要》。 The emphasis of these sources was on Sun Yatsen's liaison with the secret societies. Professor David Lung's 龍炳頤 drawing my attention to the Daoji Church 道濟會堂 has alerted me to the history of that church, in which the author 王誌信 claims that its pastor and all its elders were unofficial members of Sun Yatsen's Xing Zhong Hui 興中會.²⁰ If true, this would open up an entirely new field of enquiry and might radically revise our accepted wisdom. To date, I have found two pieces of corroborative evidence. First, 陳少白 named 區鳳墀 in his list of Xing Zhong Hui comrades, a list which made no distinction between official members,²¹ supporters and sympathizers, however.²² Second, the editor of《孫中山全集》第1卷 states categorically that 區鳳墀 was indeed an official member of Xing Zong Hui.²³

Wang Zhixin 王誌信 also claims that Sun Yatsen and other young Christians of the Daoji Church met regularly in the church building to discuss the current affairs of China.²⁴ This claim is based, in turn, on the preface written by the late Pastor Zhang Zhuling 張祝齡 of that church for a pamphlet commemorating the 30th anniversary of a certain

¹⁹ 載《中國近代史叢刊——辛亥革命》，一套8冊（上海：人民出版社，1981），第1冊，第225-234頁。以後簡稱《辛亥革命》。

²⁰ 王誌信編著《道濟會堂史》，第36頁。

²¹ Those who had taken the customary oath upon joining the Xing Zhong Hui.

²² 載《辛亥革命》，第1冊，第144-145頁。

²³ 第24頁，註*

²⁴ 王誌信編著《道濟會堂史》，第30頁。

Hong Kong youth organization.²⁵ These claims may be valuable evidence passed down by word of mouth. If proven, then it is obvious that the young Christians in Sun Yatsen's company had played some part in his transformation from an ordinary student to someone determined to save China from her woes. To date, I have found one

piece of corroborative evidence. It is a newspaper article written by Sun Yatsen announcing the establishment in Hong Kong of a young Christian organization 教友少年會 on 27 March 1891 and encouraging like-minded youths to form similar organization in other parts of China. It was published in 1891 in Shanghai by the 《中西教會報》.²⁶

I have yet to verify all these claims. Since members of the Daiji Church were originally converts of the London Missionary Society, I was hoping that the Society's records might throw more light on this point. My cardinal object is this. If Hong Kong Christians such as Sun Yatsen were the first to awaken to the need to bring China into the modern world, should not the well-known Chinese Communist attitude of regarding such Christians with suspicion – witness Lucian Pye's proverbial saying that Chinese nationalism has been "Shanghaied" by Mao Zedong and his comrades from the hinterland – be changed?

investiation.

2. The discovery that, apart from secret societies members, Hong Kong and Canton Christians could have been very supportive of Sun Yatsen's abortive Canton *coup* in 1895. The exact nature of that support has yet to be explored, however.

Conclusion:

These discoveries far exceeded what I had expected to find when I set out to investigate this topic – I thought I would be lucky if I were to find additional information to put more flesh on the skeleton provided by 陳少白, 馮自由, 鄒魯 and others. A great deal of additional information has indeed been found. That is why I consider 100% of my original project completed. If one were to take into consideration the path-breaking discoveries mentioned in the previous section, one might even say 200% completed. These discoveries logically lead to a new direction of my investigation, which I now call Stage 2 of my project in which the London Missionary Society records will be a logical starting point.

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