



Revisiting the Hawaiian Influence on the Political Thought of Sun Yat-sen

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ABSTRACT

In the 19th century, the Hawaiian Kingdom was not merely the leading state of Oceania, but had important influences on East Asia as well. The article argues that Hawai'i has a special place in the modern history of China because Sun Yat-sen, the future revolutionary and founding father of the Chinese Republic, was educated in the Hawaiian Kingdom, attending two denominational secondary schools in Honolulu in the late 1870s and early 1880s during Kalākaua's reign. Sun began developing his vision for a modernised China during this time, and as he himself stated, the Hawaiian Kingdom became the first conceptual philosophical model for this vision. A critical examination and analysis of Sun Yat-sen's early biography and the development of his political thought further demonstrates that Sun's vision of a technologically modern, yet politically independent and actively anti-imperialist China was close to the reality of the Hawaiian Kingdom he experienced.

Key words: China, Sun Yat-sen, political thought, Pan-Asianism, Kalākaua, modernisation, hybridity

This is my Hawaii. Here I was brought up and educated; and it was here that I came to know what modern civilized governments are and what they mean. (Sun Yat-sen during a visit to Honolulu in 1911)

While awareness of the Hawaiian Kingdom as the most developed nation-state in 19th-century Oceania is slowly re-emerging in historiography after having been obscured by a century of American occupation of the archipelago,¹ its impact on political developments in East Asia, especially in China, has been largely neglected by historians.

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¹ David Keanu Sai, *Ua Mau ke Ea, Sovereignty Endures: an overview of the political and legal history of the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu 2011); Kamanamaikalani Beamer, *No Mākou ka Mana: liberating the nation* (Honolulu 2014).

Biographers of Dr Sun Yat-sen,² the person considered by a wide political spectrum as the father of modern China, often mention that he received an important part of his education in the Hawaiian Islands between 1879 and 1883, and that these formative years in Hawai'i influenced Sun's later political ideas.³ However, many if not most scholars, at least those publishing in or translated into English, have ascribed this influence to the American presence or rule in Hawai'i. This is true not only for Sun's American biographers but also for L.T. Chen, the editor of Sun's main work of philosophical doctrine. In his introduction to Sun's *Three Principles of the People*, Chan writes that while in Honolulu, Sun 'breathed the spirit of liberty and absorbed freely the influences of American life'.⁴ What was apparently lost on Chen in making such a statement is the fact that when Sun was educated there, Hawai'i was not American, but its own country, the Hawaiian Kingdom. In contrast, Sun's associate and scholar Chen Shaobai in his 1935 *Outline of the Revolutionary History of the Xingzhonghui* accurately states that 'while Mr. Sun was in Honolulu, Hawai'i was a small independent country, not occupied by the USA yet. A kingdom was there. Honolulu was the main harbour and also the capital'.⁵ What Sun learnt there thus should be seen primarily as Hawaiian influences above anything else.

Focusing on a variety of sources in Hawaiian language as well as in English and Chinese that have hitherto been rarely taken note of by biographers of Sun Yat-sen, this article revisits the influence on the Chinese revolutionary's political ideas of his being educated in the Hawaiian Kingdom. By arguing that, in a sense, the ultimate model for the Republic of China is the Hawaiian Kingdom, and by putting Sun Yat-sen's pan-Asianism of the 1920s in relation to Hawai'i's earlier

² The name Sun Yat-sen usually used in Western sources reflects the Cantonese pronunciation of 孫逸仙 (Pinyin: Sun Yixian), one of his several names. In Chinese sources, he is more commonly known as 孫中山 (Sun Zhongshan) or simply 中山 (Zhongshan). Because he is most widely known by the former name and in order to avoid confusion, I will uniformly use the name Sun Yat-sen throughout the article. I use Pinyin Romanisation for all other Chinese words including place and personal names, except for publications in English, for which the author's name and the publication's title will be left unchanged. The same goes for the names of Chinese persons only known to me from non-Chinese sources. For some known historical persons and institutions, the name in the older Wade-Giles Romanisation is provided in brackets, as readers might be more familiar with those spellings. Chinese surnames are followed by given names, inverse of Western practice.

³ See, e.g. Paul Myron Linebarger, *Sun Yat Sen and the Chinese Republic* (New York and London 1925); Henry Bond Restarick, *Sun Yat Sen: liberator of China* (New Haven 1931); Harold Z. Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution* (Berkeley 1968); Jen Cho-Hsuan, 'The beginnings of "San Min Chu I"', *China Forum*, 1:2 (1974), 49–89.

⁴ L.T. Chen in Sun Yat-sen, *San Min Chu I: the three principles of the people*, Frank W. Price (tr.), L.T. Chen (ed.) (Shanghai 1927), xii.

⁵ Chen Shaobai, *興中會革命史要 (Xingzhonghui Geming Shiyao*, [Outline of the Revolutionary History of the Xingzhonghui] (Taipei 1956 [Nanjing 1935]), 5. I acknowledge Dr David Tengyue Ma, professor of anthropology, Yunnan University, for translation of this passage from Chinese.

pan-Asianist initiative of the 1880s, I will point out the important position of the Hawaiian Kingdom in connecting Asia and Oceania.

THE IMPORTANCE OF 19TH-CENTURY HAWAII FOR CHINA AND JAPAN

Relations between China and Hawai'i long predate Sun's sojourn in the Hawaiian Islands. If Oceanian history in the *longue durée* is considered, China lies in a sense at its origins, as it is now generally accepted that the Austronesian seafarers that settled most of Oceania ultimately descend from the pre-Sinitic peoples of what is now south-eastern China.⁶ While some of their descendants migrated to Taiwan, from there to Southeast Asia and eventually to Hawai'i, others remained on the Asian mainland, became sinicised and contributed to the development of classical Chinese culture.⁷ While the insular Pacific subsequently remained largely isolated from Asia for many centuries, contacts resumed after European explorers started penetrating Oceania in the early modern age.

In consequence, from the late 1700s, Hawaiians visited China and Chinese came to Hawai'i. The first documented such exchange happened in the late 1780s when British captain John Meares took Ka'iana, a high-ranking Hawaiian nobleman who would later become an important political figure, to Macao, only to find four other Hawaiians who had already made it there shortly before.⁸ On their return to Hawai'i in 1788, Meares' ships *Iphigenia* and *Felice* included about 50 Chinese among their crews.⁹ In the 1850s, Chinese began migrating to the island kingdom in massive numbers, either as labourers for the burgeoning sugar plantations, as rural rice farmers, or as traders and merchants in what soon would become Honolulu's Chinatown.¹⁰ By 1884, the number of Chinese residents in the Hawaiian Islands had risen to 18,254, that is, 22.7% of the overall population.¹¹ As the first Pacific Islands country to host a significant Chinese population, Hawai'i thus plays an important role in the history of the Overseas Chinese. But the Chinese community in the

⁶ Jiao Tianlong (ed.), *Lost Maritime Cultures: China and the Pacific* (Honolulu 2007).

⁷ Hugh R. Clark, *The Sinitic Encounter in Southeast China through the First Millennium CE* (Honolulu 2016).

⁸ David A. Chang, *The World and All the Things upon It: Native Hawaiian geographies of exploration* (Minneapolis and London 2016).

⁹ Eleanor C. Nordyke and Richard K. C. Lee, 'The Chinese in Hawai'i: a historical and demographic perspective', *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, 23 (1989), 197.

¹⁰ Clarence E. Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers: Chinese migrants in Hawaii* (Honolulu 1980); Hsiao-ping Huang, 'Chinese merchant background and experience in Hawaii under the monarchy, PhD dissertation, University of Hawaii (Honolulu 1989). Less known is the fact that many mixed Hawaiian-Chinese couples and their children went back to Southern China, where the resulting part-Hawaiian heritage remains largely undocumented, see David A. Chang, 'Borderlands in a world at sea: Concow Indians, Native Hawaiians, and South Chinese in Indigenous, global and national spaces', *The Journal of American History*, 98: 2 (2011), 399.

¹¹ Nordyke and Lee, 'The Chinese in Hawai'i', 202.

Hawaiian Kingdom was not merely numerically large, its relations to the hosting nation were of a very particular nature, given that the Kingdom of Hawai'i was the only country at the time that did not discriminate against Chinese immigrants, who were easily granted naturalisation and were able to prosper in both business and local politics.¹² This was markedly different from the socially and politically marginalised Chinese community on the west coast of the United States. When reflecting on his youth in Hawai'i, Sun Yat-sen later succinctly described the situation:

Chinese people who live in San Francisco have no political thinking at all. Because Washington D.C. is located at the east and San Francisco is located at the west, so Chinese people who live in San Francisco have no contact with politics. But Honolulu is different. Honolulu is the main harbour and also the capital; people see political events and issues every day which make almost every Chinese have some political thinking.¹³

The Hawaiian Kingdom also entertained direct political relations with the Qing Empire, which from the 1870s maintained a consulate in Honolulu¹⁴ and during his circumnavigation in 1881 as the first head of state to do so, Hawaiian King Kalākaua met in Tianjin with the premier of the Chinese Empire, Viceroy Li Hongzhang (Li Hung-chang), with whom Hawai'i had earlier begun to negotiate about economic cooperation between the two nations.¹⁵

The reason Hawai'i was so attractive as a treaty partner for Asian countries was because the island kingdom at the time was the most developed modern nation-state outside of the Western world. The kingdom had evolved out of a tradition of native statecraft going back centuries before Western contact,¹⁶ and after conversion to Calvinist Christianity of its ruling class had developed into a modern nation-state with a legal and constitutional system crafted in collaboration between native elites and American Congregationalist missionaries by the 1840s.¹⁷ In the second half of

¹² See, e.g. Bob Dye, *Merchant Prince of the Sandalwood Mountains: Afong and the Chinese in Hawai'i* (Honolulu 1997), a biography of a Hawai'i-based Chinese businessman and political leader, or Chung Kun-Ai, *My Seventy Nine Years in Hawaii* (Hong Kong 1960), an autobiography of a Hawai'i-based Chinese entrepreneur.

¹³ Quoted in Chen, *Xingzhonghui Geming Shiyao*, 5; translated by David Teng-Yue Ma (see fn 5).

¹⁴ Dye, *Merchant Prince of the Sandalwood Mountains*, 145.

¹⁵ *King Kalakaua's Tour Round the World: a sketch of incidents of travel, with a map of the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu 1881), 54–58; Joseph M. Poepoe, *Kā Moolelo o Ka Moi Kalakaua I: Ka Hanau ana, ke Kaapuni Honua, ka Moolelo Piha o Kona mau La Hope ma Kaleponi, Amerika Hui'puia, na Hoike a Adimarala Baraunu me na Kauka, etc., etc., etc.*, (Honolulu 1891), 22–24; William N. Armstrong, *Around the World with a King: the story of the circumnavigation of His Majesty King David Kalakaua* (New York 2003), 88–99.

¹⁶ Robert John Hommon, *The Ancient Hawaiian State: origins of a political society* (Oxford and New York 2013).

¹⁷ Juri Mykkänen, *Inventing Politics: a new political anthropology of the Hawaiian Kingdom* (Honolulu 2003). For comparative analyses of the influence of Christian missionaries in the building of native monarchies in other Pacific islands, see Neil Gunson, *Messengers of Grace: evangelical missionaries in the South*

the 19th century, the Hawaiian political system evolved further, away from earlier Christian theocratic tendencies towards a secular and pluralistic polity, which included the conversion of the royal court to Anglicanism, the hiring of non-missionaries as foreign advisors, and the renaissance of Native traditions that had been abandoned in the initial fervour of conversion but were now being refashioned into a 'national culture'.¹⁸ In summary, in a long and ongoing process of 'selective appropriation' of Western technologies, ideas and institutions, the Hawaiian Kingdom developed into a state characterised by what can best be described as cultural and political 'hybridity'.¹⁹

While there were other such hybrid states in the 19th century, what made the Kingdom unique were its international relations. Formally recognised as an independent state in 1843, Hawai'i enjoyed fully equal treaty relations with all European powers since 1858,²⁰ whereas Japan had to struggle until the 1890s to get its unequal treaties revised, and for China, such a situation was only to be achieved in 1943.²¹ Given this exceptional position as the first non-Western nation to be recognised as a co-equal by the Western powers, the Hawaiian Kingdom was seen as a model for political modernisation throughout Oceania, as I have argued elsewhere.²² More than a century before Epeli Hau'ofa's seminal essay 'Our Sea of Islands',²³ Hawaiian leaders and diplomats developed a visionary policy to unite the islands of Oceania into a confederation of independent states in order to halt the expansion of Western colonialism in the region.²⁴

For Asian nations suffering under unequal treaties which made them second-class states in the international system, Hawai'i was thus both a model for their own modernisation and a potential keystone in their foreign policy. In Japan's case, for instance, the Hawaiian Kingdom was in the unique position of being one of

Seas, 1797–1860 (Melbourne 1978), 280–300. For a concise history of Christian missions in Hawai'i during the 19th century, see John Garret, *To Live Among the Stars: Christian origins in Oceania* (Geneva and Suva 1985), 32–59, 262–66.

¹⁸ Robert Louis Semes, 'Hawai'i's Holy War: English Bishop Staley, American Congregationalists, and the Hawaiian Monarchs, 1860–1870', *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, 34 (2000), 113–138; Stacy Kamehiro, *The Arts of Kingship: Hawaiian art and national culture of the Kalākaua Era* (Honolulu 2009).

¹⁹ Beamer, *No Mākou ka Mana*.

²⁰ Ralph Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1, 1778–1854: *Foundation and Transformation* (Honolulu 1938), 368–82; Ralph Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 2, 1854–1874: *Twenty Critical Years* (Honolulu 1953), 47–54; Beamer, *No Mākou ka Mana*, 131–41.

²¹ Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford 1984), 220.

²² Lorenz Gonschor, 'A power in the world: the Hawaiian Kingdom as a model of hybrid statecraft in Oceania and a progenitor of pan-Oceanianism', PhD dissertation, University of Hawai'i (Honolulu 2016); Lorenz Gonschor, 'Ka Hoku O Osiania: promoting the Hawaiian Kingdom as a model of political transformation in nineteenth century Oceania', in Sebastian Jobs and Gesa Mackenthun (eds), *Agents of Transculturation: border-crossers, mediators, go-betweeners* (Münster 2013), 157–86.

²³ Epeli Hau'ofa, 'Our Sea of Islands', in Epeli Hau'ofa, Vijay Naidu, Eric Waddell (eds), *A New Oceania: rediscovering our sea of islands* (Suva 1993), 2–16.

²⁴ Beamer, *No Mākou ka Mana*, 186–90; Gonschor, 'Ka Hoku o Osiania'.

Japan's unequal treaty partners – on the advantaged end of the unequal treaty, like the Western powers – yet was not a Western nation, but another Indigenous monarchy like Japan. During Kalākaua's visit to Tokyo a few weeks prior to his arrival in Tianjin, the Meiji emperor asked the Hawaiian king to revise their treaty and thereby create a precedent for the Western powers to follow, a scheme that may have succeeded if it had not been prematurely leaked to American and British diplomats by a traitor within Kalākaua's suite.²⁵ China's diplomatic relations with Hawai'i never progressed far enough to bring up the question of treaty equality, but similar issues would certainly have arisen if the Hawaiian Kingdom had continued to operate into the 20th century.

It also needs to be stressed that the relations between East Asia and Hawai'i were far from one-sided. Just like Asian nations desired to learn from Hawai'i's success in mastering the game of diplomatic parity with the West, the island Kingdom also desired to learn from Chinese and Japanese experiences as fellow non-Western nations dealing with Western-driven globalisation. When King Kalākaua initiated a studies abroad programme for a group of selected Hawaiian youths, three of them were sent to Asia: James Haku'ole and Isaac Harbottle went to study in Tokyo from 1882–88, and James Kapa'a in Canton from 1882–85.²⁶

SUN YAT-SEN'S FORMATIVE YEARS IN THE HAWAIIAN KINGDOM

While Sun Yat-sen was not sent to study in Hawai'i by the Chinese government but in private by his family, the impact on his homeland of his studies in Hawai'i was arguably much more important than any impact the Chinese and Japanese experiences of Haku'ole, Harbottle and Kapa'a had on Hawai'i. Born in the small village of Cuiheng in Xiangshan county, Guangdong (Kwangtung) province, in the Pearl River delta inland of Macao, in 1866, Sun came to the Hawaiian Islands under the care of his elder brother, Sun Mei, who had migrated to the Kingdom earlier to become a successful cattle rancher on the island of Maui.²⁷ In the late 1870s and early 1880s, during the reign of King Kalākaua (1836–91, reg. 1874–91) the future Chinese revolutionary attended two church-based secondary schools in Honolulu. From 1879 to 1882, Sun (registered under the name of Tai Cheu) was a student at the Anglican 'Iolani School that had been founded at the request of the Hawaiian monarchy in

²⁵ Armstrong, *Around the World with a King*, 47–51; Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and his world, 1852–1912* (New York 2002), 347. Later, the Hawaiian Kingdom became indeed the first state to revise its unequal treaty with Japan and create a precedent for the Western powers to follow. See 'Exchange of Notes between Hawai'i and Japan respecting Consular Jurisdiction. 18 January 1893/ 10 April 1894', *The Consolidated Treaty Series, 1648–1919*, 231 vols (Dobbs Ferry 1969–81), XLXXX, 125.

²⁶ Agnes Quigg, 'Kalākaua's Hawaiian Studies Abroad Program', *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, 22 (1988) 195–98.

²⁷ Yansheng Ma Lum, and Raymond Mun Kong Lum, *Sun Yat-sen in Hawai'i: activities and supporters* (Honolulu 1999), 76–77.

order to train a native Hawaiian political elite to be employed in the government.²⁸ Apparently he was talented at learning foreign languages, since at his graduation in 1882 he received the second prize in English grammar, a remarkable performance given the fact that among his classmates were not only Hawaiians for whom English was equally foreign, but several children of British and American immigrants whose mother tongue was English. The prize was personally handed to him by King Kalākaua, while his sister Princess Lili'uokalani and Queen Dowager Emma were present.²⁹ Sun thus had the rare occasion to personally encounter the most powerful people in his host country, something that must have made a lasting impression on him.

After graduating from 'Iolani School, Sun continued his education at the Calvinist Oahu College (now called Punahou School), the highest-quality educational institution available in the Kingdom, which he attended for one semester in 1883, likely its preparatory department, but possibly also the academic one.³⁰ Although run and staffed by American-affiliated Calvinists and thus more antagonistic to the Hawaiian monarchy,³¹ Oahu College continued to provide Sun Yat-sen with access to Hawaiian royalty, as one of his classmates was Jonah Kalaniana'ole Pi'ikoi, later styled Prince Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole and fifth in line for the succession of King Kalākaua.³²

Because his brother opposed Sun's interest in Christianity, he sent Sun back to China in 1883, prematurely aborting Sun's Hawaiian education. After having converted to Christianity in Hong Kong, Sun came back to Hawai'i again in 1884–85 to settle family property issues with his brother who was furious at his conversion and virtually disinherited him (even though they later reconciled). Sun then left again to study medicine in Hong Kong.³³ When Sun wrote a letter to Li Hongzhang urging radical reforms in the Chinese government in 1894, it remained unanswered, and an audience with the viceroy was refused, giving Sun a marked contrast to the approachability of Kalākaua as a constitutional monarch, as Sun had experienced in Hawai'i. Sun returned to Honolulu, where towards the end of 1894, under the impression of the series of devastating defeats China was suffering in the first Sino-Japanese War, he and a group of Hawaiian Chinese founded the Xingzhonghui (Hsing Chung Hui), the first Chinese revolutionary society and ultimate predecessor to the Guomindang (Kuomintang).³⁴

²⁸ Irma Tam Soong, 'Sun Yat-sen's Christian schooling in Hawai'i', *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, 31 (1997), 159.

²⁹ 'Our Schools', *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 5 Aug. 1882, 5.

³⁰ Lum and Lum, *Sun Yat-sen in Hawai'i*, 3; Soong, 'Sun Yat-sen's Christian schooling in Hawai'i', 170–71.

³¹ Semes, 'Hawai'i's Holy War'.

³² *Oahu College, List of Trustees, Presidents, Instructors, Matrons, Librarians, Superintendents of Grounds, and Students, 1841–1906* (Honolulu 1907), 72.

³³ Lum and Lum, *Sun Yat-sen in Hawai'i*, 5–6.

³⁴ Lo Hsiang-Lin, 'The story of the founding of the Hsing Chung Hui', *China Forum*, 1:2 (1974), 131–46. The Guomindang is the Chinese nationalist party that used to rule mainland China in the mid-20th century and is today one of the two major political parties in Taiwan.

The most detailed analysis of Sun's Hawaiian schooling so far focuses on the religious aspects of the two denominational schools.³⁵ Indeed, Sun's interest in the Christian religion and his later decision to become a Christian is certainly traceable to his Hawaiian education. Despite efforts by the Hawaiian government to curb the political and social influence of missionaries, the three mentioned denomination-based institutions were the best secondary schools in the country, and religious instruction remained an important element in each of them. Interestingly, when being baptised in Hong Kong in 1883, Sun Yat-sen chose American Congregationalism over Anglicanism as his personal faith.³⁶

However, while religion is certainly an important element in Dr Sun's biography, his later writings are not those of a Christian zealot but rather of a secular statesman. More important for my analysis, therefore, is what he learnt in Hawai'i in terms of political ideas, and what kind of society and political system he saw in existence. Since most of his biographers have argued that Sun began developing his vision for a modernised China in the 1880s, before visiting any Western country, it is logical to assume that the Hawaiian Kingdom became the first conceptual philosophical model for this vision. Lo Chia-lun, one of many Chinese biographers of Dr Sun, states that when the future revolutionary returned to China in 1883, he 'felt that the political situation in Honolulu was much better than that in China'.³⁷ In his above quoted history of the Xingzhonghui, Chen Shaobai makes a similar statement quoting Sun stating after his return from Hawai'i to China that '[t]he government was totally corrupted. Bribes happened everywhere. The Government was worse than the tigers and wolves. A huge country like China is weaker than a small country'.³⁸

A high quality of governance in the Hawaiian Kingdom can easily be attested by other sources as well. As early as in the 1850s, Sydney-based journalist Charles St Julian, who had been appointed Hawaiian diplomatic representative for Central Polynesia and Australia, stated that in terms of efficient social and political organisation, 'the Government of the Hawaiian Islands, youthful as it is, will bear a comparison with those of the best-ruled States of Europe, and will be found greatly superior to most of them'.³⁹ And recently an analysis of 19th-century Hawaiian governance led New Zealand historian Colin Newbury to conclude that '[t]he records of the Hawaiian state, and particularly those of the Ministry of the Interior from 1846 to 1893, do

³⁵ Soong, 'Sun Yat-sen's Christian schooling in Hawai'i', 151–78. Soong furthermore raises the possibility, based on secondary sources, that Sun also attended the Catholic St Louis school for a semester in 1882, in between the two other schools, see Soong, 'Sun Yat-sen's Christian schooling in Hawai'i', 163–66. However, records of St Louis for the time are not available, so this remains a matter of speculation.

³⁶ Soong, 'Sun Yat-sen's Christian schooling in Hawai'i', 172.

³⁷ Lo quoted in Jen, 'The Beginnings of "San Min Chu I"', 56.

³⁸ Chen, *Xingzhonghui Geming Shiyao*, 5; translated by David Teng-Yue Ma (see fn 5).

³⁹ Charles St Julian, *Official Report on Central Polynesia: with a gazetteer of Central Polynesia by Edward Reeve* (Sydney 1857), 2.

not show great corruption and inefficiency'.⁴⁰ These assessments connect well with Sun Yat-sen's statement during a later visit to Hawai'i in 1911, in an interview with territorial archivist Albert Pierce Taylor, where Dr Sun stated that '[t]his is my Hawaii. Here I was brought up and educated; and it was here that I came to know what modern civilized governments are and what they mean'.⁴¹ Based on those quotes, I think it is safe to say that as a modernised, yet not foreign-colonised state, the Hawaiian Kingdom became an inspirational model for a reformed China.

SUN'S *THREE PRINCIPLES* AS A REFLECTION OF HAWAIIAN REALITY

Dr Sun's most comprehensive work of political theory and philosophy, *San Min Zhuyi* (*San Min Chu I: The Three Principles of the People*), is based on a series of lectures delivered by Sun in 1924 and was first published in English translation in 1927, two years after his passing. It consists of six lectures he delivered on the first two principles each and four lectures on the third.⁴² While developed to full fruition throughout his life, particularly during his extended stay in London in 1896–97,⁴³ Jen Cho-Hsuan has well demonstrated that the origins of the *Three Principles* go back to Sun's early days, long before he became a political leader.⁴⁴ While Jen mentions the impact of Sun's Hawaiian experience, the latter is only mentioned fleetingly on a few occasions, the focus being on influences from America and Europe. Indeed, in the published edition of the *Three Principles*, Sun does not mention the Hawaiian Islands.⁴⁵ However, since we have established how important Hawai'i was in the formation of Sun Yat-sen's political consciousness, it is certainly worthwhile to compare Sun's principles with the reality he experienced in the Hawaiian Kingdom.

The first principle is that of *Minzu* (Nationalism). In order to reform and strengthen China, Sun argues that it is important to resist foreign intrusion, both in the guise of rule by a foreign dynasty – the Qing were ethnic Manchu, not Han Chinese – and in the guise of Western imperialists who had imposed unequal treaties on the empire in order to plunder its resources. In order to fight this foreign intrusion, Chinese national identity needs to be emphasised. While the large majority are ethnically Han Chinese, and Sun originally promoted a type of anti-Manchu nationalism

⁴⁰ Colin Newbury, 'Patronage and bureaucracy in the Hawaiian Kingdom, 1840–1893', *Pacific Studies* 24, 1/2 (Mar./June 2001), 31

⁴¹ Albert Pierce Taylor, 'Sun Yat Sen in Honolulu', *Paradise of the Pacific*, 41:8 (Aug. 1928), 8. While the article was published in 1928, the interview is described therein as having taken place in 1911.

⁴² Sun Yat-sen, *San Min Chu I: the three principles of the people*.

⁴³ On the importance of this episode of his life, during which Sun Yat-sen had intensive exchanges with British intellectuals and was for a time held as a prisoner in the Chinese legation, see John Yuewo Wong, *The Origins of an Heroic Image: Sun Yatsen in London, 1896–1897* (Hong Kong 1986).

⁴⁴ Jen, 'The beginnings of "San Min Chu I"'.
⁴⁵ By the 1920s the islands had been under American occupation for three decades and were thus no longer useful as an example of a successful independent country for a practically-minded political theorist like Sun. This might explain the absence of Hawai'i from the *Three Principles*.

based on Han cultural identity, in the *Three Principles of the People* he acknowledges China to be a multi-ethnic nation consisting, besides Han, of Manchu, Mongolians, Tibetans and Muslim Turkic peoples. What he advocates is thus not Han ethno-nationalism, but rather Chinese civic nationalism, as well as cooperative internationalism among nations colonised or otherwise disadvantaged by Western imperialism.⁴⁶

If we look at Hawai'i during the time of Sun's schooling, we find indeed a multi-ethnic society based on an ideology of civic nationalism with a strong internationalistic orientation. The Hawaiian Kingdom had a majority population of aboriginal Hawaiians, but a minority of its citizenry was of other ethnic origins, such as Chinese, Portuguese, American, British, German and Japanese.⁴⁷ Unlike in Qing China, where the Manchu minority population ruled despotically over all the others, no minority ethnicity ruled over Hawai'i. The monarch and the majority of legislators were aboriginal Hawaiians, but citizens of other ethnic origins had their fair share in the political system as well.⁴⁸ Furthermore, as the first and then only non-Western state to have equal treaty relations with the Western powers, and as a promoter of internationalism and anti-imperialism, Hawai'i's international status and foreign policy of the 1880s was exactly what Sun Yat-sen envisioned for China, an aspect that I will further discuss below.

The second principle is that of *Minquan* (Democracy). Sun advocates for a system of government in which the holders of government offices are elected by the people, and are accountable to them. Besides elections of officials, the people should also have the powers of recall, initiative and referendum. While he cites various Western political philosophers, he warns against copying Western political models *en bloc*. Of particular interest is Sun's constitutional model discussed in lecture six, upon which the actual constitution of the Republic of China is based. Of the five branches of its government, three are the classical powers developed by Montesquieu – executive, legislative and judiciary – but two others, that of censorship or control and that of civil service examinations, are based on traditional Chinese principles of statecraft developed by Confucius.⁴⁹

While the Hawaiian Kingdom, one of the world's earliest constitutional monarchies (since 1840), had a fundamentally different constitutional system, what it has in common with Sun's five-power constitution is that it similarly hybridises Western and traditional institutions, for instance, in the combination of the traditional Hawaiian 'aha ali'i (house of nobles) with an elected house of representatives to form the legislative branch,⁵⁰ and the continuation of old Hawaiian institutions in the executive branch such as the offices of *kuhina kalai'āina* (minister of the interior), *kia'āina*

⁴⁶ Sun, *San Min Chu I*, 1–148.

⁴⁷ Hawaiian Kingdom, Bureau of Public Instruction/Buro Hoonaauao o ka Lehulehu, *Report of the General Superintendent of the Census of 1890/Hoike a ka Luna Nui o ka Helu Kanaka*, 1890 (Honolulu 1891), 18–19.

⁴⁸ For a recent academic analysis of the political conditions in the Hawaiian Kingdom, see Sai, *Ua Mau ke Ea* and Beamer, *No Mākou ka Mana*.

⁴⁹ Sun, *San Min Chu I*, 353–58.

⁵⁰ Beamer, *No Mākou ka Mana*, 116–130.

(governors of conquered islands) and *ilamuku* (executioner, later police marshal). Besides this, the Hawaiian Kingdom as Sun experienced it was one of the most democratic countries at the time. Whereas in most Western countries, voting rights were restricted to property owners, since 1874 the Hawaiian House of Representatives was elected by universal suffrage.⁵¹

Sun Yat-sen's third principle is that of *Minsheng* (People's Livelihood or Social Welfare). While admiring and advocating the progress and wealth brought by industrialisation, Sun saw the shortcomings of capitalism unless there were corrective measures by the government in order to ensure a more equal distribution of resources. While criticising orthodox Marxism as unsuited for China, Sun advised for concerted efforts taken by the government to take control of key industries and coordinate economic growth in a way it benefits the common people. Advantages granted to foreign businesses through the unequal treaties and the fixed tariffs guaranteed therein need to be abolished.⁵² In other words, Sun supported a form of cooperative and state capitalism, a social market economy and economic nationalism.

As a fully recognised independent state, the Hawaiian Kingdom as Sun witnessed it enjoyed full authority over its tariff policy. While Hawai'i's economy was far from socially equal, comprising, for instance, sugar plantations owned by wealthy entrepreneurs and worked by labourers under contract who received relatively little pay, the Kingdom practised a social policy that was ahead of its time. Its welfare system was certainly far more developed than those of Great Britain and the United States. Since the 1860s, Hawai'i had a public health system, with a hospital established by King Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma to provide free services to people who could not otherwise afford it.⁵³ A health insurance scheme was even compulsory for foreign visitors, as it was well observed by late 19th-century German traveller Reinhold von Anrep-Elmpt.⁵⁴

In summary, with its extraordinary political status and very advanced political and social development, the Hawaiian Kingdom clearly was, in the words of Hawaiian geographer Kamanamaikalani Beamer, 'a vessel of potential'.⁵⁵ Experiencing such a modern nation-state based on civic nationalism, practising a hybrid form of democracy and serving its people with a progressive healthcare system must have made a lasting impression on Sun. It can thus be concluded that his Hawaiian experience had a larger impact on the formulation of the *Three Principles of the People* than commonly assumed. Hawaiian historian Alfred Castle comes to a similar conclusion:

Sun Yat-sen's Hawaiian education would play major role in shaping and defining his early faith in democratic institutions, social justice,

⁵¹ Hawaiian Kingdom, *Laws of His Majesty Kalakaua, King of the Hawaiian Islands, passed by the Legislative Assembly, at its session 1874/Na Kanawai o ka Moi Kalakaua, Ke Alii o ko Hawaii Pae Aina, I kauia e ka Hale Ahaolelo, iloko o ka Ahaolelo o ka Makahiki 1874* (Honolulu 1874).

⁵² Sun, *San Min Chu I*, 363–514.

⁵³ Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 2, 69–72.

⁵⁴ Graf Reinhold Anrep-Elmpt, *Die Sandwich-Inseln oder das Inselreich von Hawaii* [The Sandwich Islands or the island realm of Hawaii] (Leipzig 1885), 2–3.

⁵⁵ Beamer, *No Mākou ka Mana*, 16.

social action to change institutions, and his anti-imperialism. These values would be further refined by his later experience in the U.S., Europe, Japan and China. But the period 1879–1886, a period shaped by his Hawaiian education, would be among the most important of his life. Hence, the history of China and the intellectual legacy of the 19th century Hawaii are, perhaps unexpectedly, intertwined.⁵⁶

LATER REFLECTIONS ON HAWAII'S IMPACT ON SUN YAT-SEN

During his first stay in Hawai'i as a teenage schoolboy, Sun's presence went largely unnoticed by the local community, with the noted exception of his winning the graduation prize mentioned above. When he subsequently visited Hawai'i as a revolutionary leader in the 1890s, 1900s and 1910s, his presence was duly noted, and local newspapers featured articles about him and his political goals, like the 1910 interview quoted above. After Sun's political movement succeeded in overthrowing the Qing dynasty in 1911/12, Honolulu media followed Chinese news excitedly, and later, when Sun Yat-sen's republican government became embattled by rival leaders and warlords, Hawaiian sympathy was clearly on Sun's side. It seems that in this support all political factions in Hawai'i agreed, even though they otherwise by no means saw eye-to-eye. In the Hawaiian-language press, which continued throughout the first decades of the 20th century despite policies by the American occupants to exterminate the language, Sun was affectionally referred to as '*keiki Pake o Hawaii nei*' ('Chinese child of Hawai'i').⁵⁷ When Dr Sun passed away in 1925, the Hawaiian newspaper *Nupepa Kuokoa* published an extensive obituary. Its author clearly highlighted the importance of Hawai'i for the revolutionary's life, pointing out '*ka naauao i loaia iaia ma Hawaii nei, ka ike ame ka hoomaopopo ana i ke kulana hookele aupuni maanei*' ('the enlightenment he received here in Hawaii, the knowledge and the understanding of the quality of governance here').⁵⁸

In the following decades, as Hawai'i became ever more Americanised, the Hawaiian influence on the development of Sun Yat-sen's political consciousness became gradually lost. Later historians of the Chinese revolution dismissed Hawai'i's status as an independent state and confounded the formative Hawaiian influence on Dr Sun as 'American' influence. Harold Schiffrin, for instance, while acknowledging the influence of Hawaiian nationalism on Sun,⁵⁹ later in his book claims that the founding of the Xingzhonghui in late 1894 with its vision of China's future as a republic was influenced by the proclamation of the so-called Republic of Hawaii in July 1894.⁶⁰ This seems quite strange, given that the regime proclaimed

⁵⁶ Alfred Castle, 'Educating a revolutionary: Sun Yat-Sen's schooling in Hawaii', *Sun Yat-Sen: the man and the myth, a Humanities guide* (Honolulu 1991), 10.

⁵⁷ 'He Keu Aku No Keia A Ka Pake Hookiekie Nui Wale', *Ke Aloha Aina*, 24 July 1915, 3.

⁵⁸ 'Make o Kauka Sun Yat Sen ma Kina', *Nupepa Kuokoa*, 26 Mar. 1925, 5.

⁵⁹ Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution*, 13.

⁶⁰ Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution*, 43.

in July 1894 in Honolulu was republican in name only, and was in fact an oligarchic dictatorship of white supremacists desiring the islands to be annexed by America, installed through a previous US military intervention, and representing not more than a faction within the white minority in the Kingdom.⁶¹ It appears extremely unlikely that a tyranny by a clique of white racists would be seen as a model for a democratic China, especially by representatives of a non-white community like the Chinese, whose civil rights they had enjoyed under the Hawaiian Kingdom were taken away by the so-called Republic.⁶²

Chen Shao-Bai, on the other hand, gives a much more reasonable explanation how the worsening political situation in Hawai'i during the 1890s influenced Dr Sun:

Moreover, at that time the USA wanted to annex the Hawaiian archipelago, and the people of the Hawaiian archipelago were fighting against the USA every day. The Chinese people were used to see these things, and affected by these political events, especially for Mr. Sun, a man with revolutionary ideas. Later when Mr. Sun came back China, he felt everything was wrong. He said 'Our great country was discriminated by the foreign countries. A civilisation was underestimated by the aliens [...]'.⁶³

Further evidence of the alignment of Sun and the revolutionary society founded by him with Hawaiian nationalism, rather than with American imperialism, can be gathered by looking at the biographies of some of the other founding members. The owner of the house in which the Xingzhonghui was founded, Ho Fon, for instance, was not only an important leader of Honolulu's Chinese community and editor of one of the early Hawaiian newspapers in Chinese language,⁶⁴ but was also one of the leading members of – and provider of arms for – a rebellion by Hawaiian patriots in 1889 to restore democratic rights to the people taken away in an 1887 *coup d'état* against King Kālakaua by the same white supremacists who would later constitute themselves as the 'Republic of Hawai'i'.⁶⁵ Ho Fon's participation in the Hawaiian rebellion cost him dearly, as he was fined 250 Hawaiian dollars (the Hawaiian dollar was pegged to the US dollar of which 250 was a considerable sum at the time) by the new regime, so one should assume that he was as much a patriot of his adopted homeland of Hawai'i as he was of his native China.⁶⁶ Reflecting on Dr Sun's later anti-imperialist and pan-Asianist stances, Alfred Castle considers it

⁶¹ Noenoe Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian resistance to American colonialism* (Durham and London 2004), 123–63; Beamer, *Na Mākou ka Mana*, 198–226.

⁶² Ralph Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3: 1874–1893: *The Kālakaua Dynasty* (Honolulu 1967), 649.

⁶³ Chen, *Xingzhonghui Geming Shiyao*, 5; translated by David Teng-Yue Ma (see fn 5).

⁶⁴ Lo, 'The story of the founding of the Hsing Chung Hui', 138–39; Lum and Lum, *Sun Yat-sen in Hawai'i*, 69.

⁶⁵ Thomas K. Nakanaela, *Ka Buke Moololo o Hon. Robert William Wilikoki* (Honolulu 1890), 49ff.

⁶⁶ Nakanaela, *Ka Buke Moololo o Hon. Robert William Wilikoki*, 49ff.

reasonable to speculate ‘that at least some of Sun’s anti-imperialism and sensitivity to foreign influence came from his awareness of foreign influence in Hawaii and its relationship to a relatively weak central government under the increasingly embittered Kalakaua’.⁶⁷

HAWAI‘I AS A BREEDING GROUND OF PAN-ASIANISM

Further evidence of what Castle referred to as Sun Yat-sen’s ‘intellectual legacy of 19th century Hawaii’ can be found in Sun’s later pan-Asianist convictions. On 28 November 1924 (coincidentally Hawai‘i’s Independence Day commemorating the Kingdom’s international recognition in 1843), Sun was invited to speak in Kobe, Japan, on the topic of Asian unity. The central point of the speech, which in many ways resembles the fourth lecture on nationalism in the *Three Principles of the People*, can be summarised in the following quote:

Oriental Civilisation is the rule of Right; Occidental civilization is the rule of Might. The rule of Right respects benevolence and virtue, while the rule of Might only respects force and utilitarianism. [...] Pan-Asianism is based on the rule of Right, and justifies the avenging of the wrongs done to others. [...] Therefore now we advocate the avenging of the wrong done to those in revolt against the civilisation of the rule of Might, with the aim of seeking a civilisation of peace and equality and the emancipation of all races.⁶⁸

First of all, it is striking to see the evolution of Sun’s ideology, from an earlier advocacy of modernising China through Christianity, to a recognition of civilisational difference between the West and the East – while positioning himself firmly in the latter. Secondly, it is remarkable how similar the line of argument in Sun’s Kobe speech is to a declaration made by King Kalākaua four decades earlier to the Meiji Emperor in Tokyo during the Hawaiian King’s world tour mentioned above, when Kalākaua stated:

The European countries make it their policy to think only of themselves. They never consider what harm they may cause other countries or what difficulties they may cause other people. Their countries tend to work together and cooperate when it comes to strategy in dealing with the countries of the East. [...] Consequently, it is imperative for the countries of the East to form a league to maintain

⁶⁷ Castle, ‘Educating a revolutionary’, 9. The latter passage refers to the 1887 *coup d’état* and the ensuing political instability during the last four years of the king’s reign.

⁶⁸ Sun Yat-Sen, ‘Pan-Asianism’, English translation by T’ang Leang-Li, in Sven Saaler and Christopher W.A. Szpilman (eds), *Pan-Asianism: a documentary history*, vol. 2: 1920–Present (Lanham MD 2011), 78–85.

the status quo in the East, in this way opposing the European countries. The time for action has come.⁶⁹

Common to both speeches is the realisation that there is a fundamental civilisational difference between the Eastern values of communitarian harmony and those of individualist greed and materialism of the West, and a call for all of the East (including, obviously, Oceania), to bond together in order to oppose further encroachment by the West, and ultimately to create a new egalitarian world order to replace the then current Eurocentric one. With this visionary speech, Kalākaua clearly needs to be acknowledged as one of the pioneers of pan-Asianism, long before it became prevalent among Asian leaders and intellectuals during the early 20th century.⁷⁰ While Sun probably did not know the exact content of Kalākaua's 1881 speech, for it remained unpublished (though he might have accessed the speech in the Japanese imperial archives during his stay in Japan 1895–1903), his pan-Asian ideas of the 1920s can clearly be traced to the ideas circulating among Hawaiian intellectual circles during the time of Sun's schooling in Honolulu. During those years King Kalākaua's policies of a Hawaiian cultural renaissance, an assertive foreign policy, and a promotion of Pan-Oceanian unity were reaching their climax.⁷¹

CONCLUSION: AN EPILOGUE OF PAN-ASIA-PACIFIC CONNECTIONS

An analysis of Sun Yat-sen's biography, of his own statements about his Hawaiian experience, and of his political vision for China with the political reality in the Hawaiian Kingdom shows that late 19th-century Hawai'i was not merely the leading state of Oceania, but had important influences on modern China as well. In that sense, I would propose that in a certain sense, the ultimate model of the Republic of China is the Hawaiian Kingdom. While it might sound absurd at first glance to have a monarchy serve as a model for a revolutionary republic, the existence of a monarchical head of state is in fact the only significant conceptual difference between the two political systems and their underlying ideologies. Otherwise Kalākaua's constitutional kingdom and Sun Yat-sen's constitutional republic were remarkably similar, as they both embraced cutting-edge modernity while at the same time insisting on being non-Western, native-ruled nations grounded in old civilisations and actively pursuing an anti-colonial internationalist foreign policy.⁷² The connections between Chinese

⁶⁹ Kalākaua, quoted in Keene, *Emperor of Japan*, 347–48.

⁷⁰ For a more detailed discussion of Pan-Asianism, see Cemil Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: visions of world order in pan-Islamic and pan-Asian thought* (New York 2007), and Szpilman and Saaler, *Pan-Asianism: a documentary history*.

⁷¹ On Kalākaua's policies, see Kamehiro, *The Arts of Kingship*; Kealani Cook, 'Kalākaua's Polynesian Confederacy: teaching world history in Hawai'i and Hawai'i in world history', *World History Connected*, 8:3 (2011), n.p.; Gonschor, 'Ka Hoku o Osiania'; and Beamer, *No Mākou ka Mana*, 176–90.

⁷² Given this situation, Sun Yat-sen's sojourn in the Kalākaua-era Hawaiian Islands should be compared not so much with his later travels to the West but rather to his stay in Meiji Japan. Both were certainly more modernised and Westernised countries than late Qing China, but nevertheless, just

and Hawaiian political modernity through Sun Yat-sen and other members of the Chinese diaspora in Hawai'i thus represents another important one of the 'Chinese Pacifics' that is missing from a recent historical review on that topic.⁷³

As is well known, in 1949, the Republic of China under Sun's successor Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) moved from mainland China to Taiwan to flee from the communists. In consequence, it is on Taiwan where the political heritage of Sun Yat-sen is most visible today, with a modified version of his Five-Power Constitution still in force. At the 21st Pacific History Association conference in 2014, Taiwanese government official and scholar of Chinese literature Sun Dachuan (Paelabang Danapan), a member of the Puyuma people, one of the island's Austronesian aboriginal nations, delivered a keynote speech at Taidong (T'aitung) University. Under the title 'Formosa's Gift to the World', he pointed to the twofold importance of Taiwan as the place where Chinese democracy as envisioned by Sun Yat-sen is flourishing today but also where the ancestors of more than 300 million Austronesian speakers and their Indigenous civilisation hail from.⁷⁴ What was missing from the speech, however, was the fact that Sun Yat-sen first learnt concepts of modern and democratic governance in one of those Austronesian nations, namely in Hawai'i, a fact that adds an interesting twist to the story and in a sense closes a circle.

But the importance of Sun Yat-sen's education in late 19th-century Hawai'i extends beyond merely Chinese-Hawaiian, Chinese-Pacific or even Chinese-Austronesian connections. As an archetypal hybrid state and a 'vessel of potential', the most far-reaching such potential of the Hawaiian Kingdom was its role as a conceptual model for other modernisation projects in both Oceania and Asia, and as one of the pioneers of both pan-Oceanism and pan-Asianism. While King Kalākaua's pan-Asianist discourse articulated in Tokyo in 1881 reflected an earlier pan-Oceanian regionalism expressed in Hawaiian political circles as early as the 1850s, the prevalence of similar regionalist discourses in the first half of the 20th century among Asian leaders such as Sun Yat-sen can be seen as one of many indications that the Hawaiian Kingdom did indeed cast a long shadow into the 20th century, long after its occupation by the United States had impeded Hawai'i from being an actor in international politics. The important influence of Hawai'i on the political thought of Sun Yat-sen can thus be seen an epitome of the legacy left by the Hawaiian Kingdom throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

like Japan was unmistakably part of East Asia, Hawai'i was clearly part of Polynesia and of the wider Austronesian world, and hence also part of the East, not of the West.

⁷³ Paul D'Arcy, 'The Chinese Pacifics: a brief historical overview', *The Journal of Pacific History*, 49:4 (2014), 396–420.

⁷⁴ Sun Dachuan (Paelabang Danapan), 'Formosa's gift to the world: an Indigenous perspective', keynote speech, presented at 'Lalan, Chalan, Tala, Ara (Path): reconnecting Pacific-Asia Histories', Pacific History Association 21st Biennial Conference, Taipei and Taitung, Taiwan (Republic of China), 3–6 Dec. 2014.

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