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Re-Defining the Late Qing Revolution: Its Continuity with the Taiping Rebellion, Radical Student Politics and Larger Global Context

Abstract Studies in recent decades conducted from the angle of provincial-level local self-government have done much to help relativize narratives of the 1911 Revolution in China that emphasize the importance of armed uprisings. However, these endeavors still have room to locate the revolution within a global context and to understand its implications as a revolution conducted through the conduits of culture and thought. More importantly, these existing studies are also insufficient in terms of viewing the Late Qing Revolution through a longer time span to see the Revolution as the new development and continuity of a much longer revolution that began with the Taiping Rebellion (1851–64). The Taiping Rebellion substantially weakened the rule of the Qing court. In other words, this author regards the Late Qing Revolution as a part of the long revolution starting from the outbreak of the Taiping Rebellion. Through this analysis, the author demonstrates how the Late Qing Revolution was comprised of three key components: armed uprisings, self-government movements, and finally, a revolution through words and culture including the student movements at home and in Tokyo. It argues that, to a certain degree, it is the Taiping Rebellion that made the Revolution successful in a relatively pacifistic way, and that, in particular, made possible the non-violent revolutions of self-government and the revolution through words and culture.

Keywords the Taiping Rebellion and Late Qing Revolution, the Late Qing Revolution of culture and thought, self-government, the student politics, the rebellion by genteel scholars (*xīucaī*)

Introduction: The Forgotten “Cultural Nature” of the Late Qing Revolution

In recent decades, studies looking at forms of local self-government during the late Qing revolution at the provincial level have begun receiving increasing attention,

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with their results having helped to balance out the “armed uprising”-centric narratives. The earliest of such studies may be represented by M. Elvin’s article (1974) as well as most of the articles in Mary C. Wright’s *China in Revolution: The First Phase, 1900–1913* (1968), within which the social dynamics of the late Qing transformation, including political provincialism, the role of gentry and so on, were all dealt with.¹ Particularly in recent decades, after the initiation of China’s “Reform and Opening-up Policy” (1978), the dichotomy of the “revolution vs. reform” and “armed uprising”-centric narratives surrounding the late Qing transformation have been challenged to a great extent. We may, for example, observe such a trend in Joseph W. Esherick and C. X. George Wei’s *China: How the Empire Fell* (2014). This compendium assembles together a number of high quality research papers presented in several symposiums in China during 2011.² Joseph W. Esherick’s introduction is particularly useful in that it offers an overview of several new trends developing in the study of the late Qing transformation (“The late Qing transformation” and “the Late Qing Revolution” are synonymous in this article, thus to avoid the possible misconception of the late Qing reform in the dichotomy of “reformist vs. revolutionaries” and an arm-forced-centric revolution). Previous to this book, these trends were also mentioned, to some degree, in mainland scholars Zhang Kaiyuan and Yan Changhong’s work, *Xinhai Geming yu Zhongguo zhengzhi fazhan* (2005).³ Their book compiles together papers having been written by leading mainland Chinese scholars during the seventieth anniversary of the 1911 Revolution. According to Wen-hsin Yeh, the characteristics of these new trends in research may be summarized in the following manner: An emphasis on intellectual enlightenment rather than the invoking of class interests as the driving force of history, and emphasis on republican thought—introduced prior to the 1911 uprising—as the underlying component of the transformation [rather than] the

¹ M. Elvin, “The Administration of Shanghai, 1905–1914,” in M. Elvin and G. W. Skinner eds., *The Chinese City Between Two Worlds*, 236–62; Mary C. Wright ed., *China in Revolution: The First Phase, 1900–1913*. As Joseph W. Esherick pointed out, Wright’s position comes from Elvin. See Joseph W. Esherick, “1911: A Review,” 165. In his perspective of provincial self-government to relativize the Sun Yat-sen-centric narratives, Esherick reviewed the main publications in English language critically from the late 1960s to 1976 (pp.141–84).

² Joseph W. Esherick and C. X. George Wei eds., *China: How the Empire Fell*. Among the papers in this compendium, the papers by Dai Angang (Ibid., pp.19–35), Li Zhenwu (pp. 36–65) and by Zhou Jiming and Hu Xi (pp. 66–85), are important to further review the self-government on a provincial level.

³ Zhang Kaiyuan and Yan Changhong eds., *Xinhai Geming yu Zhongguo zhengzhi fazhan*. Regarding the publications on the late Qing revolution on mainland China before 1982, please refer to Zhang Yufa, *Xinhai Geming shilun*, 25–48.

uprising itself as a great epoch-creating event.⁴

Drawing upon research presented in previous studies, this article will emphasize the interactive element of the relationship which existed between reform and revolution, thus placing the dichotomy of “reformist vs. revolutionaries” directly under question.⁵ In doing so, we will see how reformism and revolution were important components of “the Late Qing New Cultural Movement” (a phrase coined by this author). Moreover, viewed from this light, this article will go on to argue that a different type of revolution existed during the period of the late Qing which had endured for more than a decade: That is to say, a revolution through civility (*wen* 文), or a “cultural revolution,” as it were.⁶ This article supports the view that this “revolution by means of civility (*wen*)” functioned as one of three key pillars of the Late Qing Revolution along with the other two pillars, namely the provincial level self-government movements during the 1910s’ and the armed-force uprisings [in attempt to] topple the Manchu dynasty.

The author argues that what had made such a revolution possible—one based on culture and self-government—was, in a certain sense, the Taiping Rebellion of 1851 to 1864, which by itself had severely shaken the foundations of the ruling Qing court. After the end of the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–76), the orthodox Marxist framework and revolution-centric views of Chinese history were called into question. The most symbolic event in this regard occurred when Li Zehou, the most influential thinker for Chinese youth during the 1980s, along

⁴ Wen-hsin Yeh, “Shingai kakumeishi no rekishi jojutsu to chūkansō” 辛亥革命史の歴史叙述と中間層, translated by Kazuhiro Iwama 岩間一弘, in Shingai kakumei hyakushunen kinen ronshū henshū yiyinkai 辛亥革命百周年記念論集編集委員会 eds., *Sōgō kenkyū shingai kakumei* 総合研究辛亥革命, 573.

⁵ For the complicated linkage between revolutionaries and reformists including constitutionalists, please refer to Zhang Pengyuan, *Lixianpai yu Xinhai Geming*. Huang Kewu also has previously pointed out that it was the revolutionaries and constitutionalists who cooperated with the great project of founding Republican China. See Huang Kewu, “Shinmatsu kara mita shingaikakumei” 清末から見た辛亥革命, 92. Quite recently, concerning Kang Youwei’s ‘revolution’ both in Confucian tradition and the context of a world revolution, please refer to Chen Jianhua, “Wuxu bianfa yu shijiegeming fengyun: Kang Youwei yu jinwen jingxue geming de kunjing,” 632–51.

⁶ In recent years, to a varying degree, the following studies matters to this “Late Qing Cultural Revolution.” Luo Zhitian, *Guojia yu xueshu: Qingji Minchu guanyu “guoxue” de sixiang lunzheng*; Peng Chunling, *Ruxue zhuanxing yu wenhua xinming: Yi Kang Youwei Zhang Taiyan wei zhongxin (1898–1927)*; Zhang Zhongmin, *Zhongguo dedou: Qingmo Minchu de yuedu wenhua yu jieshou zhengzhi*; Qu Jun, *Tianxia weixue shuo lie: Qingmo Minchu de sixiang geming yu wenhua yundong*; Wang Fansen, “Cong ‘xinmin’ dao ‘xinren’: Jindai sixiang zhong de ‘ziwo’ yu ‘zhengzhi’” and “‘Zhuyi shidai’ de lailin: Zhongguo jindai sixiangshi de yi ge guanjian fazhan,” 33–68, 138–219, etc.

with his close friend, the famous literary critic Liu Zaifu, published their co-authored roundtable discussion, *Bidding Farewell to Revolution: Reviewing Twentieth Century China in Retrospect* (1995).⁷ The mention of the Taiping Rebellion has since become rare. Thus, by questioning such “fact,” the author argues that it is necessary to employ a broader time-frame which incorporates the late Qing transformation and the Taiping Rebellion [into a common period], so as to shed light to the hidden linkages between them. The author argues that it is Taiping Rebellion—one of the bloodiest rebellions in Chinese history—which has decisive implications for the above mentioned “three pillars” of the Late Qing Revolution.

The “Xiucai” (Genteel Scholars), the Cultural and Intellectual Revolution of the Late Qing and Zhang Taiyan’s Conceptualization

“Wen” 文 is a complex concept within Chinese thought; for simplicity’s sake, and the purposes of our paper, however, as the antonym of *wu* 武, *wen* may used to signify ideas such as civility, culture, and nonviolence. Thus, revolution by *wen*, as opposed to that of revolution by force (*wu*), represents a nonviolent political and ethical means used in resisting violence. *Wen* is also used to convey the significance of literary practice in its broad sense: a revolution of thought and action, using words. The author would like to specifically point out that within the context of the late Qing, the development of the printing industry had contributed greatly to the success of this revolution, [creating] a new wave of journalism which fuelled the revolutionaries with a new found vigour in their resistance against Qing despotism, a force having already been weakened during the Taiping Rebellion. In recent years, although studies looking at journalism in the late Qing have made important findings about the transformations during that period,⁸ there still exists

⁷ Li Zehou and Liu Zaifu, *Gaobie geming: Huiwang ershi shiji Zhongguo*.

⁸ Regarding this issue, for example, Joan Judge’s book cast light to the role of *Shibao* 時報, a reformist daily newspaper, in serving as a new means of social integration and of social mobilization, for the journalists’ primary social objective to transform the people from passive subjects of the dynasty to active participants, especially to format the new middle realm. Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: ‘Shibao’ and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China*. Also see Pan Kuang-che, “Xixue de ‘xinwenhua’: *Shiwubao* yu ta de duzhe,” in Pan Kuang-che, *Wan Qing shiren de Xixue yuedushi (1833–1989)*, 163–240. Concerning *Guocui xuebao* 國粹學報, an influential journal based in Shanghai from 1905 to 1911 in the context of the Late Qing Revolution, please refer to Tze-ki Hon, *Revolution as Restoration: Guocui xuebao and China’s Path to Modernity, 1905–1911*. Regarding the term “Chinese print capitalism,” please see Christopher A. Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876–1937*, 1–9. For a relatively overall studies, please refer to Zhang Qing, *Qingji Minguo shiqi de “sixiangjie.”*

much room for further development, particularly in that of framing this issue within the context of the late Qing “cultural revolution.”

For quite some time this *wen* revolution, by means of words, civility, and culture was relegated to a position of secondary importance, similar to that of an “assistant” or “servant” of the military revolution—and later, of the “reform.” Here, the author will borrow Zhang Taiyan’s concept of “revolution” as an aid to his argument. On December 2 in 1906, Sun Yat-sen and Zhang each gave speeches in Tokyo at an event commemorating the First Anniversary of the establishment of *The People’s Journal* (*Minbao* 民報). These speeches were recorded by the journal and later published in an article written by an author named “Minyi” 民意. In his speech, Zhang criticized the revolutionary intellectuals’ over-reliance on the uprising(s) of military governors, stating that “in old revolutions, the leading roles were played by people who were referred to as the sworn brothers of gangsters, while today’s revolution is referred to as a rebellion of genteel scholars.”⁹ Here, Zhang clearly makes a distinction between the Late Qing Revolution and that of traditional Confucian revolutions (*geming*), pointing out that the subjects of revolution are in reality nothing but unarmed “genteel scholars” (*xiucais*). *Xiucan zaofan, shinian bucheng* 秀才造反, 十年不成 is a famous Chinese idiom that roughly translates to “a genteel scholar who prepares for a revolution and cannot succeed even after ten years of preparation.” This, to a certain degree, is a well-known historical truth for Chinese people.

Zhang also made the following statement in his speech: “As the official circles of today are full of bacteria and worms, without a people’s revolution, how can we get rid of this malaria?”¹⁰ The revolution Zhang envisaged was a “people’s revolution” under the leadership of intellectuals. This is to say, under the development of modern print industry as well as shifts in the transmission of information, even a rebellion led by “genteel scholars”—one by means of words or culture—becomes possible. One tenet of Zhang’s concept of revolution was that ethics and morals were essential for enacting change in the world. This may be seen in the following remarks made by Zhang: “The degenerating of morals is exactly the reason why revolution fails.”¹¹ Hence, Zhang’s revolution is a revolution of thought, a view which can also be found in the later writings of Lu Xun, who was one of Zhang’s disciples in Tokyo.

A similar [type of] revolution may be observed in Zhang’s earlier writings, as

⁹ Minyi 民意, “Jinian shi’eryue erri benbao jiyuanjie qingzhu dahui ji yanshuoci,” *Minbao* 民報, no. 10 (September, 1906): 1–34. Reprinted version: *Minbao*, vol. 3, 1508.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1510.

¹¹ Zhang Taiyan, “Geming daode shuo,” in *Zhang Taiyan quanji*, vol. 4, 284.

well. In May, 1903, Zhang had written the preface for Zou Rong's 鄒容 (1885–1905) pamphlet *Revolutionary Army*, which called for revolution [by the people]. This radical appeal was an event of great significance during the Late Qing Revolution. In his “Preface to Zou Rong’s *Revolutionary Army*,” Zhang made the following remarks:

Why did Zou Rong put “revolution” in the title? Perhaps he planned to not only drive out the alien races, but to also radically change that which should be changed in our politics, culture, scholarship, rites, and customs. This is the reason why Zhou called out for revolution with such vigor.¹²

In Zhang’s eyes, revolution should not only strive for radical change within a political system, but also that of a “critical transformation” in culture; a revolution of “politics, culture, scholarship, rites, and customs.” Regarding this kind of revolution, in Zhang’s “A Letter to Denounce Kang Youwei and On Revolution” which was written in May 1903, he also remarked: “If revolution has not been yet enlightened, let us enlighten it with revolution; If all the old customs still exist, let us get rid of them with revolution.”¹³

It was the development of print industry and mass media that allowed the *wen* element of the Late Qing Revolution to succeed. As Joan Judge made clear, during the mid-to-late 1890s, a new paradigm of politics and paradigm of print simultaneously emerged as reformists created and evolved a more potent form of politics which also constituted new political meaning for the press, ultimately leading to republicanism in the late Qing. *Shibao*, a newspaper founded by Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929), Di Baoxian 狄葆賢 (1873–1941), and several other journalists in 1904, symbolized this new form of politics.¹⁴ In his recent book, Zhang Zhongmin, through a close analysis of reading culture and [the newspaper’s] reception in the late Qing, convincingly pointed out that “reformist” Liang Qichao’s articles as a matter of fact had been received “revolutionarily.”¹⁵ It was also this new journalism which had fostered new revolutionary and reformist subjectivity(s) through the critical reconstruction of Chinese thought and the

¹² Zhang Taiyan, “Zou Rong *Gemingjun* xu,” in *Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji*, ed. Tang Zhijun, vol. 1, 193.

¹³ Zhang Taiyan, “Bo Kang Youwei lun geming shu,” in *Zhang Taiyan zhenglun xuanji*, ed. Tang Zhijun, vol. 1, 204.

¹⁴ Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: “Shibao” and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China*, 18.

¹⁵ Zhang Zhongmin, *Zhongguo dedou: Qingmo Minchu de yuedu wenhua yu yuedu zhengzhi*, 329–31.

assimilation of Western ideas.

Interpreting the Late Qing Revolution through Local “Self-Government”

As mentioned above, mainstream interpretations of the Late Qing Revolution have tended to view it purely as an armed uprising; at least, this was generally the case in English speaking circles before the 1970s and before the year 2000 in Chinese ones. Indeed, the term “1911 Revolution” is itself based on this implicit premise. In 1976, American historian Joseph Esherick attempted to challenge mainstream assumptions about the Late Qing Revolution in his book *Reform and Revolution in China: The 1911 Revolution in Hunan and Hubei*. He paid close attention to the interactions between reform and revolution, looking particularly at reformist-led civic movements such as the Railway Rights Protection Movement—a movement which challenged the Qing court’s plans to nationalize railways for the purposes of ceding their control to foreign investors—and the role local self-government played in it. Through his case studies of Hubei and Hunan, Esherick came to regard the Late Qing Revolution as one having been led by an urban-reformist upper class influenced by Western culture. According to Esherick, however, the New Policies (*xinzheng* 新政) that this class experimented with were not enough to hold off the revolution. On the contrary, it was the New Policies which brought about the revolution. Once the flames of revolution had been kindled, a longer-term version of the New Policies, one aiming at achieving a stable society, was needed. Furthermore, in order to achieve this goal, the upper class had to approach the revolutionaries. Esherick’s argument stresses the important role that the New Policies played at the provincial level. He also shed light on the importance of events such as the nationwide One Hundred Days’ Reform, the failed uprising led by Tang Caichang 唐才常 (1867–1900) in 1900, and the role he and his followers played in preparing China for the Wuchang Uprising. As Esherick admits, his book was part of a larger historical trend emphasizing the importance of local or provincial history.¹⁶ Young-tsu Wong sides with Esherick and argues that the Tongmenghui 同盟會 was not a [unilateral force] in the Late Qing Revolution, and confirmed there were variety of social classes which had all participated in the revolution at the provincial level.¹⁷

In 2006, Japanese historian Mizoguchi Yūzo 溝口雄三 (1932–2010) had drawn

¹⁶ Joseph W. Esherick, *Reform and Revolution in China: The 1911 Revolution in Hunan and Hubei*, 2, 3.

¹⁷ Young-tsu Wong, “Popular Unrest and the 1911 Revolution in Jiangsu,” 321–44.

conclusions similar to Joseph Esherick's.¹⁸ In his article, "The Historical Formation of the 1911 Revolution," Mizoguchi argued that the main source of power which enabled the goals of the revolution to be realized was not a military force(s) comprised of specific ethnicities, be they Han or otherwise, but local self-government at the provincial level, a body which had [already] accrued increasing levels of power within Chinese society. Mizoguchi regards this as an outcome of power gradually accrued by traditional, local self-governing bodies during the Ming and Qing era. According to Mizoguchi, China's "rural spaces" (*xiangli kongjian* 鄉里空間) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries should be regarded as a "local public sphere" within which public opinion gradually took shape. Becoming ever greater in scale, these spaces shifted from the county level in the late Ming and early/mid Qing to the provincial level in the late Qing. This transformation demonstrates the way in which local autonomous political powers at the provincial level had amassed so much influence by the late Qing. Mizoguchi maintains that the existence of these bodies of "local power" have hitherto been concealed by historical narratives of revolutionary history. Mizoguchi cautiously distinguished the concept of *xiangzhi* 鄉治 (self-government-based rule of rural society) from the imported term *difang zizhi* 地方自治 (local autonomous rule). What he meant by the term *xiangzhi* was a system of local, non-governmental rule based upon: a private education system, *shantang* 善堂 (early and premodern charitable institutes), *tuanlian* 團練 (local civic corps), *baojia* 保甲 (a neighborhood-based administrative system used on in ancient and premodern China), guilds, and lineage activities. Thus, Mizoguchi regards the Late Qing Revolution as the modern development of this self-governmental system.

Esherick and Mizoguchi's research shares a commonality in the sense that they both emphasize the role of local provincial power. However, unlike Mizoguchi, Esherick did not unequivocally state that the 1911 Revolution was a direct outcome of the accumulation of provincial self-governing power.

Prior to Esherick and Mizoguchi, Japanese historian Chūzō Ichiko 市古宙三 had also emphasised the leading role of the gentry in the revolution in a paper he delivered to the Far East Association in Philadelphia in 1956. The paper was titled "The Gentry and the Ch'uan-Sha Riot of 1911," and was published in Japanese in 1962. However, Ichiko did not place this issue within the context of "China's self-governing tradition" (rooted in the Ming).¹⁹ Rather, Mizoguchi, a specialist

¹⁸ Mizoguchi Yūzo 溝口雄三, "Shingai kakumei no rekishiteki kosei" 辛亥革命の歴史的個性, 88–107. A revised Chinese translation, Mizoguchi, "Xinhai Geming xinlun," translated by Lin Shaoyang, in *Goukou Xiangsan zhuzuoji • Zhongguo lishi de maidong*.

¹⁹ Chūzō Ichiko 市古宙三, "Kyōshin to shingaikakumei" 郷紳と辛亥革命, in *Sekai No Rekishi* 世界の歴史, vol. 15; Chūzō Ichiko, "The Role of the Gentry: A Hypothesis," 297–318.

in Chinese intellectual history, had placed the leading role which the gentry played during the Late Qing Revolution within a context of “intellectual continuities” spanning the Ming and Qing dynasties, attempting to interpret this revolution within the Chinese self-governing tradition. Of course, his interpretation also owes great “intellectual debt” to the large volume of existing research on the gentry of the Ming and Qing dynasties,²⁰ a field to which both he and Esherick made their contributions. As Paul A. Cohen has pointed out, although both Ichiko and Esherick maintained that the gentry was the key driving force in the Late Qing Revolution, as opposed to viewing the pro-Western Sun Yat-sen as the main leader of the revolution, Ichiko conceptualized the “gentry” as a conservative class who were only interested in reform and Westernization insofar as they were factors which contributed to their preservation as a class.²¹ Esherick attempted to go beyond Ichiko’s conservative image of the gentry by breaking it down into two parts: a rural conservative gentry and its urban progressive counterpart.²² Before Esherick, Mary C. Wright also had taken an opposite view to critique Ichiko’s conservative image of gentry, which was that the gentry did not seem to have been isolated from the main currents of the time, and that it is difficult to separate a radical student, or an officer in the new armies, from the gentry, as the young radicals were precisely part of the gentry families.²³ Wright used the example of Zhang Taiyan, claiming that Zhang, a far more radical revolutionary than Sun Yat-sen, was also a “gentry” who had maintained his “gentry connections.”²⁴

“China” in Exile: The Link between Local Self-Government, “Cultural Revolution” and Chinese Student Politics in Tokyo

These interpretations of the Late Qing Revolution by historians such as Esherick

²⁰ As to the rich accumulations of studies on the role of the gentry in Ming and Qing periods, research conducted by Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong 費孝通 (1910–2005) and Chinese historian Fu Yiling 傅衣凌 (1911–88), amongst others, are well-known in Chinese. In English, Korean historian Min Tu-ki’s works, works by Ho Ping-ti, Chang Chung-li, and Philip A. Kuhn, etc., were also very important. As for the work of Japanese historians, please refer to the research conducted by Tanigawa Michio 穀川道雄 (born in 1925), Mori Masao 森正夫 (born in 1935), Fuma Susumu 夫馬進 (born in 1948), and Kishimoto Mio 岸本美緒 (born in 1952).

²¹ Paul A. Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past*, 159.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Mary C. Wright, “Introduction,” 39.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

and Mizoguchi are valuable and insightful because they help to counter-balance those mainstream narratives which focus on the “armed uprising” aspect of the revolution. Mark Elvin, Mary Wright, Esherick, Chang P’eng-yüan, Ichiko, Philip Kuhn, and so on, all belong to the first generation which directed our attention away from the revolutionaries abroad and toward the constitutional reformers at home,²⁵ and later on, away from a Sun-centric revolution. Despite the great achievements made by these scholars in this regard, their arguments could still be further developed upon. After years of concentrating on reformers within China, the global context of the Late Qing Revolution has unavoidably been ignored. In the author’s opinion, an interactive balancing of perspectives within and without China is necessary. The narratives which focus on the armed uprising aspect of the revolution and the narratives which emphasize the role of local self-government (especially those of Mizoguchi, who frames the revolution as a development of local self-government which had its roots in China’s own inherent early modernity, beginning in the Ming) are both weak at placing the late Qing’s transformation within a larger global context. In the view of the author, Tokyo and its role as an important arena for the Late Qing Revolution ought to take a more central position.²⁶ The author will argue that Tokyo also served as an important arena where student movements unfolded, rather than only emphasizing it as a preparatory place for the “armed force” revolution and as a Sun-centric “revolutionary headquarters.”²⁷ From this perspective, the arguments made by Esherick, Mizoguchi and the like can be corroborated by the journals which were edited and published in Japan by Chinese students, and which used the names of

²⁵ For Chang P’eng-yüan, “The Constitutionalists,” 143–84. Concerning Chang’s article’s positioning in history of researches, please see Joseph W. Esherick, “1911: A Review,” 163.

²⁶ Recent research that has located the late Qing revolution in a global context can be found in Xingai kakumei hyakushūnen kinenronshū henshū yiyinkai 辛亥革命百周年記念論集委員会 eds., *Sōgō kenkyū shingaikakumei* 総合研究辛亥革命, Ōsato Hiroaki 大裏浩秋 and Li Tingjiang eds., *Shingai kakumei to ajia* 辛亥革命とアジア and so on. For the late Qing revolution’s Russian influence, please refer to Don C. Price, *Russia and Roots of the Chinese Revolution, 1896–1911*.

²⁷ Regarding students politics in Tokyo, especially on Zhang Taiyan’s leading role for students and on Chen Tianhua’s 陳天華 (1875–1905) activities, Kojima Yoshio 小島淑男, *Ryū nichigakusei no shingaikakumei* 留日学生の辛亥革命; Please also see Murata Yujiro 村田雄二郎 and Kong Xiangji, *Shinmatsu to nihon: Kyūtei henpō kaumei* 清末中国と日本: 宮廷・変法・革命, 165–220. Though more concentrating on student movements at home, Sang Bing’s book is important as a relatively systematic studies in this regard. Sang Bing, *Wan Qing xuetang xuesheng yu shehui bianqian*. As the earliest book, please refer to Mary Backus Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries: Radical Intellectuals in Shanghai and Chekiang, 1902–1911*.

various provinces in their titles. These journals demonstrate how local provincial powers, comprised of Tokyo-based radical Chinese students, contributed to the revolution. Key examples include *Henan* 河南, *The Tide of Zhejiang* (*Zhejiang chao* 浙江潮), *The Circle of Hubei Students* (*Hubei Xuehshengjie* 湖北學生界) and *The Journal of Shanxi* (*Jincheng* 晉城).²⁸ In contrast to these was *The Journal of Datong bao* 大同報 (literally the “Journal of Great Harmony”), which was edited by Tokyo-based Manchurian students—the descendants of men from the Eight Banners. As its title indicates, the *Journal of Great Harmony*²⁹ sought to eliminate local factors to stress the harmony [existing] between China’s various ethnic groups. Similar characteristics of provincial power may also be observed in the activities of the “Southern Learning Society” (*Nanxuehui* 南學會), which began its operations in the winter of 1878, but officially was founded on February 21, 1898 in Hunan under the aegis of Chen Baozhen 陳寶箴 (1831–1900), a reformist who at the time served as the Governor of Hunan province. The Southern Learning Society was run and supported by local Hunan elites, such as Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865–98), but also by elites from other provinces, such as the Cantonese reformist Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲 (1848–1905) and Liang Qichao. Although the Southern Learning Society had fully demonstrated its power as a local and self-governing entity within the province, its influence had extended far beyond Hunan province, continuing to spread all over China. Concerning this provincial self-governing entity, and in particular, concerning the leading role played by Hunan province in the self-government movement of the late Qing, Stephen R. Platt, in his work *Provincial Patriot: The Hunanese and Modern China* (2007), introduced how “Hunanese” were destined to lead the rest of China based on “Hunan nationalism” (as the author dubbed), thus the “self-government” of Hunan had extended far beyond the province; to put it simply, “provincial reform” was essentially “China’s reform.”³⁰

In spite of this, however, it bears mentioning that the above-mentioned journalism conducted by Chinese students in Tokyo served as the main platform for discussion on the issue of local self-government. More importantly, however, was the fact that this discourse on self-governing became directly linked to the matter of revolution. While the *Journal of Great Harmony* took a clear reformist stance, the majority of these journals featured a mixture of both revolutionary and

²⁸ Zhang Nan and Wang Renzhi, “Qikan jieshao,” in *Xinhai Geming qian shinian jian shilun xuanji*, the latter half of vol. 2.

²⁹ The *Journal of Great Harmony* was established in June 1907 and ceased publication in March 1908. A total of seven issues were published.

³⁰ Stephen R. Platt, *Provincial Patriot: The Hunanese and Modern China*.

reformist thought. That being said, some nevertheless edged closer to reformism.³¹ Qin Lishan 秦力山 (1877–1906), a famous revolutionary who participated in founding of the Independent Army (*Zilijun* 自立軍), discusses the relationship between self-government and revolution in chapter four (“Self-Government as the Foundation of Revolution”) of his book *On Revolution* (1906). There, he states: “By viewing the rise and fall of all the nations in the world, we can find that a nation which is qualified to be independent usually has the spirit of self-government. This is why self-government is the element of a nation.”³² He goes on to say that “one should know that local self-government is the lifeline of revolution. It is groundless to talk about revolution without referring to self-government.”³³ What Qin said here is a good example of the interaction between local self-government and revolution.

Here, the discourse among Tokyo-based Chinese students on local self-government may be regarded as both a discursive and political strategy used in resisting the Qing court, and simultaneously as a nation-building method. Be it *Xin Guangdong* 新廣東 (New Canton, 1902, published by Xinmin cunbaoshe in Yokohama, Japan), edited by Kang Youwei’s 康有為 (1858–1927) disciple Ou Qijia 歐榘甲 (1870–1911), or the aforementioned journals of *Henan*, the *Tide of Zhangjiang*, or *The Circle Of Hubei Students*, all these publications were both a political expression of the dreams that these people harboured for their home provinces, and furthermore, for a new China. Viewed in this light, the *Great Harmony* (*Datong* 大同) obviously was at odd ends with these journals due to their emphasis being on local factors, which is what the revolutionaries relied on to try and mobilize people to topple the central rule of the Qing court.

In contrast with these arguments surrounding local self-government which were used as a form of strategic discourse by radical young revolutionaries in Tokyo, the Qing court, under the influence of Meiji Japan, had invoked autonomous rule as one of its reform policies for modernization. This was represented by the promulgation of the “Regulations for Local Autonomy in Cities, Towns and Villages” (*Chengzhenxiang difang zizhi zhangcheng* 城鎮鄉地方自治章程) in 1909.³⁴ This local autonomy (*difang zizhi* 地方自治), just like its counterpart in Meiji Japan (*chihō chiji*), served the purpose of reinforcing the new but stable relationship between a highly centralized state power and its local interests, in fact,

³¹ Huang Donglan, *Kindai Chūgoku no chihō chiji to meiji nihon* 近代中国の地方自治と明治日本, 110.

³² Qin Lishan, *Shuo geming* (first appeared in 1905), in *Qin Lishan ji*, 146.

³³ *Ibid.*, 147.

³⁴ For Meiji Japan’s influence, see Huang Donglan, *Kindai Chūgoku no chihō chiji to meiji nihon* 近代中国の地方自治と明治日本, chaps. 9 and 10.

rather than acting as a restraint or check to central power. After the establishment of The Republic of China, the new centralization of state power was completed in the early 1920s under rule of the Beiyang Warlord's central government. This had brought about the "United Provinces Local Self-Government Movement" (*liansheng zizhi* 聯省自治) in 1920s, which was opposed to such a centralization of state power.

The Late Qing Revolution as a Student Movement

The Late Qing Revolution was comprised of three key components: armed uprisings, local self-government and a "cultural revolution." On some occasions, however, no hard and fast relation can be drawn between these three parts. For example, as Kojima Yoshio 小島淑男 had pointed out in his work, *1911 Revolution for Chinese Students in Japan* (*Ryūgakusei no shingaikakumei*, 1989), Chinese students studying in Japan played an important role in the armed uprisings, including the failed Huanghuagang Uprising of April 27, 1911.³⁵ Kojima elucidated the important role played by Chinese students in Japan during the revolution in terms of provincial self-government. For example, he clarified that Chinese students studying in Japan played a leading role in the Railway Rights Protection Movement in the southern provinces, especially those movements in Sichun, Hunan and Hubei³⁶ (similar facts are also stressed in Eshrick's book³⁷). The author will argue that the armed uprisings and Railway Rights Protection Movements were both, to differing extents, student movements.

Mary Rankin is one of a handful of scholars who stressed the importance of radical students during the Late Qing Revolution. In her book, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries: Radical Intellectuals in Shanghai and Chekiang, 1902–1911* (1971), Rankin focuses on radical student politics in both Shanghai and Zhejiang, attempting to revitalize the previous framework of research into the Late Qing Revolution. In particular, she attempts to challenge historical narratives produced by the Guomindang on the revolution.³⁸ Rankin also sheds light on how radical students were very much at the heart of the revolution, on their links to secret

³⁵ For the essential role of the students studying in Japan in Huanghuagang Uprising, please see Kojima Yoshio, *Ryūnichigakusei no shingaikakumei* 留日学生の辛亥革命, 36–87.

³⁶ Kojima Yoshio, *Ryūnichigakusei no shingaikakumei*, 80–82.

³⁷ Joseph W. Eshrick, *Reform and Revolution in China: The 1911 Revolution in Hunan and Hubei*, 34–65.

³⁸ Mary Backus Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries: Radical Intellectuals in Shanghai and Chekiang, 1902–1911*.

society, and furthermore on how the revolution was “urban” in its nature.³⁹ Rankin’s argument is related to this author’s argument in that it stresses the importance of radical student politics during the Late Qing Revolution. However, it was unfortunate that Rankin did not address the important links between student politics in Tokyo, which functioned as the headquarters of the revolution, and mainland China. Furthermore, she did not pay close enough attention to Zhang Taiyan, who had served as an influential guide for the younger generation of revolutionary students. That being said, as is suggested by her book’s title, Rankin’s interest was in understanding how Zhejiang and Shanghai functioned as political spaces. As such, it is perhaps unfair to criticize her for not addressing the significance of Tokyo in the revolution.

Regardless, to stress the importance of Tokyo is also to stress the importance of a revolution by means of civility or culture (*wen*). Different areas served different purposes in the Late Qing Revolution; Hong Kong, for a short period in the early stages of the revolution, was the area where the idea of revolution was disseminated, serving as a support for the armed uprisings. Meanwhile, Guangzhou (including both Huizhou and Chaozhou) was the place where the armed uprisings themselves took place. Meanwhile, overseas Chinese communities raised funds. In Japan, Tokyo and the neighboring area of Yokohama served as a general headquarters for the revolution as well as the reformist camps. They also were used as a discursive space, in which materials were published and political speeches were made. Viewing the Late Qing Revolution through a broader lens, Hunan served as an important area for pushing the New Policies forward prior to the failure of the Reform Movement of 1898, while Hunan and Hebei were the areas in which the revolution itself was attempted, as represented by the failed uprising of the Zili Army, which was led by Tang Caichang. Zhejiang, as mentioned above, was the place where radical student politics took place, while Shanghai became an important publication center for the revolutionaries after the Japanese government shut down *The People’s Journal* (*Minbao*), the organ of the Chinese Revolutionary League (Tongmenghui), at the behest of the Qing court in October 1908. In light of these circumstances, the revolutionaries’ publication center located in Tokyo had gradually weakened, and was soon relocated to Shanghai. There, *The People’s Calling* (*Minhu ribao* 民呼日報), *The People’s Praying* (*Minyue ribao* 民籲日報), and *The People’s Independence* (*Minlibao* 民立報) rose up as the heirs of the revolutionary journals that were once published in Tokyo, further demonstrating the close link which existed between Tokyo and Shanghai for the revolutionaries.

³⁹ For the role of secret society in Chinese revolution, please refer to Sun Jiang, *Kindai Chūgoku no kakumei to himitsu kessha* 近代中國の革命と秘密結社.

While Tokyo functioned as a publication center for revolutionaries, Yokohama had functioned in a similar manner for the reformist camp. In as early as March 18 1898, Canton-born Kang Youwei established the Datong School in Yokohama with support from Cantonese overseas-Chinese. In the years 1901 to 1904, two of the five reformist journals [in print] (*Qingyibao* 清議報 and *Xinmin congbao* 新民叢報) were published in Yokohama, the other three in Shanghai, respectively. Conversely, all revolutionary journals, bar *Dalu* 韃虜 (The continental) and *Tongzi shijie* 童子世界 (The world of kids), were published in Japan.⁴⁰ In 1907, a total of twenty-one Chinese journals were published in Japan, also in much higher quantity than their counterparts in China within the same year.⁴¹ In terms of volume, the famous Tokyo-based revolutionary journal *The Tide of Zhejiang*, for example, issued a total of five thousand copies of its first four issues (the first and fourth issues were published in January and April, 1903, respectively). Five thousand copies were issued for the fifth, sixth and seventh issues, too (the seventh issue was published in July 1903).⁴²

According to Sanetō Keishū 實藤惠秀, the number of Chinese students studying in Japan had skyrocketed to 8000 students in the year 1905, compared with the mere 100 in 1903.⁴³ Wang Xiangrong estimated that there were 7285 Chinese students in Japan in 1905⁴⁴ and according to Li Xisuo there were 12,000 Chinese students in Japan 1906, but this figure dropped back down to 10,000 in 1907.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, Kojima Yoshio estimated that there were 5500 Chinese students in Japan in 1908 and 5200 in 1909.⁴⁶ What was important for the revolution, however, was the quality of these students' [ideas], rather than their numbers; the influence of the journals they published in Japan would soon reach mainland China. For instance, the Shanghai-based *Journal of National Essence* (*Guocui xuebao* 國粹學報), which trumpeted the reconstruction of traditional Chinese learning, and "Southern Society" (Nanshe 南社), the biggest literary society of the Late Qing, both had strong, interactive relationships with various

⁴⁰ Zhang Nan and Wang Renzhi, "Xuyan," in *Xinhai Geming qian shinian jian shilun xuanji*, vol. 1, 6, 9.

⁴¹ Sanetō Keishū 實藤惠秀, *Zhongguoren liuxue Riben shi*, 294.

⁴² Zhang Nan and Wang Renzhi, "Xuyan," in *Xinhai Geming qian shinian jian shilun xuanji*, vol. 1, 6, 9.

⁴³ Sanetō Keishū, *Zhongguoren liuxue Riben shi*, 318.

⁴⁴ Wang Xiangrong, *Riben jiaoxi*, 117.

⁴⁵ Li Xisuo, *Jindai Zhongguo de liuxuesheng*. Cited from Kojima Yoshio, *Ryūnichigakusei no shingaikakumei*, 13.

⁴⁶ Kojima Yoshio, *Ryūnichigakusei no shingaikakumei*, 13.

Japan-based journals. Established by both radical and reformist students in Tokyo, the journals demonstrated that the Late Qing Revolution was also a cultural movement whose active body consisted chiefly of radical students. For example, Zhang Taiyan's audience during his time spent in Japan had largely consisted of younger students, and even before going to Japan in 1906, he still tended to appeal to a younger crowd—such as members of the Southern Society.⁴⁷

On December 2 1906, Huang Xing 黃興 (1874–1916), who, together with Sun Yat-sen and Zhang Taiyan is revered as one of the “Three Nobles of the Revolution” (*geming sanzun* 革命三尊), gave a speech at the anniversary ceremony of *Minbao* in which he mentioned that [China's] revolution was a student movement. Huang made the following remarks to the young audience: “Since all of you now are students, let me talk about the responsibility of students.” He also made reference to fact that when Austria had taken advantage of the Russian Tsar's power to organize the “Holy Alliance,” it was thanks to the student protests against it that the revolutionary party eventually prevailed.⁴⁸

On the other hand, Mary Rankin laments about these radical student revolutionaries during the Late Qing Revolution in her book, stating that: “Lacking effective power or consistent methods, they were often driven to self-defeating, self-sacrificing acts. Like Qiu Jin, some traded their lives for moral triumph which they were sure would be acclaimed in the future.”⁴⁹ Here, Rankin's opinion of the revolutionaries comes across as rather pessimistic; however the young revolutionaries' mentor, Zhang Taiyan, a man who vehemently stressed and practiced moral values, regardless of his own life, believed that it was the moral staunchness of the student revolutionaries alone which had enabled them to conquer their fierce enemies. This, then, is precisely the meaning and essence of non-violent revolution.

The Taiping Rebellion as the “Armed-Force” part of the “Long Revolution”: The Taiping Rebellion as one of the Preconditions for the Late Qing Revolution Achieved through the Means of Culture and Self-Government

Regardless of how one chooses to evaluate the Taiping Rebellion, there exist

⁴⁷ Lin Shaoyang, “Zhang Taiyan yu ‘nanfang’ huayu: Zhang Taiyan yingxiang xia de Qingmo geming qingnian,” 94–123.

⁴⁸ Hunan sheng Shehui Kexueyuan eds., *Huang Xing ji*, 5.

⁴⁹ Rankin, *Early Chinese Revolutionaries: Radical Intellectuals in Shanghai and Chekiang, 1902–1911*, 1.

direct linkages and continuities between the Taiping Rebellion and the Late Qing Revolution which have, in the past, been neglected in several senses.

Among these was the devastation brought upon the Qing court and Chinese society by the Taiping Rebellion. Ho Ping-ti's research provides data to show how the Taiping Rebellion and its subsequent suppression had directly resulted in China's depopulation. Ho maintains that the estimated depopulation figure(s) for the period during and after the rebellion largely exceeds that of "20 to 30 million"—a number provided by nineteenth-century Western observers which was based on "the guesswork of treaty port residents."⁵⁰ As for the significant damages brought upon the Qing Court by the Taiping Army, the *Qingshigao* 清史稿 or *Draft History of the Qing*, a draft version of a formal, official history finished in 1927, states: "The war spread to more than ten provinces In those years the Court was not able to surmount [the Taiping challenge] until it had exhausted the efforts of the entire country. Nonetheless, it eventually sapped the Court's vitality, which presaged China's peril."⁵¹ The rebellion also had influence on foreign relations; John Fairbank pointed out that Vietnamese tribute relations had been deferred in 1854, 1856, 1860 and 1864 because of China's domestic situation, and that tribute(s) from Laos and Burma were also deferred in 1853 for the same reason.⁵²

Secondly, the Late Qing revolutionaries themselves regarded the Taiping Rebellion as the precursor of their nationalist revolution. This may be observed, for example, in the frequent appearances of essays, paintings, and photos on the Taiping Rebellion in *The People's Journal* (*Minbao*), the organ of the Chinese Revolutionary League (Tongmenghui). Here we may list off a few: A painting with the title of *Taiping Tianguo zhansheng Qingbing zhi zhenjing* 太平天國戰勝清兵之真景 appears in *Minbao* Vol. 4 (May, 1906), and Hong Xiuquan's 洪秀全 (1814–64, the leader of the Taiping Rebellion) portrait appears as the cover photo in its next issue; an essay with the title of "Ai Taiping Tianguo" 哀太平天國 written by Xinchuan 信川 was published in *Minbao* Vol. 18 (December, 1907); the supplementary issue "Tiantao" 天討 of *Minbao* (April, 1907) published an illustration titled "Taiping Tianguo yiwang yexiaotu" 太平天國翼王夜嘯圖; etc.

In September of 1906, Zhang Taiyan had also written his preface for *Hong Xiuquan yanyi* (The romance of Hong Xiuquan), a biographical novel on the life of Hong Xiuquan that was written by Huang Shizhong 黃世仲 (1872–1913), a Cantonese revolutionary and member of Tongmenghui. In 1904, Sun Yat-sen also

⁵⁰ Ping-ti Ho, *Studies on the Population of China, 1368–1953*, 246–47.

⁵¹ Zhang Erxun et al., *Qingshigao*, vol. 42, 12966.

⁵² John Fairbank, "The Early Treaty System in the Chinese World Order," 269.

wrote an introduction for *Taiping Tianguo zhanshi* (The fighting history of Taiping Heavenly Kingdom) by Han Gong 漢公, a revolutionary activist. Undoubtedly, the late Qing revolutionary radicals regarded themselves as the successors of the Taiping Rebellion, armed with their anti-Manchurian nationalism.

The Taiping Rebellion as the “Armed-Force” part of the “Long Revolution”: The Issue of the Gentry Class

Continuity between the Taiping Rebellion and the Late Qing Revolution is clearly manifest within the causal relationship between the Taiping Rebellion and the gentry’s subsequent expansion of political power. Existing research on the role that the gentry had in late Qing politics convincingly reveals direct and essential contributions made by the gentry in the Protection of Railway Rights Movement, the running of provincial assemblies and the transition to independence in fourteen provinces after the Wuchang Uprising. This, then, is precisely where the causal linkage between “self-government” and the Late Qing Revolution rests.

As mentioned earlier, Ho Ping-ti’s research revealed the enormous population loss which was brought about by the Taiping Rebellion. Chang Chung-li, by comparing the disparity in [population] totals between the pre-Taiping and post-Taiping era, clarified changes in the size of the gentry class in various provinces as well as their relationship to population totals before and after the Taiping period. According to his research, for instance, the number of gentry in Jiangsu province during the pre-Taiping period had accounted for 1.3 percent of the population, standing in contrast to the later 2.5 percent during the post-Taiping period. A similar rise in “percentage of gentry” may be observed in other provinces, too. For example, the size of the gentry in Zhejiang province accounted for 1.4 percent of the population during the pre-Taiping period, whereupon it greatly rose post Taiping, accounting for 5 percent of the total provincial population.⁵³ Chang’s definition of gentry ought to be noted here. He divides gentry into “regular” and “irregular” groups. The regular group was formerly formatted by the imperial examination (*keju* 科舉) and the irregular group was constituted of individuals which paid for their status (i.e., through the purchasing of academic titles). Thus the “regular” group enjoyed a higher prestige than those who had entered the gentry through “irregular” means—the purchasing of academic titles.⁵⁴ Chang’s definition was essentially predicated upon the *keju*

⁵³ Chung-li Chang, *The Chinese Gentry: Studies on Their Role in Nineteenth-Century Chinese Society*, 164 (Table 32).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6–10.

system, and had further divided the gentry into two hierarchical groups: “upper” and “lower.” The upper gentry were either officials, or those having been qualified for appointment to office, whereas members of the lower gentry still had yet to purchase office, or pass higher examinations (*sheng-yuan* with several subgroups).⁵⁵

Yet on the other hand, according to Ho’s statistical research on population loss incurred in certain regions affected by the Taiping Rebellion, Jiangsu’s population (including Shanghai) totalled at 44,155,000 in 1850, and increased slightly by 7.5 percent in 1953 to 47,456,609—thanks to the rise of Shanghai as the nation’s largest metropolis. Meanwhile, the population of Zhejiang province in 1850 was 23.8 percent less than that of the figure recorded in 1953. The aggregate population of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui and Jiangsi as of July 1953 was down 14 percent when compared with 1850 figures.⁵⁶ Based on [his research of] a large number of local chronicles from those affected regions, Ho cautiously concluded that the population loss had far exceeded what was the previous estimation of “twenty to thirty million people.”⁵⁷ In synthesizing the data provided by Chang and Ho’s studies, we may draw the conclusion that, in contrast to the striking population loss in regions affected by the Taiping Rebellion around the lower Yangtze River, the gentry—though narrowly defined by Chang in terms of an academic status achieved through imperial examination—increased by a wide margin, which means that the gentry class expanded significantly amid the Taiping Rebellion.

Here, I do not have my own primary sources with regard to the issue of the gentry class during the Taiping Rebellion. However, drawing on previous works of research looking at this issue, I would like to argue that an extended timeframe is necessary to view the Late Qing Revolution as a whole. If the late Qing transformation is viewed in such a way, it will then become clear that the Taiping Rebellion should be counted as the “armed-force” part of the late Qing transformation, and that it is this rebellion which had made self-government and revolution by means of culture possible.

Therefore, it is important here to mention Philip A. Kuhn’s book, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure* (1980), looking at the relationship between local militarization and local social structure from 1796 to the conquest of the Taiping Rebellion in 1864. In this book, he had shown that it was difficult for the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom to control rural areas due to its shortage of able well-trained carders and personnel, and, contrary to

⁵⁵ Ibid., 6–7.

⁵⁶ Ping-ti Ho, *Studies on the Population of China, 1368–1953*, 246.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 247.

what one might suppose, the power of local elites had expanded in the Taiping period.⁵⁸ As a consequence, according to Kuhn, the Taiping's "centers of rule" were limited to urban areas, which stood in striking contrast to Mao Zedong's later policy of using rural areas to encircle the cities. Kuhn's definition of an "elite" (gentry) is broader than that of Chung-li Chang's, splitting the class into the "national elite," "provincial elite" and "local elite." The "national elite" had influence that transcended its difference of regional origins and connections which reached up to the apex of national political life. By contrast, the "[local elite] . . . lacked the social prestige and powerful connections of the former two groups but might still wield considerable power in the society of village and market town."⁵⁹ The "provincial elite" thus lay somewhere in-between. Min Tu-ki's book, *National Polity and Local Power* (1974), is a well-known title about the political roles of the gentry in the Late Qing Revolution, though he did not deal very directly with the relations between the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the gentry class.⁶⁰

The logic here is simple: If we evaluate the essential role that the Taiping Rebellion had in the expansion of the gentry class, may we not also evaluate direct and indirect linkages among the Taiping Rebellion and the late Qing transformation [in the same manner]? Is it not limiting to view the Late Qing Revolution through a 20-year time frame—from the 1890s to 1910s? Because this increasing power held by local elites and local gentry had substantial meaning for the Late Qing Revolution including the reform movements, it is suffice to say that the Taiping Rebellion was thus a crucial factor in allowing for the Late Qing Revolution to take place in a relatively peaceful manner.

The Linkage between the Taiping Rebellion and the Pacifist Settlement of the Wuchang Uprising

The linkage between the Taiping Rebellion and the Late Qing revolution reveals that all the parties having a stake in the Wuchang Uprising had, to varying degrees, displayed marked determination in drawing lessons from the bloody aftermath of the Taiping Rebellion. As such, they all were inclined to seek peaceful settlements for the uprising which avoided violence. Liao Yuchun 廖宇春 (1870–1923), a former diplomat to Japan who had assisted the Beiyang warlord Duan Qirui 段祺瑞 (1865–1936) in his founding of the Beiyang Army Academy, held a closed door

⁵⁸ Philip A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies In Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796–1864*.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

⁶⁰ Min Tu-ki, *National Polity and Local Power: The Transformation of Late Imperial China*.

meeting with Gu Zhongchen 顧忠琛 (1880–1945), the representative of Tongmenghui's Huang Xing, in Shanghai on December 17, 1911. During the meeting, he promised to cooperate in the toppling of the Qing court on the condition that Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 (1859–1916) would be brought in as President of the new polity. To achieve this goal, Yuan Keding 袁克定 (1878–1955, Yuan Shikai's son), Duan Qirui and Jin Yunpeng 靳雲鵬 (1877–1951), a key Beiyang figure, secretly linked up all of the Beiyang armies so as to coerce the Qing court into agreeing to the founding of the Republic of China.⁶¹ Liao Yuchun recorded this process in great detail in his diary, which was later published under the title, “The Record of New China's Peaceful Settlement” (*Xin Zhongguo wuzhuang jiejie hepingji* 新中國武裝解決和平記, 1912). The revolutionary party, having accepted the condition proposed by the Beiyang army (appointing Yuan Shikai as President of the new Republic), agreed to the following: “1) the establishment of a republican polity; 2) the preferential treatment of the Qing Emperor; 3) he who is first to topple the Qing government will be the President of China; 4) military officers and men who have fulfilled their assigned duties on both fighting sides should receive preferential treatment without having to take responsibility for wartime injuries regardless of whether they are Southern or Northern, Manchurian, or Han Chinese; 5) at the same time, a temporary parliament should be organized so as to recover the provincial orders.”⁶² From these, it is evident that both sides had wanted to settle this military opposition peacefully. It is also worth noting that this desire for peaceful settlement was closely related to their memories of the thirteen years of turmoil which ensued following the start of the Taiping Rebellion. This can be observed clearly in Liao Yuchun's memorial to the throne, in which he stated that “the tragedy of Nanjing should serve as a warning to us (*Taicheng zhi can, ke wei yin jian* 台城之慘，可為殷鑒).⁶³ “The tragedy of Nanjing” refers to the turmoil brought about by the Taiping Rebellion, as [the revolutionaries] chose Nanjing as their capital city. Liao warned the Emperor in this memorial that, “if the Court deals with this matter without sincerity and only takes the interest of the Imperial house into account in the name of the ancestral temple of the Imperial house, it will inevitably bring the people misery, make our fellow countrymen bleed away their lives, and create hatred amongst different races.” If the Court conforms to the general trend of the times, Liao emphasised, “we shall be able to make the Manchu and Han peoples into one nationality. In doing so, we will be able to avoid the encroachment of foreign nations upon China and will thus be able to realize a democratic polity with a constitution without having to endure

⁶¹ Liao Yuchun, “Xin Zhongguo wuzhuang jiejie hepingji,” 302 (the editor's notes).

⁶² *Ibid.*, 320 (Liao Yuchun's record).

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 311.

any bloodshed and will be able to make the nation peaceful.”⁶⁴ Liao’s stance, which represented the attitude of the Beiyang Army, was also shared by all the concerned parties including the revolutionaries and the Emperor.

On February 12, 1912 Puyi, the last Qing Emperor, issued an edict entitled [the] “Imperial Edict on the Abdication of the Qing Emperor” (*Qingdi tuiwei zhaoshu* 清帝退位詔書). After their successful victory, the winning revolutionary party refrained from taking violent action against the losing Qing court members just to “settle the score.” In sum, the Late Qing Revolution was relatively peaceful in nature.⁶⁵ Unlike later revolutions which took place in China, it did not plunge the people into misery and suffering. As such, it is worthy of greater praise. In the author’s view, it should be remembered as a revolution which was greatly aided by local self-government politics and, in particular, non-violent revolutionary action—namely culture and words (*wen*). Furthermore, without the “contributions” of the Taiping Rebellion, it is difficult to imagine how such a peaceful revolution could take place in Chinese history.

Conclusion

The cultural and linguistic dimensions of revolution have hitherto been suppressed by historical narratives which generally emphasize its more violent ones. Indeed, by analyzing the discourse of contemporary events and historical figures we may better understand how they actually perceived the concept of revolution. For example, right before the success of the revolution on September 26, 1911 an article was published in the *Guanghua Daily* (*Guanghua ribao* 光華日報), a newspaper published in Penang by overseas Chinese in Malaysia, entitled “A Commentary on Current Affairs: The Great Merits of Script” (*Shipping: Wenzigong* 時評：文字功) which lavished praise on Zhang Taiyan and Zou Rong. The article stated: “revolution rests on action and not on empty talk. However, if the theory is sufficient, it helps to make actual practices thrive. The great achievements of today’s revolutionary forces stem from their writing (Zhang Taiyan and Zou Rong).”⁶⁶ Here, a contemporary writer who witnessed the revolution attributes the success of the Late Qing Revolution to Zhang’s revolutionary theory,

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ This fact matters to Yuan Shikai’s essential role in process of the pacific settlement of the uprising. Qu Jun pointed out in his recent book that even Li Dazhao 李大釗 (1889–1927), one of the founding member of Chinese Communist Party later, contributed an enthusiastic essay to sing his praise for Yuan in 1912. Qu Jun, *Tianxia weixue shuo lie*, 46–48. Li Dazhao, “Zhina fenge zhi yunming boyi,” 281–84.

⁶⁶ Cited from Tang Zhijun, *Zhang Taiyan nianpu changbian: 1868–1918*, 361.

therefore demonstrating how contemporary witnesses did not possess a view on the revolution which attributed its success to the armed uprisings. Another editorial published on the same date by the *Minlibao*, one of the three main journals of the Shanghai-based revolutionary camp, announced the news of Zhang's return to Shanghai from Japan, praising Zhang highly: "The achievements of our nation today were down to the power of our great literary giant. We hope that all patriots shall respect him as the new China's Rousseau."⁶⁷

While stressing the importance of the role Tokyo played as a base camp for the Late Qing Revolution, this paper thus begs the question: how have contemporary Japanese citizens perceived the revolution? Takeuchi Zensaku 竹内善作 (1885–1951), a famous Japanese socialist and member of the Association of Asiatic Humanitarian Brotherhood (created by Zhang Taiyan in 1907), recalled in 1948 that "at that time, it was not Sun Yan-sen's words, but the power of Zhang Taiyan's pen that encouraged the morals of Chinese revolutionaries most."⁶⁸

Although mentioned from time to time, the Late Qing Revolution is essentially a "forgotten cultural revolution." The fact that it has been forgotten stems from the idea that language is nothing but a tool, copy, substitution, or representation of something or some idea. Such thinking is typical of Western metaphysics,⁶⁹ which was criticized by Jacques Derrida as "phonocentrism."⁷⁰ Incidentally, this critique of Derrida's was also highly influential in modern East Asia. As a matter of fact, language is not a copy, representation, or substitution of something. Rather, it can produce and create novel reality(s) and novel things. However, under the influence of this utility-based attitude towards language, the significance of the autonomy of language has been neglected. As such, written text and journalism have been regarded as nothing more than passive representations of the "idea of revolution," and regarded as secondary in importance to armed uprisings. Consequently, language's power as a strong and necessary weapon to form and consolidate a revolutionary subject, and its power to deconstruct despotic, colonial and imperial ideologies, has not been evaluated in its full potential.

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⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Takeuchi Zensaku 竹内善作, "Meiji makki nicchū kakumei undo no kōyū" 明治末期日中革命運動の交流, 80.

⁶⁹ See W. J. T. Mitchell, "Representation," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, 339–53.

⁷⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*.

in content. Lin Shaoyang, *Dingji geming yu Zhang Taiyan figu de xinwenhua yundong* (Revolution by Means of Culture: The Late Qing Revolution and Zhang Taiyan from 1900 to 1911). Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2018.

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