Finding the Way: Guomindang Discourse, Confucius, and the Challenges of Revolutionary Traditionalism in China, 1919–1934

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Abstract

Between 1919 and 1934, as members of China's Guomindang (Nationalist Party) struggled to take control of and transform the country, they increasingly appropriated language and symbols associated with the fallen Qing Dynasty. At the same time, these were accompanied in party discourse by radical appeals that included strong critiques of China's past.

In this they were far from unique: studies of nationalisms around the world have found them to combine appeals to the new and the old. Yet in China this combination incited particular controversy, as Guomindang members and others, wrestling with the cultural legacy of the empire, put forward powerfully radical critiques not only of the culture of the past but also of traditionalist appeals to it. The result was distinctive textual practices I term 'revolutionary traditionalism', which appropriated cultural elements of the imperial orthodoxy while reconciling these appropriations with radical language. Yet this revolutionary traditionalism could not unproblematically form a unified modern nationalist orthodoxy. Radical and traditionalist positions in regard to culture recurred through power struggles within and beyond the party.

Through these struggles, by the end of the 1920s revolutionary traditionalism came to characterise the new Nationalist Government formed by Guomindang members in Nanjing. While like other nationalists Guomindang members reinvented the language and symbols to which they appealed, however, the case of Confucius shows that they could not unilaterally control these reinterpretations. The central place of Confucius in national culture was established through a process of negotiation, as groups identifying themselves as 'Confucian' petitioned the state, appropriating its own traditionalist discourse, for recognition and commemoration. Yet these Confucians, pursuing their own often religious agendas, also cast doubt on the authenticity of the state's commitment. Revolutionary traditionalism thus remained unstable, repeatedly challenged both from radical and traditionalist positions.

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Introduction

> With the rise of the revolutionary army the call to 'smash the Confucian shop' sounded across the country, and on its founding the national government ended the Confucian sacrifices. Now... those who denigrated Confucius do their best to venerate him... we are left bewildered; human affairs seem more inconstant than the clouds...
>
> Recent years have seen the most extreme contradictions between the new and the old: where leading figures strive in their words and deeds to 'restore antiquity', the young lean to the left. These [ways of thinking]... are never seen together.[1]

For an anonymous author in the *National News Weekly* (*Guowen zhoubao*) journal in 1934, the celebration of Confucius meant the end of revolution. In 1911 the Qing dynasty had fallen, replaced by the unstable Republic of China. While political authority soon fragmented, however, the twice-annual sacrifices to the Sage remained as a legacy of the imperial era, carried out by those who (often unconvincingly) claimed national power in Beijing. This continuity seemed to have been severed early in 1928: as the avowedly revolutionary Guomindang fought its way from Guangdong in the south to finally take control of Beijing, the national government established in its name in Nanjing ended the sacrifices, declaring them incompatible with the new Republic. Six years later, however, the government announced in a burst of publicity that Confucius' birthday was to become a national holiday marked by grand ritual. In this and other commentaries, at the time and in subsequent years, the reversal in Confucius' fortunes was emblematic of a wider transformation in the government's standpoint: the radical cultural agenda of a revolutionary party appeared to have given way to a conservative effort by those in power to 'restore antiquity'.

As this thesis will show, however, this 'veneration' was an expression of a tendency Guomindang discourse had long featured: revolutionary traditionalism. This combination of iconoclastic radicalism and positive claims to symbols associated with the national past was a consistent feature of revolutionary propaganda throughout the 1920s. Increasingly emphasised in key texts, traditionalist claims grew to a position of dominance by the end of the 1920s. The events of the 1930s thus marked not a reversal but an intensification of this tendency and its concentration on the specific symbol of

[1] Anonymous, 'You fei Kong dao zun Kong' [From Getting Rid of Confucius to Revering Confucius], *Guowen zhoubao* 11.35 (September 3 1934)

Confucius.

Revolutionary traditionalism was not, however, a non-controversial union: the relationship between radical and traditionalist claims was a fraught one. The modernist paradigm of nationalism, which has dominated much historical work on twentieth-century China, appears to render the place of 'tradition' in a revolutionary state natural and unproblematic. The Guomindang's 'turn' is readily understood as an appeal to symbols of an ostensibly shared past common to modern nationalisms across the globe, entirely compatible with industrialising, socially transformative efforts: native culture need not be equated with political conservatism. Margaret Clinton, for example, writes that '[i]t would be difficult to find a nationalist project which did not seek to differentiate what is particular to itself by piecing together an inherited past, or an anti-colonial nationalism which did not in some way affirm received traditions denigrated and decimated by imperialism'.[2] This insight is valuable, as is viewing the Guomindang in a wider context of cultural nationalism in Japan, Italy, Germany, Spain and other countries. Yet this scholarship tends to obscure the difficulties involved in establishing this simultaneous appeal to national past and future: for present-day scholars the use of Confucius and other symbols of the Chinese past might be unproblematic, but for the commentator above and others it involved 'extreme contradictions'. The under-analysed shifts of the 1920s reveal tensions particular to China, the Guomindang, and the cultural legacy of the pre-revolutionary empire.

These tensions are evident in the Guomindang party discourse on which this thesis focuses. The party was at best only nominally united in the 1920s, and 'national culture' was produced in power struggles as a sphere of contestation. In the writings of party members, radical and traditionalist claims about Chinese culture both defined and served political agendas, defining the writer's position and identifying and attacking enemies. Through these contests, by the end of the 1920s revolutionary traditionalism had emerged as a defining feature of the Nanjing state, but even amongst nominally united party members the tensions could not be reconciled: revolutionary traditionalism did not constitute a stable orthodoxy, and instead remained open to challenge and rival interpretations.

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[2] Margaret Clinton, 'Fascism, Cultural Revolution, and Sovereignty in 1930s China' (Doctoral thesis, New York University, 2009), 10. See also Brian Tsui, 'China's Forgotten Revolution: Radical Conservatism in Action, 1927–1949' (Doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 2013)

Tradition, Modernity, and the Guomindang

Previous scholarship has not captured the struggles this thesis describes. This is in part because, in contrast to that of its great rival the Communist Party, there has been little detailed study of Guomindang discourse.[3] Yet the appeals to the past here defined as revolutionary traditionalism have long been central to characterisations of the party, taking the form of more or less explicit presentations of what can be described as its temporal orientation: whether the party acted as a transformative, radical force or a conservative one. Various of these appeals, typically captured by the overall term 'tradition', have appeared in these accounts in three chief ways: first, and generally earliest, as elements holding the party back from being modern; second as political resources for a generic modern nationalism; and third as definitive features of an alternative modernity which could distinctively shape the party's agenda.

In the earliest historical work on the Guomindang under Chiang Kaishek tradition defined the party as conservative in a thoroughly negative sense, and helped to explain the party's 'failure' given the victory of the Communist Party in 1949 and its rivals' flight to Taiwan.[4] For John King Fairbank, Guomindang appeals to the past could only be 'confused atavism' without any 'solution to the fundamental problems of China's adaptation to modern life'.[5] Similarly, Mary Wright's analysis echoed the *National News Weekly* quote in seeing a turn from 'revolution' to the attempted 'restoration' of the social order (though not the state form) of the late Qing. Though the party continued to claim that it represented revolution, it in practice 'redefined the term in a precisely opposite sense'.[6]

Fairbank and Wright did not endorse Communist-affiliated judgements of the Guomindang as repressing (ultimately unsuccessfully) the Communist Party's truly

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[3] See e.g. Michael Schoenhals, *Doing Things with Words in Chinese Politics* (Berkeley: Center for Chinese Studies, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1992), David Apter and Tony Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994)

[4] See Julia Strauss' discussion of these narratives in 'The Evolution of Republican Government' in Frederic Wakeman and Richard Edmonds, eds., *Reappraising Republican China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 75

[5] John King Fairbank, *The United States and China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 255

[6] Mary Wright, 'From Revolution to Restoration: the Transformation of Kuomintang Ideology', *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 14.4 (August 1955) pp. 515-32, 521

radical, authentically modern revolution. However, they share with these narratives the presentation of the Guomindang as conservative.[7] In such accounts, the cultural orientation and political ambitions of the Guomindang are conflated: backward-looking cultural references are natural symptoms of an ineffective and fundamentally reactionary Guomindang government, which could not represent modernity for China. For writers in the People's Republic of China, the espousal of values and symbols evocative of–and in their view, drawn directly from–China's dynastic empires have naturally served the purposes of autocratic rule and social control.[8] Even more recent verdicts, which have tended to be more sympathetic to Chiang Kaishek by presenting him as a misguided patriot and as committed to China's modernisation, have by their valuing of 'modernity' presented Guomindang appeals to the past as inherently flawed and evidence of the incompleteness and contradictions of the party's modernity project.[9]

What these accounts share is the failure of the Guomindang to be 'modern'. They thus evoke modernisation theory's binary of 'modernity' and 'tradition', aptly summarised by Arif Dirlik as a model presenting modern history around the world as a zero-sum competition between these terms understood as mutually exclusive, holistic categories, with modernisation bringing about an inevitable, though unequally fast, march toward a single world culture characterised by 'scientific/technological development, a sense of history driven by its commitment to progress, the political institutions associated with parliamentary democracy, and the social primacy of the individual'.[10] In this binary view

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[7] See e.g. the characterisation of the Guomindang as representing China's 'bourgeois revolution', promoting national equality and independence and an improved version of parliamentary democracy, but hamstrung by its inability to deal with the economic problems of capitalism in Liu Jianqing, Wang Jiadian, Xu Liangbo, *Zhongguo Guomindang shi* [A History of the Chinese Guomindang] (Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1992), 7

[8] E.g. Luo Yuming, '1934 nian Nanjing zhengfu zun Kong si Kong huodong shuping' [The Nanjing Government's Reverence for and Sacrifices to Confucius in 1934], *Huaihua xueyuan xuebao* 28.9 (2009) 56–58; Shen Decheng, 'Dai Jitao zhuyi qiantan' [Brief Discussion of Dai Jitaoism], *Chuancheng* 6 (2008), 90–91. The argument that social oppression was the logical function of classical references is not unique to Chinese writers. In his textbook on early 20th century China, Peter Zarrow also argues that 'the entire neo-traditional approach was (naturally) being used to impose autocratic measures': Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2005), 265

[9] Gao Hua, 'Guomin zhengfu quanwei de jianli jiqi kunjing' [The Construction and Predicament of Authority in the National Government] in Xu Jilin, Chen Dakai, eds., *Zhongguo xiandaihua shi* [History of Modernisation in China] 1 (Shanghai Sanlian shudian, 2007), 362

[10] Arif Dirlik, 'Guoxue/National Learning in the Age of Global Modernity', *China Perspectives* 1 (2011), 4. Dirlik fittingly refers to this projected future as 'Euromodernity', with Europe and the USA serving as presumed spatial origin and model for the process of modernisation; originally 'traditional' societies outside Europe were thereby condemned to follow–or fail to follow–in the footsteps of the western model, discarding their local 'traditional' characteristics in order to reach the universal standards of a modern existence. Naturally, Chinese Communist Party-friendly accounts put forward a different vision of modernity, opposed to capitalist 'Euromodernity', but it is likewise universal, constructed against local tradition.

progress toward these universal goals would result in a corresponding decline of local, traditional features.

Subsequent work has tended to reverse these judgements, taking seriously the party's revolutionary rhetoric and seeing it as attempting social transformations only less radical in comparison with those of the Communist Party.[11] Lloyd Eastman's classic account, while keeping to the general focus on Guomindang failure, presented the optimistically radical visions of party leaders as frustrated both by weaknesses within the party and by the thoroughly destructive invasion of the country by the Japanese military in the 1930s.[12] Work since Eastman's has sought to avoid the assumption of failure and consequently identified significant continuities between the Guomindang and Communist Party regimes as well as wide-reaching changes in the social reality of China.[13]

One sign of this shared radicalism is explicit attacks on cultural elements identified as 'old'. Most notable here has been work, following Prasenjit Duara, on thoroughgoing attacks by representatives of the Guomindang party-state on popular religion.[14] As Rebecca Nedostup has shown, iconoclastic tendencies crossed the party, including those conventionally identified as 'conservatives' as well as 'radicals', and moreover continued to characterise the party throughout the 1920s and 1930s, over the period Mary Wright had identified with a turn away from revolution.[15]

In focusing on novelty and sometimes explicitly iconoclastic radicalism, however, these accounts have tended to leave the place of appeals to the past under-analysed, and as a result have retained key elements of the tradition-modernity binary. Joseph Levenson's eloquent version of the binary is a key influence here, presenting the 'traditionalism' of twentieth century 'Confucianism' as necessarily inauthentic, irrevocably removed from the 'tradition' of its premodern cultural context.[16]

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[11] William Kirby, *Germany and Republican China*, (Palo Alto: Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 45

[12] Lloyd E. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China Under Nationalist Rule, 1927-1937* (Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1990), xii-xiii

[13] Ernest P. Young, Introduction in Terry Bodenhorn , ed.: *Defining Modernity: Guomindang Rhetorics of a New China, 1920-1970*. (Michigan: University of Michigan, 2002), 5-6

[14] Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*; Rebecca Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes: Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009).

[15] Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 17. See also Paul Katz, *Religion in China and its Modern Fate* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2014), 17–49

[16] Joseph Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: a Trilogy* Vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California

Levenson's argument was largely psychological, stressing the 'emotional feeling' for individual Chinese thinkers of claiming something as their own in the face of unavoidable transformation along fundamentally foreign lines.[17] By contrast, more recent explanations of Guomindang evocations of the Chinese past have focused on their political utility. Nedostup, for instance, suggests that certain Guomindang leaders in the 1930s turned to heroic figures of the past, including Confucius, in the interests of 'national unity', evoking a shared community, authentically existing across time and space.[18] Nedostup's argument recalls Eastman's claim that 'Confucianism… was not propounded as a goal in itself, but as a moral ingredient that would contribute to the cohesiveness of the Chinese people as they moved forward to a new society'.[19] Joseph Fewsmith's explanation is similar, although more specific in identifying how unity was to be realised: '[t]he attempt to "combine the best of China's past with the best of the modern West" was, in effect, a *promise of co-optation* [of local elites] in the midst of a revolutionary movement'.[20] William Wei similarly addresses the New Life Movement launched in 1934, generally viewed as the peak of conservative claims, arguing that '[i]t was assumed that the revitalization of traditional Confucian values would appeal to the conservatism of the rural elite and elicit from them a personal commitment to the government and its programs', although in Wei's account this assumption proved wrong as the elite's status no longer depended upon the imperial examination system that had supported those values.[21]

These visions of the utility of references to the past unwittingly retain something of the tradition–modernity binary, in that the goal that they serve is nationalism, a thoroughly modern one irrevocably cut off from the Chinese past. The Guomindang, removed from the tradition by already being 'modern', could only be inauthentic users of tradition: Eastman directly recalls Levenson by arguing that the Guomindang's 'Confucianism' was not 'a goal in itself'.

Press, 1968), 106-108.

[17] Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: a Trilogy* Vol. 1, xii.

[18] Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 268

[19] Eastman, 'The Nanking Decade 1927–1937', in Lloyd E. Eastman, Jerome Ch'en, Suzanne Pepper, Lyman P. van Slyke, *The Nationalist Era in China 1927–1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 31.

[20] Joseph Fewsmith, *Party, State, and Local Elites in Republican China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), 112

[21] William Wei, *Counterrevolution in China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985), 76, 79-80.

This point is made explicit in Els Van Dongen's thesis on conservatism in twentieth-century China. Van Dongen defines conservatism as a mode of thought 'critical of the [linear and mechanical] time consciousness of modernity', arguing against 'progressivism' and 'against an abstract reason that does away with the local, the particular, and the historically grown'. This true conservatism, however, is reserved exclusively for certain intellectuals: the approach of Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang, by contrast, is an instrumental "traditionalism" in service of, rather than critiquing, a 'modernization project'.[22] Likewise, Rana Mitter excludes the Guomindang from authentically distinctive nationalist movements: unlike 'hybrid interpretations of what "modernity" meant' in India, the Middle East, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia, in China 'both the Nationalists and the Communists were secular and drew on western political models in their intellectual derivations and assumptions'.[23] The Guomindang's nationalism is thus imported, a 'derivative discourse', which is not meaningfully, distinctively shaped by the 'traditions' it deploys.[24]

The Guomindang thus appears as an example of what Anthony Smith describes as the instrumentalist 'modernist' approach in nationalism studies, or indeed of more recent 'post-modernist' developments viewing nations as 'the creations of nationalist elites for whom 'the ethnic past they select and invoke... is determined by nothing other than the present interests and needs of [these] elites who use nationalist projects to seize and maintain themselves in power'.[25] Guomindang uses of the past appear to fit the 'invention of tradition' model of modernising nationalism, according to which 'traditions', transformed from past practices or wholly invented but claiming continuity with those of the past, serve as unifying symbols for the national community and are used as such by elites, such as the Guomindang, seeking to transform society in their

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[22] Els van Dongen, 'Goodbye Radicalism!: Conceptions of Conservatism Among Chinese Intellectuals During the Early 1990s' (Doctoral Thesis, Leiden University, 2009), 21, 37. The reassessment of Chinese conservatism was sparked by Charlotte Furth, ed., *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976). Since then, notable examples have included study of the turn-of-the-century National Essence group (Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity–China, 1900-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 239-56) and Critical Review groups (Tze-ki Hon, 'National Essence, National Learning, and Culture' in *Historiography East and West* 1.2 (2003), 242–86), the academic discourse of *guoxue* or 'national learning' (Dirlik, 'Guoxue/National Learning in the Age of Modernity'), and individual writers, e.g. Susan Daruvala, *Zhou Zuoren and an Alternative Chinese Response to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000).

[23] Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution,* 111

[24] Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (London, Zed Books, 1993)

[25] See Anthony Smith, 'The Shifting Landscapes of "Nationalism"', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 8.2 (2008), 321, 325

image.[26]

As Smith suggests, the result of such approaches is a reductive 'historical foreshortening', 'preclud[ing] the study of relations between present activities and past legacies and traditions'.[27] While the retrospective view of a distinctive past may be a common feature of nationalisms, this general rule does not explain how nationalists deal with specific cultural elements and how these elements might challenge or shape their projects.

A third viewpoint on 'tradition', evident more recently, has the advantage of stressing the distinctiveness of Guomindang visions of the nation by uniting the Guomindang's 'conservatism' with its 'radicalism': the former is no longer simply a propaganda tool but a defining characteristic of the party. In making this point, however, Brian Tsui does not stress Chinese uniqueness–the opposite, in fact, as he ties the Guomindang into global trends. In Tsui's account the Guomindang 'conservative revolution' is distinctive in joining with others, most notoriously those of Italian Fascism and German Nazism, in putting forward an authentically modern approach that nonetheless posed a distinctive challenge to key elements of capitalist, liberal democratic modernity, including (*pace* Van Dongen) its 'abstract and linear time'.[28]

While opposed to Dirlik's 'Euromodernity' and defined by its claim to tradition, however, this version of the Guomindang still allows little room for distinctively Chinese features. That the 'traditions' deployed could shape the party's nationalism into something unique is suggested by Jennifer Oldstone-Moore's account of the 1930s New Life Movement, which takes seriously Guomindang claims to have inherited traditional, 'Confucian' ideas and practices.[29] Her approach builds on longstanding criticisms of Levenson's

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[26] Hobsbawm, Eric J., and Ranger, Terence O., eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)

[27] Anthony Smith, 'History and National Destiny: Responses and Clarifications', *Nations and Nationalism* 10.1–2 (2004), 195–209, 196

[28] Brian Tsui, 'China's Forgotten Revolution: Radical Conservatism in Action, 1927–1949' (Doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 2013), 11, 253

[29] Jennifer Oldstone-Moore, 'The New Life Movement of Nationalist China: Confucianism, State Authority, and Moral Formation' (Doctoral thesis, University of Chicago, 2000) passim. Federica Ferlanti follows Oldstone-Moore in describing 'state Confucian' elements in the New Life Movement: Ferlanti, 'The New Life Movement in Jiangxi Province, 1934-1938', *Modern Asian Studies* 44 (2010). 961-1000. Frederic Wakeman Jr. had earlier suggested, through the notion of 'Confucian Fascism', that 'the classic Neo-Confucian view of community hierarchy and lineage solidarity', absorbed by Chiang Kai-shek during his upbringing, had shaped the party's agenda along with foreign influences in the 1930s: Wakeman Jr., 'A Revisionist View of the Nanjing Decade: Confucian Fascism' in Frederic Wakeman Jr.

assumptions, suggesting how 'Confucianism' could be transformed in the twentieth century without being 'museumified' or made inherently false. As Rana Mitter notes, for example, '[t]here is a space to be found between the radical May Fourth argument that the twentieth century saw the death of Confucianism... and the argument, still sometimes heard today, that China has remained a Confucian state and culture, that Chiang Kaishek and Mao were simply returning to the Dragon Throne, and that the hierarchies of premodern China are preserved largely intact. For Confucianism did not stay the same in the twentieth century, any more than something called "Christianity" was the same system of beliefs in 1700 or 2000 that it was in 1100 or 500'.[30] Oldstone-Moore, however, goes further by describing this reinvention in the political sphere, which for Van Dongen and others could only be one of inauthentic utility.

These more recent accounts therefore overturn binary assumptions, showing how the Guomindang could be both 'conservative' and 'radical'. What is missing, however, is the struggle evident in the quote that opened this thesis. In neither the vision of tradition as an inauthentic, generic tool, nor tradition as a distnctive, agenda-defining element, do we see the 'extreme contradictions between the new and the old'. We need to understand the struggle captured here without restoring the assumptions of an inherently incompatible 'tradition' and 'modernity', 'old' and 'new' that cast a long shadow over the debates of the 1920s and 1930s, and further down in time through subsequent historical verdicts. By focusing on these struggles we can understand the complex and distinctive processes through which nationalism was constructed in Guomindang discourse–processes in which revolutionary traditionalism played a vital role.

Methodological framework

These processes are understood here by addressing Guomindang discourse as a field of struggle, rather than a fixed, singular ideology (in the commonly-used sense of a 'systematic body of ideas').[31] We are dealing with a wide range of texts, including journal and newspaper articles and speeches, published and republished, which are unified by

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and Richard L. Edmonds, eds., *Reappraising Republican China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[30] Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution*, 113. Note, however, that as noted earlier Mitter denies that 'Confucianism' meaningfully shaped the Guomindang's political project: in his account continuations and adaptations of pre-existing norms therefore appear to be a feature of the intellectual sphere, but, as with Van Dongen, there is deemed to be a fundamental inauthenticity to their political use.

[31] E.g. Gunther Kress and Robert Hodge, *Language as Ideology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 16

their being produced, transmitted and read by those who affiliated themselves with the Guomindang, often through the medium of publications directly linked to the party's institutions. It is these institutional links that enable us to identify a broad field of 'Guomindang discourse'.

This field was made up of technologies of persuasion newly introduced to China, including a diversity of journals, newspapers and other publications linked to factions and individuals within the party, pursuing different agendas and aiming at different readerships. These included, for example, pamphlets explicitly addressing and seeking to persuade fellow Guomindang members, as well as the newspaper *Republican Daily* (*Minguo ribao*), which was relatively indirectly affiliated with the party and was a commercial venture in the burgeoning Shanghai media landscape.

As David Strand has shown, public speeches were an important part of these new developments, as Guomindang and other figures strove '[t]o reach as many individuals, groups, and communities as possible'.[32] Sun Yatsen, leader and (after his death in 1925) figurehead of the party, built his career on giving speeches to win support, and many of the most important texts in the chapters that follow were originally given as speeches.[33] Strand's work points to a (largely invisible) level of expression and debate, in spoken reactions to speeches and texts, with which this thesis does not deal. However, speeches by important figures were recorded, edited, and published and republished: the textual forms addressed here are thus the forms in which their creators intended them to reach wider reading audiences.

The Guomindang discursive field, although defined in institutional terms, was characterised by rupture and contention. In principle, no ideology can attain full hegemony and be free from controversy, since meaning cannot be dictated and alternative readings and counter-claims may always occur. As Michèle Barrett summarises Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's argument, 'ideology is a vain attempt to impose closure on a social world whose essential characteristic is the infinite play of differences and the impossibility of any ultimate fixing of meaning'.[34] However, this does not make

[32] David Strand, *An Unfinished Republic: Leading by Word and Deed in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 168
[33] Strand, *Unfinished Republic*, 237–40
[34] Michèle Barrett, *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 78. See also Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic*

all such attempts equal: the discourse generated by the CCP, for example, appears in analyses such as those of David Apter, Tony Saich and Harriet Evans to be relatively stable, limiting the proliferation of meanings.[35] Guomindang discourse in the formative period studied here, by contrast, featured often open contention between party individuals and factions: there were multiple, rival 'attempts to impose closure'. The difference may be located in the fact that the CCP was sufficiently strong and centrally organized that dissent could be suppressed, whereas even after the formation of a 'National Government in 1927 the Guomindang lacked this unity.

Focusing on texts as part of on-going struggles means that reconstructing their contexts is vital. The texts discussed here were often polemical, written (and spoken) against named targets, and are to be understood with reference to the identities and positions within the party of authors and journals. Although broadly affiliated with the Guomindang, the journals discussed here sometimes explicitly represented specific factions within the divided party. Audiences, intended and actual, also varied, particularly with the aforementioned transition of texts from speeches to publication: spoken efforts to persuade party members or soldiers could reach a wider readership by publication in newspapers and journals. At the same time, publication of texts placed them into new contexts; articles putting forward different visions of the nation and the party could be juxtaposed in journals, while other texts such as advertising accompanied and framed these arguments.[36]

These texts cannot, however, be reduced to their contexts: they were not simply tools, products or symptoms of pre-constituted political positions. Rather, through their proliferation of meanings they shaped the political landscape and the positions of their authors, readers and the people and factions they referenced. As Foucault put it '[d]iscourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle; discourse is the power which is to be seized'.[37] Seen in this light, individuals and factions within the Guomindang sought to

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Politics (London: Verso, 2001), passim.

[35] Apter and Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic*, Harriet Evans, 'The Language of Liberation: Gender and *Jiefang* in Early Chinese Communist Party Discourse' in Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, ed., *Twentieth-Century China: New Approaches* (London: Routledge, 2003), 193–220

[36] Michel Hockx has coined the term 'horizontal reading' to describe 'the spatial relation between texts published in the same issue of the same journal': Hockx, *Questions of Style: Literary Societies and Literary Journals in Modern China* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 118

[37] Michel Foucault (tr. Ian McLeod), 'The Order of Discourse' in Robert Young, ed., *Untying the Text: A*

seize control of the party's political projects through discourse that defined those projects, the modern Chinese nation, the place of the party, and the positions of those with a stake in it.

In making these efforts, however, speakers and writers could not monopolise the meanings of the texts they produced; these formed part of a pre-existing web of texts, within and outside the institutionally defined field of Guomindang discourse. This view follows that of Roland Barthes: following Julia Kristeva's elaboration of intertextuality, the text is 'a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture'. [38] The texts that make up this discourse accordingly appropriated existing terms which carried their own associations for different audiences, and which were open to multiple reinterpretations by friendly and hostile readers, including those who responded with their own texts.

Within this struggle, this thesis focuses on the particularly controversial elements generally deemed 'old'. These elements were open to claims defined here as 'radical' and 'traditionalist'. Neither of these terms is defined by specific, fixed content; rather, they are terms used heuristically, to describe positions repeatedly constituted and re-constituted in Guomindang discourse, which may be broadly defined by their orientation towards time. 'Radical' here refers either to celebrations of explicitly 'new' cultural elements or to attacks on other elements identified as 'old', while 'traditionalist' positions involved claiming positive value for ideas and practices identified as deriving from the Chinese past. Both radical and traditionalist claims therefore represent diverse textual practices, which could incorporate quotation of prior texts (such as the classic texts canonised under the imperial regime) references to these texts and to symbolic figures such as Confucius and Mencius, or, more abstractly, statements and arguments about the nation's relation to its past in general (through positive or negative use of such terms as 'new', 'old', 'modern', 'ancient'). In looking at the use and re-use of cultural resources in this way, this thesis thus follows Jennifer May's analysis of quotational practices, whereby 'the authority of a quotation derives from its canonical origin, yet this authority is

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Post-Structuralist Reader (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 51–78, 52–53

[38] Roland Barthes (tr. Stephen Heath), 'The Death of the Author' in Barthes, *Image Music Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 143–148

bestowed upon the canon by quoting its parts'.[39] By analysing traditionalist textual practices, however, I focus on a wider range of practices for invoking or attacking elements associated with the past, including but not limited to quotation.

Working from these generalised positions, this study brackets the question of authenticity: it is not concerned with whether the elements attacked or valorised were truly 'old', in the sense of having recognisable links to preceding ideas and practices (or, for that matter, to what extent 'new' elements were genuinely unprecedented). In this sense, although inspired by Anthony Smith's questioning of the 'modernist' approach to nationalism, this thesis is not an investigation into the *longue durée* of cultural elements which fed into modern Chinese nationalism. Instead, both 'new' and 'old' are here treated as constructions within discourse. 'New' and 'old' were labels applied to diverse cultural elements by radical and traditionalist claims: an individual could make a critical, radical attack on a given symbol as a harmful legacy of the past while arguing that another, likewise attributed to China's past, could continue to have value. Which features could be defined as 'old' and 'new', positive and negative, was precisely the issue around which struggle took place.

Situated in a field of conflict, such constructions could never be unilateral. Since they were political moves in relation to other texts, positive and negative quotations and references to 'old' and 'new' elements were always open to responses and challenges. An element identified, whether positively or negatively, as 'old' and therefore part of a pre-existing cultural tradition had impact insofar as it provoked recognition and response: these elements therefore tended to be polyvalent and elicit controversy. It is here that we can identify the heated discursive struggle around revolutionary and traditionalist claims without either invoking the inherent binary conflict between 'tradition' and 'modernity' or seeing 'tradition' as a tool of or unproblematic part of modern nationalism. Those elements deemed old, in the specific context of China in the 1920s, were the objects of political claims and counter-claims.

Argument of this thesis

This framework allows us to address questions left unanswered by existing historical

[39] Jennifer May, 'Sources of Authority: Quotational Practice in Chinese Communist Propaganda' (Doctoral thesis, Heidelberg University, 2008), 296–97

literature, and so put forward a new view of the development of the Guomindang and nationalism in China.

The first contribution made by this thesis is a chronological one, in that work addressing traditionalism within the Guomindang in detail has typically focused on the 1930s to the exclusion of the preceding decade: the result is a sudden turn much like that described in the *National News Weekly* article with which I started this chapter. Arif Dirlik, for example, refers to a 1930s 'reversal' in which 'the Kuomintang leadership invented its own version of Sunist Confucianism'.[40] Nedostup, while focusing in greater detail on the Guomindang, likewise identifies the use of 'heroic figures from China's past' as taking place 'during the national crises of the mid-1930s', while Marie-Claire Bergère puts aside the question of whether Sun Yat-sen in the early 1920s could be called a 'traditionalist' as having 'more to do with the political history of the 1930s than with the intellectual history of the 1920s', suggesting that Guomindang traditionalism only became important in the later decade.[41]

By analysing the discourse of the 1920s, this thesis by contrast presents traditionalism as a long-term feature repeatedly accompanying the party's revolutionary claims throughout the decade, with Sun Yatsen's lectures of 1924 proving a particularly important, and subsequently canonical, source of such claims. As a strand in the contested field of party discourse, the place of traditionalism was, however, an indeterminate and inconsistent one.

Though consistently present, the traditionalist claims did rise in importance through the decade, achieving a particular prominence as the party's 'right wing' under Chiang Kaishek established its national government in Nanjing in 1927. Given the struggle over and by means of discourse, this thesis concurs with the 'invention of tradition' argument insofar as it draws attention to the deployment of 'traditional' elements as a part of the exercise of power. However, it is reductive to view the role of traditionalism simply as an appeal to national unity or as the natural tool of a singular, authoritarian nationalism.

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[40] Dirlik, 'Guoxue/National Learning in the Age of Global Modernity', 10

[41] Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 17; Marie-Claire Bergère, *Sun Yat-sen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 365. See also Clinton, who writes that '[i]n Nationalist hands during the 1930s, Confucianism made a dramatic about-face from shouldering the blame for China's retarded economic development to assuming pride of place as the governing ethic of a post-liberal capitalist society' ('Fascism, Cultural Revolution, and Sovereignty in 1930s China', 204–05)

Instead, the many manifestations of traditionalism served different and rival agendas in which politics and visions of the nation's culture were interwoven. Radical attacks were likewise a part of the power struggle. Moreover, as part of the party's discourse rival claims over culture played a role in constructing its agendas rather than simply serving them. Traditionalist claims differentiated Chiang Kaishek and his allies from their Communist opponents, nativising party doctrines: against the prevalence of evidently 'foreign' political models, 'orthodox' Guomindang thought was claimed to be rooted in, and thus uniquely suitable for, the historically continuous Chinese nation. At the same time, though, this positioning against allegedly exclusively 'foreign' programmes represented an effort to reconcile the historical Chineseness of Guomindang thought with a global modernity, uniting the particular with the universal: the figure of Confucius and the classics attributed to him proved crucial to this. Thus traditionalist claims formed a definitive feature of Chiang Kai-shek's regime.

Although traditionalist claims were consistently present in Guomindang discourse, and had risen to particular prominence by the end of the decade, they were never uncontroversial. This was particularly because they co-existed in party discourse with the continued espousal of revolution.

This controversy is analysed here without invoking the idea that 'tradition' and 'modernity' are inherently incompatible wholes. As the 'invention of tradition' model indicates, traditionalist and radical claims in fact commonly accompany each other in nationalist discourse. However, particular features of the traditionalism in Guomindang discourse, understood in the wider context of post-dynastic China, presented distinctive difficulties for the Guomindang. This was because many of the cultural elements quoted and referenced, most notably including those that Sun Yatsen appealed to, were readily associated with the pre-revolutionary imperial orthodoxy.

I use 'orthodoxy' here in the sense referred to by Benjamin Elman: 'what the multilayered late imperial government (represented by the interests of literati in the bureaucracy and the throne; i.e., "imperial interests") publicly authorized as "orthodox," which became the core of the civil service examination curriculum'.[42] This orthodoxy, of course, changed over the late imperial era depending on what the state promoted, but as

[42] Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, 1

Kwang-ching Liu suggests we can identify core 'socioethical' beliefs, centred on the hierarchical 'Three Bonds' (*sangang*: ruler to subject, father to son, husband to wife) from the Han Dynasty on.[43] Consequently the late imperial state promoted the teachings which twentieth-century scholars have conventionally labelled 'Confucian', centred on the 'Five Classics' of the pre-imperial era—the *Classic of Changes* (*Yijing*), the *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu*), the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing*), the *Book of Rites* (*Liji*) and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu*)—and the later 'Four Books'—the *Analects* (*Lunyü*), the *Mencius* (*Mengzi*), the *Great Learning* (*Daxue*) and the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong*).[44] The Four Books, elevated to a privileged place within the imperial examination system as the Ming and Qing Dynasty states adopted the Song Dynasty 'School of the Way' (also known as Neo-Confucianism) texts, served in particular as key texts for elementary education in the late imperial era.

Consequently it was these texts that were repeatedly invoked after the fall of the Qing, along with associated texts featured in late Qing elementary schooling like the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiaojing*) and the *Three Character Classic* (*Sanzijing*). Sun Yatsen and others quoted from these canonical texts and enumerated key virtues emphasised in them in a manner which echoed not only imperial precedents, but also the pronouncements of Yuan Shikai and his successors, the military leaders who had established power in Beijing after the 1911 revolution and who represented the primary political opponents of the Guomindang until Beijing fell to the party's successful military advance in 1928.

Yet these texts and values were at the same time explicitly targeted by influential iconoclastic texts, associated in particular with the legacy of the 'New Culture Movement' of the 1910s, which identified revolution with often comprehensive attacks

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[43] Kwang-ching Liu, 'Introduction: Orthodoxy in Chinese Society' in Liu, ed., *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China* (Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), 1–24

[44] The work of Lionel Jensen, Nicholas Standaert, Michael Nylan and Barend Ter Haar suggests that the term 'Confucian' is often an anachronistic one that places too much weight on the figure of Confucius; Ter Haar shows how 'Confucianism' emerged from nineteenth century European engagements with China. See Lionel Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions and Universal Civilization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), passim; Nicholas Standaert, 'The Jesuits did NOT Manufacture "Confucianism"', East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine 16 (1999), 115–32; Michael Nylan, *The Five 'Confucian' Classics* (London: Yale University Press, 2001), 2–5.; Barend Ter Haar, 'From Text to Field in the Study of Chinese Religion' in Kiri Paramore, ed., *Religion and Orientalism in Asian Studies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 85–105. I thus follow Nylan in translating the commonly used term *ru*, conventionally rendered as 'Confucian', as 'classicist', to indicate this group's common commitment to a tradition oriented around the Five Classics. As described below, however, the early twentieth century saw Chinese equivalents of 'Confucian' come into use, especially through the new category of 'Confucian religion' (*Kongjiao*) but also through terms like 'Confucian learning' (*Kongxue*).

on the 'old'. It was in part through these attacks that ideas of a singular imperial orthodoxy were constructed in the early twentieth century. Advocates of 'Confucian religion' (*Kongjiao*) sought a new form in which to continue the teachings and practices associated with Confucius, and in this they were opposed by radicals who identified their chief cultural enemy as 'Confucian religion' or, more broadly, 'doctrines of rites' (*lijiao*), or 'teachings of the classicists' (*rujiao*). Thus Lisa Rofel sees radicals as inventing the 'idea of a holistic, patterned, and functionally complete "Confucian culture" or "Confucian tradition"': it was against this, rather than a holistic notion of 'tradition' as such, that ideas of a 'New Culture' was commonly constructed.[45]

The authority of the classics, already eroded by the end of the imperial examination system in 1905 and the subsequent fall of the dynasty, was thus under radical attack. In this context their quotation in Guomindang discourse could be seen, following May, as preserving their canonical authority.[46] Traditionalist claims to the classics were therefore open to challenges from those who associated themselves and their political agenda with the radical 'New Culture' legacy. Those using this radical language moreover included Guomindang members as well as rivals in the Communist Party and external critics, making these cultural issues a part of intra-party struggles.

This on-going challenge produced the distinctive features identified here as 'revolutionary traditionalism', as a synthesis of radical language and traditionalist claims to elements of the national culture. Revolutionary traditionalist claims were characterised by three key features:

a) selection from available cultural elements associated with the Chinese past and (often explicit) reinterpretation of these elements;
b) self-conscious arguments for the utility of these resources for the needs of the modern nation;
c) positioning of these claims against opponents identified by linked cultural and political views, often by a process of triangulation, i.e. claiming a middle ground

[45] Lisa Rofel, *Other Modernities: Gendered Yearnings in China After Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 24. Mao Chen, while criticising the idea that the 'New Culture Movement' was defined entirely by 'totalistic iconoclasm', also notes that attacks were made on 'the oppressive nature of ancient (specifically, Confucian) authority'; Mao, *Between Tradition and Change*, 115

[46] May, 'Sources of Authority', 296–97

between reactionary conservatism and a rootless radicalism.[47]

Yet the revolutionary traditionalist synthesis could not avoid repeated challenges. These were raised both from inside and outside the institutional structure of the party-state. Extreme variants, drawing on the legacy of the thought associated with the New Culture Movement, conflated traditionalist statements with political conservatism, autocracy and even imperial restoration, using the Guomindang's traditionalist language to dismiss it as counter-revolutionary. The influence of such judgments has been evident in subsequent historiography critical of the Guomindang.

The Guomindang's revolutionary traditionalism was thus formed by external commentary as well as by party members' own statements. Those who adopted traditionalist positions participated in this process just as avowed radicals did. Particularly important here are groups which petitioned for and welcomed the official recognition of Confucius and the moral teachings attributed to him, notably including 'redemptive societies' and the Confucian Religion Association, which since 1912 had sought official approval of 'Confucianism' as a state religion.[48] Explicitly religious agendas like these proved troubling for the avowedly secular nationalism of the Guomindang.[49] The self-consciousness of Guomindang members' references to the past, and their efforts to separate their traditionalist claims from imperial and religious associations, moreover attracted charges of inauthenticity or a lack of proper commitment from such groups, who in explicitly critiquing radicalism were often notably less self-conscious about reconstructing the past. Thus these groups could challenge the authority and legitimacy party members claimed from their link to a national past. At the same time, as these groups linked their own agendas to the party-state's language and policies, critics within and outside the government saw the party compromise on promises of social and cultural revolution by responding to or according with the demands of traditionalist groups.

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[47] The term 'triangulation' was coined in a political context to describe a strategy of claiming the middle ground between 'left' and 'right' views applied during US President Bill Clinton's re-election campaign in 1996, 'not only blend[ing] the best of each party's views but also transcend[ing] them to constitute a third force': Dick Morris, *Behind the Oval Office: Getting Re-elected At All Costs* (Los Angeles: Renaissance Books, 1999), 80. This term can usefully be applied in the (intensely politicised) cultural debates examined in this thesis.

[48] See Chen Hsi-yuan, 'Confucianism Encounters Religion'

[49] This thesis thus follows Duara and Nedostup's work, which examines tensions between the party's secularism and the popular religion which played such an important role in the national culture to which the Guomindang appealed.

I thus view revolutionary traditionalism as a balancing act, open to challenges from both 'radical' and 'traditionalist' sides in a context of politicised cultural struggle. Despite the ambitions of party leaders to define unilaterally a culture for modern China, it could never resolve into a stable orthodoxy.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into two parts. The first discusses the emergence and (contested) rise of revolutionary traditionalism within Guomindang publications, from the party's 1919 engagement with the 'New Culture Movement' to the establishment of the Nanjing state in 1927 and 1928. The second focuses on the specifically contested figure of Confucius as a key cultural element, showing how representations in Guomindang media and policies from the 1920s to the 1930s competed and were mutually shaped by other representations inside and outside the party.

Chapter one argues that the distinctive features of Guomindang revolutionary traditionalism emerged through the party's engagement with the texts subsequently identified as part of a 'New Culture Movement' in 1919 and 1920. In this period writings in party journals focused on constructing visions of national culture, adopting radical language in the process. Claims to the past in these journals echoed 1900s constructions of a positive national cultural legacy (or 'national essence'), while at the same time reconciling these claims with radical celebrations of the new and attacks on 'conservatives'.

Chapter two focuses on Sun Yatsen's 'Three Principles of the People' lectures in 1924 as key texts in the development of revolutionary traditionalism. I argue that Sun's lectures were at odds with radical discourse then prevalent in party journals and made a decisive move in separating Guomindang discourse from that radicalism. Sun's traditionalist claims made references to texts strongly associated with the late imperial cultural orthodoxy central to party discourse. While putting forward a generalised national culture, however, Sun's lectures also distinctively reconciled that culture with his revolutionary aims, giving Chinese culture a global role that would mark the traditionalism that followed. This impact, however, depended on the lectures' subsequent

canonisation.

Chapter three argues that radical and traditionalist statements played an important role in defining positions in the power struggle within the Guomindang that followed Sun Yatsen's death. Particularly with the influence of Dai Jitao's interpretation of Sun Yatsen's thought, identifying Sun as having inherited the 'Way' from Confucius, traditionalist language helped to define the anti-Communist 'right' of the party. Contrary to critics who have seen Dai Jitao as an absolute conservative, however, I argue that a carefully revolutionary traditionalist balance characterised Dai's arguments. Nevertheless, Communist and other opponents positioned themselves against Dai using radical attacks on his cultural claims, denying his revolutionary credentials.

Chapter four concludes the first section by showing that when anti-Communists in the party formed a national government in Nanjing, a traditionalism that canonised Sun Yatsen's words played a major part in defining the new state. I argue that this was not entirely due to Chiang Kaishek, who was one among many putting forward revolutionary traditionalist language, but was partly a reflection of the shift to government, since the growth of the party-state brought in wider moral concerns expressed in traditionalist language. At the same time, however, the regime's establishment did not mean the end of claims to 'New Culture' radicalism. With the new government making both radical and traditionalist claims, I argue that its cultural claims remained strongly contested and open to attack from those identifying themselves with radicalism.

Chapter five shows how Guomindang representations of Confucius in the early 1920s emerged through interaction with a range of alternative versions of Confucius and the teachings he transmitted that proliferated in the early twentieth century. Although Sun Yatsen and Dai Jitao linked their arguments to texts associated with the imperial orthodoxy, constructing images of Confucius compatible with revolution, at the same time Guomindang members condemned constructions of Confucius as a religious figurehead or object of imperial worship and participated in radical constructions of 'Confucianism' as having a negative impact on Chinese society.

Chapter six shows how representatives of the Nanjing party-state were not able to control unilaterally the meaning of the symbols they deployed by examining the events

of 1928. Over the course of this year the new government established at Nanjing moved from confirming the end of state sacrificial rituals to Confucius to announcing the protection of Confucian temples and an annual commemoration of Confucius' birth in schools. Although the explanations for these policies reflected the revolutionary traditionalist language of the state, attempting to separate state recognition from 'superstitious' rituals, the policies were partly brought about by the intervention of 'Confucian' groups and individuals finding support within the expanded Nanjing state. These campaigners appropriated the government's traditionalist language to argue for their cause. As the government sought to control Confucius and avoid committing to sacrificial ritual, however, the issue remained unsettled.

Chapter seven argues that controversies over Confucius impacted the discourse of the party-state, with Dai Jitao's 'transmission of the Way', raising the question of Confucian inspiration for party doctrines, being a focus for criticism and debate. Although as chapter four demonstrates revolutionary traditionalism defined the new regime, the case of Confucius shows how specific cultural features remained contested, including radical attacks on Confucian ritual and on Confucius himself. In this context moves to affirm Confucius' position, notably Chiang Kaishek's personal approved of Dai's arguments in 1931, represented fresh attempts to control the symbol of Confucius through revolutionary traditionalist practices.

Chapter eight concludes the thesis by showing how struggles over Confucius did not abate even as, after 1928, members of the Nanjing government turned increasingly to traditionalist proclamations and Chiang Kaishek put forward his own version of the 'transmission of the Way'. This link reached its peak in the 1934 national commemoration of Confucius. Yet the regime struggled over the preceding years to separate its constructions of Confucius from continued campaigns for sacrificial ritual and alternative protection of the temples. While for radical critics Nanjing had turned toward the 'old', for many self-identified Confucians its commitment was inauthentic.

Part One: Revolutionary Traditionalism in Guomindang Discourse

Introduction

The first part of this thesis shows the emergence, contestation, and rise of revolutionary traditionalist practices within the diverse field of Guomindang discourse.

There was much that was new about the Guomindang. The party was officially named the Chinese Guomindang in October 1919, and was the latest in a succession of groups gathered around Sun Yatsen whose declared aim had been to bring about a Chinese Republic. This goal, originally directed against the Qing Dynasty and then, following the Qing's overthrow, against the military leaders in Beijing who were seen to have betrayed the revolution, naturally involved the introduction of a host of new or reinvented words and practices, as Guomindang sought a complete social transformation.

At the same time, references to the cultural legacy of the empire by revolutionaries were not new in 1919. Sun Yatsen had celebrated the revolution in 1912 with a grand ceremony to the founding emperor of the Ming Dynasty, proclaiming the revolution to have restored China's Han majority to power after oppression by the alien Manchus.[50] In this he continued the example of earlier revolutionary propaganda, which had found inspiration for racial revolution in such ancestral and exemplary figures as the mythical Yellow Emperor.[51]

In Shanghai, however, members of the reorganising party engaged with the distinctively radical cultural language associated with the intellectual tumult that became known as the 'New Culture Movement'. This language, informed by the perceived failure of the revolution, included sweeping attacks on China's historical culture. It was through this interaction that the distinct practices I call 'revolutionary traditionalist' developed, as party members reconciled attacks on 'conservatives' with their own claims to tradition.

This reconciliation could never be complete, however. The following years saw struggles within the party play out through the language of culture, with party members (including those who were also members of the Communist Party) adopting radical and

[50] Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen*, 42–43
[51] Lung-Kee Sun, *The Chinese National Character: From Nationhood to Individuality* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 28–30

traditionalist claims to define their political positions. In these struggles Sun Yatsen's distinctively traditionalist approach proved crucial: in opposition to prevailing trends in party discourse, in 1924 he put forward an unprecedentedly strong claim to the cultural legacy of empire while making these features part of the party's future-oriented Chinese and even global mission.

It was this claims, canonised after Sun's death in 1925, that would provide a basis for revolutionary traditionalist discourse within the Guomindang, and which would ultimately be adopted by the 'National Government' that anti-Communist Guomindang members formed in Nanjing in 1927. At the same time, however, the new party-state did not reject the radical legacies of the 'New Culture'. Although traditionalist appropriations defined the party-state after 1927, these remained in constant conflict with radical claims.

1. New Culture, Old Culture: the Emergence of Revolutionary Traditionalism

> If our party wishes to succeed in its revolution, it must depend on the transformation of thought. This is the meaning of the Art of War's "strike the heart" and the Analects' "transform the heart/mind". Thus this kind of new culture movement is truly the most valuable thing. Lately our comrades have stirred up waves of the new culture and inculcated the shoots of new thought...[52]

In January 1920, in a communication to party departments overseas, Sun Yat-sen aligned the propaganda policy of his newly renamed party with the intellectual ferment he and others called the New Culture Movement. Through party journals founded in Shanghai in 1919, members of Sun's party at this formative stage actively put forward some of the most radical perspectives which flourished under the name of this 'movement'. In party discourse culture became a site for the creation of the new and a sometimes violent separation from the past, and as Sun suggested the party's journals closely linked cultural radicalism to its political goals.

As Sun's citation of Sunzi and Confucius as classical precedents for the party's propaganda work suggests, however, radicalism is only part of the story. Even as Guomindang writers turned expressly against 'conservatism', associating it with the Beijing regime they opposed, their articles nonetheless found their own means to positively claim elements of the past for the revolution. This chapter shows how, in the party's brief but prolific engagement with the 'new culture', revolutionary traditionalism emerged in party discourse, with its key characteristics: a combination of the old with radical appeals to the new, explicit selection and reinterpretation of available cultural elements associated with the Chinese past, self-conscious arguments for the utility of these resources for the modern nation, and positioning of these claims against opponents identified by their linked cultural and political conservatism.

If revolutionary traditionalism provided a means to call for the new and oppose conservatism while still claiming the best of the old, from its outset the combination was still troubled by unresolved tensions. Radicalist claims portrayed the revolutionaries as

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[52] Sun Yatsen, 'Zhi haiwai Guomindang tongzhi han' [Letter to Guomindang Comrades Abroad], 29th January 1920, in *Sun Zhongshan quanji* [Complete Works of Sun Yatsen] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981–86) Vol. 5, 210

standing apart from the culture of the past, having the authority to judge it for their own purposes; the textual incorporation of elements associated with the past, however, could undermine these claims and cast doubt on the affirmation of radicalism.

The Guomindang and the New Culture Movement

Radicalism became an important feature of Guomindang discourse through the party's efforts in 1919 to lay claim to the 'New Culture Movement'. Such efforts were made through journals published in that year from the party's temporary base in Shanghai, where Sun and his allies reformed their party in opposition to the government formed by military authorities in Beijing. Sun's letter linked these propaganda efforts directly to the 'May Fourth movement' of 1919, which, sparked by student protests in Beijing against the government's perceived capitulation to Japanese demands (particularly the granting of former German concessions to Japan as part of the Treaty of Versailles), had spread further to include a general strike in Shanghai.

As a number of scholars have shown, the link between these protests and cultural radicalism was not an obvious or natural one. The 'New Culture Movement', which in some accounts has appeared as a predecessor to May Fourth or even as synonymous with it, was constructed self-consciously and retrospectively through journals and newspapers in the wake of the May Fourth protests.[53] This retrospective construction linked political opposition to Beijing with a wide range of academic arguments and cultural debates which had become prominent in the 1910s and which were transmitted through a flourishing journal publishing industry and through gatherings of students and scholars.[54] The texts claimed to be part of the 'movement' were diverse, resisting easy summary, but often privileged ideas of novelty and radical change. These perhaps most famously included arguments for replacing the classical written language with a new vernacular language and literature, but also included calls for gender equality, attacks on ancestral

[53] See Elisabeth Forster, 'From Academic Nitpicking to a "New Culture Movement": How Newspapers Turned Academic Debates into the Center of "May Fourth"', *Frontiers of History in China* 9.4 (2014), 534–557, and Rudolf Wagner, 'The Canonization of May Fourth' in Milena Dolozelova-Velingerova and Oldrich Kral, eds., *The Appropriation of Cultural Capital: China's May Fourth Project* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002), 66–122

[54] Wen-hsin Yeh and Shakhar Rahav have drawn attention to the social gatherings in which ideas were formed and transmitted: Wen-hsin Yeh, *Provincial Passages: Culture, Space, and the Origins of Chinese Communism*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) and Shakhar Rahav, *The Rise of Political Intellectuals in Modern China: May Fourth Societies and the Roots of Mass-party Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

rites, and other issues. One notable feature was vociferous attacks on elements of the rituals and classic texts associated with the imperial orthodoxy, identified as 'the doctrine of rites'.[55]

Guomindang publications were an important part of the retrospective construction of the 'Movement'. Whereas scholars have often connected the 'New Culture Movement' and the events of 1919 to the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 (given that, for example, two of the most renowned 'New Culture' figures, Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, were also founders of the CCP), there has been much less discussion of the impact of Sun and his allies on the events of 1919, or vice versa.[56] Once we view the 'New Culture Movement' as a retrospective construction, however, it becomes clear that the Guomindang played a key role in it. The present-day scholar Ouyang Junxi, for example, cites one of the Guomindang-controlled journals discussed in this chapter, the *Weekly Review*, as the likely first appearance in print of the phrase 'New Culture Movement', at the end of August 1919.[57]

The claim in Sun's letter of January 1920 that party members had 'stirred up waves' was not a mere boast: the party's journals formed an important part of the rapidly-changing press landscape in 1919. One of these journals, the short-form *Weekly Review* (*Xingqi pinglun*) was first published on the eighth of June 1919 and welcomed as a 'brother' journal by the similarly titled *Weekly Review* (*Meizhou pinglun*), a prominent journal founded in Beijing in 1918 by Li Dazhao and Zhao Songnian.[58] The Guomindang's own *Weekly Review* gained prominence from its weekly distribution with the *Republican Daily* (*Minguo ribao*) newspaper, founded in 1916. As Fitzgerald notes this was 'the only Nationalist party newspaper with a truly national circulation', and it ranked second in popularity in a 1923 poll of Beijing University students.[59] In the wake of the May Fourth Movement, which the paper's editors had enthusiastically supported, the daily *Awakening* (*Juewu*)

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[55] Edmund Fung, *The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 31. See e.g. Chen Duxiu, 'Kongzi zhi dao yu xiandai shenghuo' [The Way of Confucius and modern life], *Xin qingnian* 2.4 (December 1916)

[56] A notable exception is Lü Fangshang, *Geming zhi zaiqi: Zhongguo Guomindang gaizu qian dui xin sichao de huiying* [Revolution Rises Again: the Pre-Reorganisation Chinese Guomindang's Response to New Thought] (Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Jindaishi Yanjiusuo, 1989)

[57] Ouyang Junxi, 'Guomindang yu xin wenhua yundong: yi "Xingqi pinglun", "Jianshe" wei zhongxin' [The Guomindang and the New Culture Movement, Centred on *Weekly Review* and *Reconstruction*], *Nanjing daxue xuebao: zhexue renwen sheke* 1 (2009) 72–84, 73 n. 1.

[58] Lü Fangshang, *Geming zhi zaiqi*, 50

[59] John Fitzgerald, 'The Origins of the Illiberal Party Newspaper: Print Journalism in China's Nationalist Revolution', *Republican China 22.2* (April 1996), 3

supplement was added to the *Republican Daily* with a clear remit to focus on the issues raised by existing publications identified with the 'new culture'. Though both the *Republican Daily* and *Awakening* were operated and funded independently, they were run by party members Ye Chucang and Shao Lizi, and openly supported Sun; Lü Fangshang notes that the *Republican Daily* was eventually designated a party organ in December 1923.[60] The *Weekly Review*, by contrast, was funded and published directly under party auspices, as was the third journal discussed here, the longer-form *Reconstruction* (*Jianshe*), which began publication on the first of August 1919.

The Global Tide: Novelty in Guomindang Discourse

These journals, then, were among those retrospectively constructing a 'New Culture Movement', and linking it to the political protests in 1919. What was distinctive about the Guomindang's journals was that they offered a concrete solution to China's closely interlinked cultural and political woes. This solution was, naturally, to bring the party to power. Sun's letter described political action in line with the Guomindang's agenda as the natural consequence of the 'transformation of thought': Sun's vision of the movement subsumed a diverse range of cultural activity into a singular outpouring in which 'the public opinion of all sectors in the country is united' and whose great achievement was that 'the students' tide has spread throughout the country, and everybody has put their consciences to work and sworn to die for love of the country'.[61] Journal articles in 1919 likewise combined the diverse cultural arguments of the 'new thought' with direct statements of the party's political agenda, welding the two together.

While the journals existed to further the party's agenda, however, the 'new culture' presented as central to the party's mission was not a singular, coherent vision of Chinese culture. Even *Weekly Review* and *Reconstruction*, directly under party auspices, did not speak with a single voice, especially on the many cultural issues raised in the 1910s. Like the journals associated with the 'movement' in Beijing, they contained a range of views, and the association with existing cultural trends extended to publishing articles by non-party members, including celebrated figures like Hu Shi and Li Dazhao. Moreover, even for writers explicitly dedicated to Sun Yatsen's revolutionary proposals, the wide range of topics addressed within these journals allowed for variety.

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[60] Lü Fangshang, *Geming zhi zaiqi,* 84
[61] Sun Zhongshan, 'Zhi haiwai Guomindang tongzhi shu', 210

In spite of this diversity, a key feature can be identified for our purposes: the privileging of novelty itself. In Sun's words, along with the 'new culture' party writers committed themselves to 'new thought', 'new enterprises', and 'new plans': the journals celebrated novelty.[62] In this they joined publications from Beijing, the most famous of which was *New Youth* (*Xin qingnian*). As Leo Ou-fan Lee puts it, in modern China 'the very word *new*… became the crucial component of a cluster of new word compounds denoting a qualitative change in all spheres of life… [the] sense of living in a new epoch, as advocated by May Fourth leaders such as Chen Duxiu, was what defined the ethos of modernity'.[63]

The coming of the new was presented as a global phenomenon. Dai Jitao, a major party figure who served as Sun's secretary in this period, described a global 'tide' of historical progress, of which activity in China constituted only a part. Thus Dai grandly proclaimed the 'New Culture Movement' to be 'the movement for reform of the countries and societies of the world' in which 'efforts in all kinds of ways work towards the fated arrival of the new world'.[64] China, then, must fit into an on-going process, and the New Culture Movement was the most important means by which this could be accomplished: '[a]t this moment, I focus my efforts exclusively on the New Culture Movement; these efforts are necessary for our "adaptation to [global] circumstances", and for our hastening of the unfolding of the new era'.[65]

In such celebrations of the new we also see the explicit fusing of new thought with a new social order, again on a global scale. Both Dai and Hu Hanmin, who had joined the Revolutionary Alliance in 1905 and was one of Sun Yatsen's closest associates as well as the second most prolific writer for *Reconstruction*, presented this necessary combination through the new language of materialism.[66] Hu, drawing explicitly on Marx, Engels, and Kautsky, used the explanatory power of 'materialism' to describe an inevitable trend

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[62] Sun Yatsen, 'Zhi haiwai Guomindang tongzhi shu', 210

[63] Leo Ou-fan Lee, 'The Cultural Construction of Modernity in Urban Shanghai: Some Preliminary Explorations' in *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond*, ed. Wen-hsin Yeh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 31–61, 31–32

[64] Dai Jitao, 'Cong jingji shang guancha Zhongguo de luanyuan' [Viewing the Roots of China's Chaos Economically], *Jianshe* 1.2 (September 1919)

[65] Dai Jitao, 'Shijie zhanzheng yu Zhongguo' [The World War and China], *Jianshe* 2.1 (January 1920)

[66] Lü Fangshang, *Geming zhi Zaiqi*, 67. The most prolific writer was Zhu Zhixin, another longstanding ally of Sun.

toward a global modernity.[67] Dai too described this historical transformation:

> ...economies across the globe are already inseparably linked. The previous order, with each country standing against each other and a minority of capitalists monopolising the organs of production, is simultaneously splitting apart. The splitting apart of countries is the trend towards cosmopolitanism and the splitting of the capitalist production system is the trend towards socialism. As these trends occur, the co-dependent survival of countries and capitalists can rely only on the inertia of history.[68]

The new means of the 'social sciences' were the key to understanding this progress. Dai promoted 'the omnipotence of science', declaring that '[w]e must have scientific knowledge before we know to love our country... [l]ong live science!'[69] Zhu Zhixin's 'Sacred inviolability and smashing idols' (*Shensheng buke qinfan yu dapo ouxiang*) was more cautious, noting that 'western science' could itself become an 'idol' because, like religious doctrines, ethics and the regulations that governed society, people could 'worship' it as inviolable, universally and unchangeably true.[70] Zhu's argument, nonetheless, ultimately championed true science as requiring a sceptical, investigative spirit which, through research, would deliver not eternal truths but provisional ones valid and useful for as long as they withstood the scrutiny of research. Thus scientific research remained the only appropriate tool with which to smash whatever 'idols' were found in society.[71] The certainty granted by scientific knowledge allowed the statement of intent in the *Weekly Review* entitled 'Our efforts over the last half year', in which the journal editors claimed the authority to stand apart from and 'freely critique philosophy, literature, society and politics'.[72]

The War Against the Old: Cultural Politics in Guomindang Constructions of the Past

The celebration of the new implied a separation from the legacies of the past: it is vital

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[67] See Hu's defence of historical materialism in Hu Hanmin, 'Weiwu shiguan piping zhi piping' [A Critique of Critiques of Historical Materialism], *Jianshe* 1.5 (December 1919)

[68] Dai Jitao, 'Shijie de shidai jingshen yu minzu de shiying' [The World Zeitgeist and the Adaptation of Nations], *Xinggi pinglun* 17 (September 1919)

[69] Dai Jitao, 'Chaoliu fadong didian de biandong' [Change in the Launching Point for the Tide], *Xingqi pinglun* 1 (June 1919)

[70] Zhu Zhixin, 'Shensheng bu ke qinfan yu dapo ouxiang' [Sacred Inviolability and Smashing Idols], *Jianshe* 1.1 (August 1919)

[71] Zhu Zhixin, 'Shensheng bu ke qinfan yu dapo ouxiang'

[72] 'Women bannianlai de nuli' [Our Efforts Over the Last Half Year], *Xingqi pinglun* 26 (November 1919)

to our understanding of Guomindang radicalism, however, to note that this separation was often couched in very explicit and violent language. The global future was constructed against the local residue of the old, and this struggle was described through metaphors of armed conflict. Shen Dingyi's article 'A Great Battleground Between Old and New Literature' (*Xinjiu wenxue yige da zhanchang*), for example, argued that 'if we now wish to plant seeds on this earth, we must let it become a battleground, and sweep it completely clean of old things before we can truly call it recovered'.[73] Dai Jitao likewise described a 'war between new and old thought' which would decide China's fate; the 'students' tide' that had emerged in 1919 was a 'necessary stage' of this greater war.[74]

Presenting a similar struggle, Hu Hanmin's 'On the Smashing of Customs' (*Guanxi zhi dapo*), which argued against existing customs which the new (materialist and historically progressive) understandings of social science had revealed to be unsuited to the modern age, made explicit the conflation between cultural 'warfare' and the party's political struggle:

> At present knowledgeable people in China compete to call for liberation and reform; they have all declared war on society's old customs. The shift from monarchical autocracy to a constitutional democracy counts as a great part of the reform of governance in society. But many unwritten customs, closely linked to autocratic government, have not been broken, [and so] the establishment of constitutional democracy could not be completed. Only by bringing a renovating, improving frame of mind to bear on every custom can we achieve real reform and liberation.[75]

Though Hu found space for a list of such habits found in China at the end, his main concern was more generalised: he attacked 'conservative' habits of mind themselves, which prevented the Chinese people from accepting the 'new thought'. These habits thereby inhibited the completion of the revolution and thus the successful development of the nation. The very word here translated as 'conservative', *shoujiu*, literally 'adhering to the old', is itself an example of the discursive opposition established between new and old. This argument against 'conservative' tendencies stood in sharp contrast to a 1906 article by Hu which had described the Chinese people as uniquely suited to successful

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[73] Shen Xuanlu, 'Xinjiu wenxue yige da zhanchang' [A Great Battleground Between Old and New Literature], *Xingqi pinglun* 24 (November 1919)
[74] Dai Jitao, 'Xuechao yu geming' [The Students' Tide and Revolution], *Xingqi pinglun* 39 (February 1920)
[75] Hu Hanmin, 'Guanxi zhi dapo' [On the Smashing of Customs], *Jianshe* 1.2 (September 1919)

participation in an equitable Republic thanks to their historical legacy.[76] Hu's more pessimistic assessment of 1919 explained revolutionary failures since 1911 and at the same time justified the party's politico-cultural agenda to effect the 'awakening' of the people.

These calls for cultural action constituted acts of positioning against existing authorities. 'Conservatism' was not only a habit of mind to be dealt with through education, but represented a challenge and potentially a threat, to be met with 'war', because it was sustained by powerful enemies in the field of culture. In Hu's article, accepting the characteristic 'New Culture' proposal that changing minds was the primary agenda meant that those 'people who protect idols', rather than politicians who opposed reform, emerged as the main threat: 'though other improper forces holding back and harming reform are to be feared, they are not nearly as frightening as those theories that worship idols and pander to social inertia'.[77]

Guomindang radical discourse therefore presented those in favour of retaining the old as linked to political opponents: traditionalism was a mark of the enemy. Just as Sun, Hu, Dai and others conflated the 'progressive' forces for cultural and political change into a single historical 'movement', their constructions of the opponents of reform fused cultural and political opposition into the same generalised 'forces'. As Dai characterised the struggle in 1920: '[l]ast year's May Fourth was a day of great protest by the new culture against the old forces, 'common people-ism' against bureaucratism, and nationalism against 'invasionism'.[78] Hu's materialism likewise allowed him to interpret cultural arguments as part of an ultimately economic 'struggle for existence': '[c]onservatism… mostly stems from protecting the interests of a class or group of people.'[79]

These Guomindang critiques generally left the actual content of 'conservative' theories, and of the 'old culture' which they defended, without precise definition, just as the 'new culture' itself remained open to interpretation. This very vagueness, however, together with the absolute opposition between 'new culture' and 'revolutionary forces' on one side

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[76] Hu Hanmin, 'Minbao zhi liu da zhuyi' [The Six Great Principles of *Minbao*], *Minbao* 3 (April 1906)
[77] Hu Hanmin, 'Guanxi zhi dapo', 233
[78] Dai Jitao, 'Wuyi, wusi, wuwu, wuqi, wujiu' [May the first, fourth, fifth, seventh, and ninth'] *Minguo ribao* 4 May 1920
[79] Hu Hanmin, 'Guanxi zhi dapo', 231

and 'old culture' and 'counter-revolutionary' forces on the other evoked by the battlefield metaphor, seemed to allow for radical readings that comprehensively excluded whatever the reader might deem 'old'. Where they did address specific cultural elements, writings in *Reconstruction* and *Weekly Review* often accorded with and thus seemed to legitimise the most sweeping critiques to be found in *New Youth* and other established 'New Culture' journals. Dai Jitao's argument for the methods of 'science', for instance, comprehensively ruled out classical means of learning:

> in this 'age of liberation', those who call for liberation should first smash the idols of 'the rectification of names' [*zheng mingfen*] and 'evidential scholarship' [*kaoju*], in their brains and look into modern problems through modern facts. There is no need to live on dead words by quoting the classics'.[80]

Dai thus specifically attacked 'evidential scholarship', the philological research into the classics which became prevalent in the Qing Dynasty and which drew inspiration from the *Analects* injunction to 'rectify names'.[81] Yet his injunction was also a wider attack on the wider practice of 'quoting the classics'.

Shen Dingyi's depiction of the 'battleground between old and new literature' meanwhile focused not on poetry or novels but on what he called the 'many times stronger' social influence of inscribed boards and banners found in shops, schools, temples, and homes: the harmful 'old outlooks on life' included hopes for wealth and happiness, success in the (imperial) examinations, warnings of judgement after death, and moral exhortations to read the *Classic of Poetry* and *Book of Documents* to ensure that 'loyalty and filial piety' (*zhongxiao*) prevail in the household.[82] Hu Hanmin's account of harmful 'old' customs was similarly comprehensive, covering spitting and urinating in public, visiting prostitutes, gambling, lack of order, lack of punctuality, looking down on work, restricting women, bribery among officials, rape and pillage among soldiers, 'autocracy' in the household, disputes between clans, having concubines and multiple wives, and 'superstitious belief in

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[80] Dai Jitao, 'Haishi yao jiefang' [Liberation is Still Best], *Juewu* (25 August 1919)

[81] The *Analects* phrase originally referred to the correct understanding and acting out of social roles, such that 'the father is a father, the son is a son', but more broadly inspired philological research into the terms used in texts of the past. See Benjamin Elman, 'Philosophy (I-LI) versus Philology (K'ao-cheng): The Jen-hsin tao-hsin Debate', *T'oung Pao* Second Series Vol. 69 No. 4/5 (1983), 175–222, 198. For the *Analects* source see Zhu Xi, *Si shu zhangju jizhu* [Collected Commentaries on the Four Books] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 136, 142

[82] Shen Xuanlu, 'Xinjiu wenxue yige da zhanchang'

fengshui and ghosts and spirits'.[83] Hu again drew a direct connection between 'whatever harms public security and is inhumane' in daily life and political power and the need for successful revolution:

> ...at the time of the [1911] revolution the power of these evil customs came close to ending. But when Yuan Shikai and his ilk took power, they did their utmost to promote such things and seduce people, allowing these customs to recover in society.[84]

Most suggestive of a generalised rejection of the past was Dai Jitao's turn against the 'national essence' (*guocui*). This term had been a key one in anti-Qing dynasty propaganda during the 1900s: inspired by intellectual trends in Japan, where the exiled revolutionaries spent much of their time, writings by scholars like Zhang Binglin and Liu Shipei reconciled the demands of radical political and social change with cultural continuity through the notion of 'national essence' as the unique cultural core of the nation, to remain inviolate as China modernised.[85] These revolutionaries, working with Sun Yatsen and others who would remain members of the Guomindang, thereby constructed a narrative of national history separated from that presented by the Qing Dynasty's defenders, one which stretched back into antiquity and included (particularly through a racial nationalism which presented the Manchu Qing as a hostile invading race) precedents for their proposed revolution.[86]

In 1919, by contrast, Dai argued that '[i]n today's China everyone is somewhat awakened, and knows that 'privilegeism' and 'national essence-ism' are burial articles for the dead, and can solve no problems in life'.[87] Dai's article 'Poor "Them"' (*Kelian de 'ta'*) went further by identifying the broad range of cultural possibilities covered by the term 'national essence' with the targets of revolution, the unified politico-cultural representatives of 'reaction':

> [w]hat those bureaucrats, militarists, and scholars with their national essence superstitions enjoy most is wealth, status, and glory, getting

[83] Hu, 'Guanxi zhi dapo', 234
[84] Hu, 'Guanxi zhi dapo', 234
[85] See Hon, 'National Essence, National Learning, and Culture', passim; Dirlik, 'Guoxue/National Learning in the Age of Global Modernity'
[86] Laurence Schneider, 'National Essence and the New Intelligentsia' in Charlotte Furth , ed., *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 66–67
[87] Dai Jitao, 'Shijie de shidai jingshen yu minzu de shiying', 1023

> titles for their wives and passing their positions on to their sons. All their intent is focused on annexing power and riches and on passing these things down.[88]

The notion of a national essence was now added to that group of irrational phenomena explicable, for the enlightened, only as a cover for material and political self-interest; it was no longer available as a tool of revolution.

Making Room for the Old: Balance, Utility, and Selective Reinterpretation

Writings in Guomindang journals therefore associated the party's anti-Beijing political goals with a potentially wide-ranging and thoroughgoing cultural critique–one that moreover could reject traditionalist arguments such as those of the 'national essence' as manifestations of politico-cultural conservatism. Upholding the 'new' against the 'old', the writings highlighted above clearly echo texts like those of Chen Duxiu, which Lin Yü-sheng aptly described as 'radical antitraditionalism'.[89]

Yet the diverse writings in *Awakening*, *Reconstruction* and the *Weekly Review* also included a traditionalism of their own, finding positive roles for elements ostensibly drawn from the Chinese past. This might simply be interpreted as evidence of the journals' surprisingly broad range of concerns. However, as with the radicalism detailed above, the fact that traditionalist discourse appeared in party journals in articles written by major figures served to link it to the party's political agenda. Moreover such links were often explicitly stated. Beyond this, the traditionalist discourse in these writings was reconciled with radicalism in distinctive ways: it was this combination of radicalism and traditionalism, brought together in the service of the party's political agenda, that I call 'revolutionary traditionalism'.

'Nationalism' (*Guojia zhuyi*), a September 1919 article in *Reconstruction* by Zhu Zhixin, demonstrates two of the characteristics which define revolutionary traditionalism: an

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[88] Dai Jitao, 'Kelian de "ta"'

[89] See Lin Yü-sheng, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Antitraditionalism in the May Fourth Era* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 6–7. Lin's use of this phrase to define the 'movement' as a whole has been problematised by subsequent work showing the diversity of the intellectual culture of the time, but it remains a useful description of positions like that of Chen. As a letter from Chen in *New Youth* in 1917 put it 'between the old and the new there is absolutely no room for compromise and co-existence'. Chen Duxiu, 'Da peijian qingnian' [Reply to the Swordbearing Youth], *Xin qingnian* Vol. 3 No. 1 (1917)

explicit focus on utility and balance with future-oriented claims of radicalism. The utility of the culture of the past was the central theme of Zhu's essay:

> The self-awareness of citizens cannot be brought about by command. It must be based on historical facts and the efforts of the present. That the citizens of the nation feel the greatness of their country's history and consider it worth remembering is indispensable for their coming together... the people of China, for instance, call themselves the descendants of the Yellow Emperor, and with these words feel that in the past they had a superior culture...[90]

Reaching into the past, then, was in Zhu's argument an essential element in meeting the nationalist goal of bringing the people to 'self-awareness'. Despite the 'war' against the old and its defenders presented by radical discourse in the same journal, remembering and celebrating it appeared to be vital to the party's mission.

For the past to be useful for future progress, however, a balance needed to be struck. Zhu's article carried a hint of the politico-cultural warfare which characterised radicalist discourse: the rooting of nationalist feeling in the past might be confused for the unreflective conservatism which Hu Hanmin and Dai Jitao identified as a threat. The essential role of pride in the past therefore needed to be balanced by linking it to a focus on the future:

> In the past China was not without a glorious history or cultural achievements, yet if researchers stick only to the old ways and do not seek new knowledge, all they will focus on are the ethical bonds [*lunchang*] between rulers and ministers, fathers and sons, the stories of gain and loss through conquering and plotting, and they will ignore the cultural and economic elements necessary to mankind's survival and the development of citizens. With their insufficient understanding they will think that the ancients cannot be surpassed and look down on the present age, not knowing that if we can unfetter thought we can surely exceed the ancients.[91]

Zhu's argument thus claimed balance by triangulating between extreme positions on either side that were self-evidently problematic: on the one side a rootless pessimism focused only on the disasters of the present, with nothing to inspire the national community, and on the other a nostalgic longing for the past which denied the possibility

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[90] Zhu Zhixin, 'Guojia zhuyi' [Nationalism], *Jianshe* 1.2 (September 1919), 5-6
[91] Zhu Zhixin, 'Guojia zhuyi', 7

of forward motion. Thus Zhu's article was able to attack conservative enemies while finding a place for elements of the 'old' in the modern nation at the same time.

Which elements these were to be, however, was unstated, and might even be judged irrelevant. In their nonspecific and explicit instrumentalism Zhu's words call to mind Levenson's argument that the 'traditionalism' of modern Chinese nationalists involved valuing the Chinese past not as objectively, universally 'true' but as subjectively 'mine'.[92] Unlike the national essence writings of the 1900s, there was nothing in Zhu's article on the value of specific elements of the Chinese past for a modern Chinese nationalism; his only mention of cultural elements was the above suggestion that the particularistic 'ethical bonds' were incompatible with the new China. Reference to the past, provided that it was accompanied with a look to the future, could serve revolutionary ends by bolstering the community regardless of what the cultural content of 'the past' might be: Zhu's article can be treated as a theoretical argument for revolutionary traditionalism.

Elsewhere in party journals, we find the concrete practice of this theory, with cultural elements selected for their specific utility. Hu Hanmin's 'Mencius and Socialism' (*Mengzi yu shehui zhuyi*) was one such effort: although he had elsewhere attacked 'the doctrines of the classicists' (*rujiao*), including Mencius' own writings, as fatally exclusionary and thus inherently suited to use by imperial autocracy, Hu here presented a Mencius who anticipated the socialist goals of the revolutionary party.[93]

Hu's commitment to a materialist vision of historical progress made a simple connection between Mencius' thought and that of the revolution untenable: Mencius' point of similarity with socialism lay primarily in the 'well-field' system of equalising land use, which by Hu's account had already passed into history by the time Mencius described it. Thanks to the ineluctable decline of 'the feudal system' and the growth of population and industry, the 'well-field' system could never be recreated.[94] On politics Mencius therefore could not offer a practical model:

> Mencius recognised the importance of the people's rights [*minquan*], but could not conceive of a way to realise it through political

[92] Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate* Vol. 1, 105-108
[93] Hu Hanmin, 'Rujiao paita de taidu' [The Exclusionary Attitude of the Doctrines of the Classicists], *Jianshe* 1.2 (September 1919).
[94] Hu Hanmin, 'Mengzi yu shehui zhuyi' [Mencius and Socialism], *Jianshe* 1.1 (August 1919), 160

> organisation: he did not achieve a government of the people, by the people and for the people... in this he was limited by his times.[95]

What was important then was not labelling Mencius' thought 'socialist' or 'democratic', but rather a connection between ideals. By seeking to equalise wealth and showing concern for the treatment of the people, Mencius was focusing in a radically different socio-economic context on what Hu described as universal problems. During Hu's time these problems had found new expression in the political language of the new Chinese Republic, as they had in prior foreign and indigenous models as well: Mencius was therefore an advocate of 'freedom' and 'equality'.

By focusing on these generalised ideals, Hu's work thus represented another attempt at compromise, finding a balanced position whereby what was valuable in the Chinese *ru* tradition could be claimed without sinking into conservatism. The needs articulated by Mencius, but unrealisable in his time due to material changes in socio-economic relations and a lack of political understanding, would be met after the intervening years of imperial autocracy by the new learning of the Republic: 'socialism' would work to finally fulfil ancient dreams.

The ancient status of Mencius was crucial: Hu's reinterpretation of Mencius ignored the intervening centuries of imperial rule. This focus on the distant past was a recurring feature of revolutionary traditionalist reinterpretations: revolutionaries could identify positive features of a pre-imperial age while condemning the imperial system that (as with Confucius and, to a lesser extent, Mencius) might appear to promote these very elements. In this respect, despite Dai Jitao's attack on the 'national essence', Guomindang traditionalist discourse shared its approach: this 'golden age' presentation of the past had likewise served in national essence writings to separate the positive legacy of antiquity from the presumed curse of the Qing dynasty.[96] These writings presented a glorious ancient past, followed by a decline of varying durations, from which the revolutionaries offered recovery and return to greatness.

Zhu Zhixin's article had suggested such a narrative of glory and decline, stating that the ancients' 'success was achieved only through unity, and… the present decline is due only

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[95] Hu Hanmin, 'Mengzi yu shehui zhuyi', 168
[96] Hon, 'Revolution as Restoration', 262–263

to the lack of this unity'.[97] Another article by Hu, 'Research into Materialism in the History of Chinese Philosophy' went into considerably more detail in evoking this narrative, paralleling the era of the new Republic with the pre-Qin Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods: both shared instability, massive socio-economic change, and the consequent emergence of new thought. The intervening period was in Hu's account one of no progress: Hu asked 'why did Chinese philosophy flourish in the ancient period, and fall behind after the Qin and Han?' His materialist answer was that once the Empire was established, there were no 'fundamental changes in social and economic organisation'.[98]

Unlike Zhu Zhixin, Hu therefore quoted specific parts of Mencius that he found admirable and compatible with the 'global tide': this was something more than fuel for nationalist pride. At the same time, however, like Zhu Hu also explicitly stated a pragmatic goal: to convince the 'old gentlemen' who 'start in fear at the word "socialism"' yet 'revere Confucius and Mencius'.[99] Thus Mencius served to stress that the socialism Hu called for was constructive and non-threatening. The social upheaval the 'old gentlemen' feared was instead identified with Laozi, whose thoughts were 'close to anarchism' and thus, Hu argued, socially destructive and in denial of the forward movement of history.[100] Thus for those who might question the use of 'dead words', as Dai Jitao had referred to quotations, Hu Hanmin provided a practical purpose.

Synthesis, Authority and the Limits of Radicalism

Combining the political ideals of the ancient past with radicalism and linking both to the party's agenda, revolutionary traditionalism can be understood as a claim to authority. Unlike their conservative opponents, the revolutionary party could correctly interpret and make use of the past while creating its new China. Party leader Sun Yatsen's essay entitled 'Theories of Sun Yatsen' (*Sun Wen xueshuo*) marks a particularly explicit claim to this authority. Yet its presentation of the link between Sun and the Chinese past was a complex one which could cast doubt on both the party's radicalism and the article's own revolutionary traditionalist claims to stand apart from and make use of cultural resources.

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[97] Zhu Zhixin, 'Guojia zhuyi', 7

[98] Hu Hanmin, 'Zhongguo zhexue shi zhi weiwu de yanjiu' [Research on Materialism in the History of Chinese Philosophy] Part 1, *Jianshe* 1.3 (October 1919), 514

[99] Hu Hanmin, 'Mengzi yu Shehui Zhuyi', 157

[100] Hu Hanmin, 'Mengzi yu Shehui Zhuyi', 158

The 'Theories of Sun Yatsen' was written in Shanghai in 1918 but published in May 1919 as part of the party's wave of propaganda activity, and thus can be examined alongside the party's journals of that year. Indeed, the text marked Sun's most extended explicit engagement with the historical legacy of Chinese thought and, at the same time, his main contribution to his revolutionary colleagues' work on the problems of culture. Other than an introductory text for the journal *Jianshe*, his only other contribution to the journals was via the serialised publication of his 'The International Development of China' in *Reconstruction*.

Sun's article positioned him as a radical, challenging the conventional wisdom of the past: he reversed the established saying 'knowing it is easy; it is the doing that is difficult' (*zhiyi xingnan*, traceable to the *Book of Documents*) with the claim that 'to know is difficult and to act is easy' (*zhinan xingyi*).[101] As he put it, after years of thought on the matter, 'I suddenly realized that what the ancients had transmitted and what modern people believed seemed to be true but was in fact false'.[102] The belief he targeted moreover appeared a powerful one, 'transmitted for thousands of years, and learnt throughout the country, so that in the thinking of our four hundred million people it long ago became an unquestioned, unchangeable truth'.[103] This reference to the past was useful, then, in illustrating the need for a dramatic change which would resolve the confusion of past scholars and overcome a fundamental problem in Chinese culture in general and so enlighten the people.

As with Zhu Zhixin's later article, the key to Sun's successful engagement with and overcoming of the past was approaching it in the correctly critical and utilitarian spirit; otherwise it might prove a threat. Iconoclastic as his claims appeared to be, in describing this spirit Sun formulated a positive revolutionary approach to the legacy of the past:

> ...there is none of the Chinese people's temperament and ideals that is not moulded by the ancients; if we seek progress and improvement, then we need to investigate the sources of our distant ancestors' temperament and ideals, measure their advantages and disadvantages, and so know how to fix what is partial and remedy what is harmful... if

[101] Wang Xianqian, *Shangshu Kong zhuan canzheng* [Verification of Kong Anguo's commentary to the Book of Documents] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), 473
[102] Sun Yatsen, *Sun Wen xueshuo* [Theories of Sun Yatsen], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 6, 160
[103] Sun Yatsen, *Sun Wen xueshuo*, 160

> we can use the ancients and not be misled by them, put them to work and not be enslaved by them, then the [historical] records will be as our own investigations, and we will make the ancients our scribes; how beneficial this would be! The Egyptian and Babylonian states have fallen and their races been wiped out, and their writings have long fallen into disuse, and yet the European and American scholars have not shrunk from searching through their fragments and restoring them to their original form; this is because the thinking of the ancients can aid the studies of people of the present day.[104]

Sun's argument here, against some 'scholars of the new learning' who proposed that Chinese characters should be scrapped, distances the text from affirmations of the new such as those of Dai Jitao. Yet, though it appears to accept the influence of past thinking on the present, Sun's argument depends upon the same kind of fundamental separation from the past: Sun and his fellow modern revolutionaries could sort the harmful from the beneficial without themselves being 'enslaved' by the past, suggesting that the 'moulding' influence of the ancients was, for the revolutionary (though not for the Chinese masses), of no concern.[105] Sun's claim was therefore that of the revolutionary traditionalist, to be able to select the 'beneficial' cultural elements from the legacy of the past, with the principle of selection being their utility for 'progress and improvement'. This approach recalls the concept of 'critical inheritance', presented by Barry Schwartz and Tong Zhang as 'a deliberative process wherein both positive and negative aspects of historic figures are recognized'.[106] Where Schwartz and Zhang discuss critical inheritance specifically as a phenomenon during the Communist Party's government of China, however, I would suggest that its later role can be traced back to Guomindang discourse.

Yet despite this radical language, Sun's article at the same time connected him with Chinese writers of the past. His own formulation took its terms, 'knowledge' and 'action', directly from the classics: the new era apparently did not call for a new vocabulary. Sun's article therefore placed him in critical dialogue with predecessors such as Ming dynasty scholar Wang Yangming: the *Theories* can thus be seen as a particularly late example of what Chang Hao called 'internal dialogues', in which '[t]radition was

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[104] Sun Yatsen, *Sun Wen xueshuo,* 180

[105] This ability recalls John Fitzgerald's work on the trope of 'awakening' in *Awakening China: Politics, Culture and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) and Fewsmith on the 'solipsistic claims to "absolute" knowledge' essential to revolutionary groups including the Guomindang: Fewsmith, *Party, State, and Local Elites*, 90-91

[106] Barry Schwartz and Tony Zhang, 'Confucius and the Cultural Revolution: a Study in Collective Memory' in Jeffrey K. Olick, ed., *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Durham, Duke University Press, 2003), 101–127

perceived not as a dead heritage from the past, but as a community of minds sharing across time the same issues and concerns'.[107]

Moreover, in this debate Sun's argument (like Hu Hanmin's) called on selected elements from the ancient past for support, despite his generalised criticism of 'the ancients':

> If any still do not believe me, please consider carefully Confucius' "the people can be made to follow it, [but] cannot be made to know it"… clearly the ancient sage understood this. It's a shame that he did not speak of it in detail, and so later people missed it and strayed onto the wrong path…[108]

Sun's argument thus marked a rediscovery of a truth anciently understood. Like Hu, he presented a 'golden age' narrative: China's decline had set in when knowledge was incorrectly viewed as more valuable than action. Sun's arguments here return us to the quotations in his letter which opened this chapter: contrary to Dai Jitao's radical claims against 'living off dead words', direct quotations from the Chinese classics had a role in that they accorded with the truths of revolution.

The *Theories* thus suggested significant limits on the separation between the 'new' and the 'old'. This was in a sense unsurprising, since the text was composed (though not published) before May Fourth and the party's engagement with radicalism. Yet later in 1919 we also find another suggestion of limits, from Dai Jitao, on the cultural warfare of which he had been an advocate.

Like Hu Hanmin, Dai Jitao's 'The Collapse of the Old Ethics and the Construction of New Ethics' (*Jiu lunli de benghuai yu xin lunli de jianshe*) drew on Mencius to establish a connection between the thwarted aspirations of the pre-imperial past and the party's political programme. This article, split between two editions of the *Critical Review* (19th October and 23rd November 1919), combined its citations from Mencius with the most radical of progressive rhetoric to produce a revolutionary traditionalist synthesis.

Dai's article, like Hu's, was a defence of the New Culture Movement itself, apparently

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[107] Chang Hao, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 10.

[108] Sun Yatsen, *Sun Wen xueshuo,* 196. The quotation is from the *Analects*: Liu Baonan, *Lunyu zhengyi* (The True Meaning of the Analects) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 299

occasioned by the critical remarks of a formerly revolutionary old friend about 'the new people' who insisted on writing horizontally and doing away with characters in order to follow western ways. The most serious issue was that they sought to destroy 'the proper ethical relations' (*lunchang*).[109] The essential point of Dai's printed response was that the old ethics had already collapsed. This was the inevitable result of 'the evolution of material civilisation', since, rejecting classical definitions of ethics as the creation of sage-rulers, Dai proclaimed them to be the 'shared guidelines of "the social life of humanity"'.[110] What was ethical accorded with collective social needs, and as those needs changed with the rise of commerce, new ethics were needed. The obsolescence of the classical ethical relations, however, was not a recent development: Dai presented Confucius as a hopeless romantic who codified and praised a dying system precisely because it was dying. Since ethics were dependent on social foundations, and these were already shifting, Confucius' vain quest to 'restore the ancient ethics' could never succeed. The hierarchical relations between father and child, husband and wife, brothers, and friends, which guided correct behaviour, were according to Dai functional only in the era of 'self-sufficiency'; the rise of commercialism, already underway in Confucius' time, then disrupted these relations. Geographic mobility, monetisation of social duties, and inequality of economic relations made a mockery of them.[111]

There appears to be no room in this materialist, evolutionist account for the ancient ethics to constitute an unchanging or valuable National Essence. Dai emphasised that the modern age required a new morality; although in isolated rural areas 'self-sufficiency' still held and the old ethics had escaped the depredations of commerce, China's urban and coastal areas were inevitably advanced far beyond that. Moreover, by highlighting social problems in the West as well as in China, Dai suggested that the need for a new morality was universal. Nevertheless, his article gave far less space to his proposals for the building of a new morality than to the collapse of the old; his sketch of the new ethics was a brief exercise in socialist utopianism, in which the distinction between 'public' and 'private morality' (which had been popularised by Liang Qichao) was denied. According to Dai any contradiction between the two was a sign of flaws in society: 'loving the masses means loving myself, and loving myself means loving the masses'.[112]

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[109] Dai Jitao, 'Jiu lunli de benghuai yu xin lunli de jianshe' [The Collapse of the Old Ethics and the Construction of New Ethics], *Xingqi pinglun* 20, 25 (October 19 and November 23 1919)
[110] Dai Jitao, 'Jiu lunli de benghuai yu xin lunli de jianshe', 1040
[111] Dai Jitao, 'Jiu lunli de benghuai yu xin lunli de jianshe', 1041-46
[112] Dai Jitao, 'Jiu lunli de benghuai yu xin lunli de jianshe', 1050

However, for all the emphasis on historical evolution and the social needs of the time, Dai's new morality appeared to be intimately connected to the classics. The standard by which he judged modern society ethically lacking was drawn from Mencius: '[that people may] be raised and buried without regrets'.[113] In sketching out the moral system that would accomplish this he also drew on and made a comparison to Mencius: the latter had sought to 'duly revere one's own elders, so that reverence may extend to others' elders', and 'duly care for one's own young, so that care may extend to others' young'. These aims had proved unrealisable because they required the political leader to have 'an attitude that only a true sovereign arising every five hundred years can have'. Dai's alternative was to 'revere the elders of the whole society' and 'care for the young of the whole society'. Mencius' goals, then, were here transposed to a collectivist society: in so doing they received affirmation as fundamental to a moral life, placed alongside and emphasised more than other elements including sexual freedom, the 'allocation of all production' and the goal 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his need'.[114]

Dai's evolutionist sweep through Chinese history, too, in practice attributed value to the 'collapsed' moral system. Even though the loss of the pre-Qin past appeared as historically inevitable, Dai's narrative recalled the 'golden age' trope; indeed, even the economic basis of Dai's narrative of moral decline recalled critiques of the imperial era in which moral corruption crept in through profiteering, the lending of money, and the depersonalisation of the ideal human relations represented by the moral bonds (*lunchang*).[115] In keeping with such narratives, Dai's 'period of self-sufficiency' was an idealised vision in which mutual trust mediated relations between friends, brothers co-operated to produce crops, and the 'admirable customs' of parents caring for children and children caring for their aged parents had not been eroded by the ability to pay others to discharge such duties. There was no explicit condemnation when Dai referred to the economic inequality between men and women, a product of 'the difference

[113] Dai Jitao, 'Jiu lunli de benghuai yu xin lunli de jianshe', 1048. Quotation from the King Hui of Liang chapter of Mencius: Jiao Xu, *Mengzi zhengyi* [The True Meaning of Mencius] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 55

[114] Dai Jitao, 'Jiu lunli de benghuai yu xin lunli de jianshe', 1051. Quotation from the King Hui of Liang chapter of Mencius: Jiao Xu, *Mengzi zhengyi*, 86

[115] See Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 1–9

between main and side occupations' in the household.[116] Dai's treatment of classical ethics, then, was far from the attacks on the 'the cannibalistic doctrine of rites (*lijiao*)' made by Lu Xun: their collapse appeared as a regrettable but inevitable loss.

It is this loss that puts Dai's writing at odds with other radicalist discourse and suggests, like the 'new morality' that nonetheless drew inspiration from the old, that Dai still sought to secure a place for classical values. His 'defence' of the New Culture movement was in practice a redefinition. Where radicalist writings, including Dai's own, identified their mission as being to sweep away the cultural leftovers of the past, which were seen to fatally threaten plans to modernise the country, here Dai's evolutionist scheme in fact denied this need: the enemy had collapsed long ago. Even the 'superstitionised' parodies which hung on through the imperial era had collapsed. Dai declared that 'the ancient ethics do not need us to destroy them; their basis vanished long ago' and that the task for his readers was instead to 'build a new morality'.[117] Cultural warfare therefore appeared misplaced. And yet, having argued throughout that they were already gone, Dai's conclusion took a contradictory turn that appeared to secure a place for the 'old ethics'. He recognised that his plan for a new morality was ambitious: 'this, our great effort, cannot be carried out by one man, cannot be carried out by the people of one state or nation, and is not the work of one year, two years, ten years or eight years: it can only be accomplished through the unceasing creativity of all of humanity.' In the process of exerting this effort, though,

> we cannot divest ourselves for the moment of the unshirkable duties given us by the old ethics. Society cannot care for our relatives, and today we do not have the strength to care for others' relatives: we cannot rid ourselves of our duty to care for our own relatives. We have already married someone; that person cannot live independently, and society will not allow for that person to live independently: we cannot divest ourselves of our duty to love that person. The same is true of [our duties toward] our children and our brothers.[118]

Before the needs met by the apparently obsolete old ethics could be met by the new ones, then, the 'collapsed' ethics of the distant past would not only survive: they would prove indispensable. Dai's contradictory argument served to defend precisely those cultural elements that served as a focal point for radical criticism.

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[116] Dai Jitao, 'Jiu lunli de benghuai yu xin lunli de jianshe', 1044
[117] Dai Jitao, 'Jiu lunli de benghuai yu xin lunli de jianshe', 1050
[118] Dai Jitao, 'Jiu lunli de benghuai yu xin lunli de jianshe', 1051-52

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, revolutionary traditionalist discourse emerged through the Guomindang's engagement with the 'New Culture'. Writings in *Awakening*, *Reconstruction* and *Weekly Review* were diverse in their constructions of culture: different articles could be read as comprehensively iconoclastic, attacking not only cultural elements associated with the past but also 'National Essence'-style appeals to those elements, or as affirming cultural elements associated with the past as an object of pride or as valuable for the revolution.

The textual practices of revolutionary traditionalism served to reconcile claims to these cultural elements with radical attacks on the 'dead words' of the past. They did so by explicitly identifying the functions of the traditional as part of the revolutionary project, by selecting cultural elements (often from a pre-imperial 'golden age') and reinterpreting them in line with that project, and by positioning these claims against those of anti-revolutionary traditionalists. The effect was to position the revolutionary party as arbiter of both 'old' and 'new' culture and politics.

The writings in Guomindang journals rarely strayed from and often explicitly stressed the immediate demands of their political movement. They were thus inevitably far less nuanced in their approach to the cultural legacy than the earlier example of the 'national essence' scholars who, although engaged in anti-Qing activities, were also well versed in classical texts. By condemning both the 'national essence' and the philological practices associated with the 'rectification of names', Dai Jitao had, in fact, cast suspicion on such academic activities.

This difference, however, had contradictory consequences which would trouble revolutionary traditionalism. The more complex engagement of the 'national essence' scholars allowed them to differentiate 'imperial learning' from 'national learning', selecting 'non-canonical' writings from antiquity and elevating them against the orthodox interpretations of the classics promoted by the imperial court.[119] By contrast, the Guomindang writings we have studied here, for all their self-declared radicalism,

[119] Luo Zhitian (tr. Lane J. Harris and Mei Chun), *Inheritance within Rupture: Culture and Scholarship in Early Twentieth Century China* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 39–45

repurposed the words of Mencius and the *Analects*, works closely associated with the late imperial orthodox order. By associating their revolution both with extremes of radicalism and with quotations from the classics, the Guomindang members had opened the floodgates to claims that would not necessarily be easily reconciled.

2. Restoring the Nation and Bringing Peace to the World: 'Inherent' Culture in the Three Principles of the People Lectures

> Now a group of people intoxicated with the New Culture throw out the old morality, thinking that if we have [the former] we have no need of [the latter]. They don't know that if the things inherent to us are good, then of course we should keep them; only if they are bad can they be discarded. At this moment China is caught in the clash between new and old tides, and the common citizens don't know what to follow.[120]

In 1919 and 1920 Guomindang journals had celebrated the 'New Culture'. Just four years later, in lectures intended to unify the party's diverse and contested doctrines, Sun Yatsen decisively turned against it. His 1924 Three Principles of the People lectures defined his principle of nationalism in explicit contrast to the iconoclasm for which the 'movement' had become known with the strongest affirmation of China's historical culture yet made by a party member.

Although it celebrated what was 'inherent' to China against a universal, global 'New Culture', Sun's nationalism was also global in its focus, and its traditionalism played an important role in this. The lectures went beyond China to imagine a new order of independent nations; as such, they were part of transnational discourses that challenged the 'imperialist' world order dominated by the European powers and the United States.[121] At the same time, Sun's lectures can also be identified with a related global intellectual trend which flourished in the aftermath of the First World War: the evocation of 'Eastern culture' or 'Eastern civilization' as a source of alternative values against the materialist or scientific 'West'.[122] Seen in this context the lectures' traditionalism was not

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[120] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang' [Sixth Nationalism Lecture], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 9, 243

[121] Erez Manela has promoted the study of 'anticolonial national histories within an international context' with his study of Asian reactions to Woodrow Wilson's rhetoric of self-determination; Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), xi. The case of Sun Yatsen supports, however, Rebecca Karl's criticism of Manela's premise: the diverse forms of 'anticolonial nationalism' predated Wilson's words, did not depend on them, and put forward their own challenges to capitalism as well as the political order of colonialism. See Karl, Review of The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism, *The American Historical Review* 113.5 (2008), 1474–76 and Karl, *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), passim

[122] Dominic Sachsenmeier, 'Searching for Alternatives to Western Modernity: Cross-Cultural Approaches in the Aftermath of the Great War', *Journal of Modern European History* 4 (2006), 241–260. Although Sun's lectures were explicitly nationalist, it would be reductive to view this trend as merely a manifestation of anti-colonial nationalism. Rabindranath Tagore, a celebrated proponent of 'Eastern civilization', rejected nationalism itself as divisive and dangerous: see Sachensenmeir, 'Searching for Alternatives to Western

merely decorative: Sun rooted his vision of China, the global future, and his own party's doctrines in a distinctive vision of China's historical culture. Traditionalist references and quotations from the classics played a central role in distinguishing his own vision of the global future not only from that of 'the West', but also from other challengers, most notably Marxism-Leninist alternatives. Combining the 'new and old tides', the native and the global, Sun's lectures thus put forward a revolutionary traditionalist synthesis, a fresh reconciliation of the transformative demands of revolution with what Sun called China's 'inherent morality' and the teachings of the classics.

Discussions of Sun Yatsen's references to historical culture and quotations from classical texts have typically focused on his intellectual heritage and/or political motivations. Those addressing the former tend to place Sun on a continuum between 'the West' and China: Zhang Qizhi argues that 'the essence of Sun Yatsen's thought was modern Western democracy', while Zhang Kaiyuan stresses more organic links with Chinese thought.[123] In both cases and others, however, there is a common interpretation in terms of motivation: however connected to 'tradition', Sun made use of it for the purposes of the national revolution. As Shimada Kenji and Geng Yunzhi put it, for Sun native culture served to inspire the Chinese people's self-confidence against invaders: the fact that in his later life Sun increasingly identified imperialism as the major enemy of the revolution explains why his praise for 'traditional' culture also increased.[124] Li Kan has offered an alternative explanation, which like Zhang Qizhi's posits a fundamental separation from legacies of the Chinese past: in the process of revolutionary nation-building, appeals to the past functioned only as propaganda to make the message of revolution acceptable, because, to quote Sun, 'the Chinese people most worship the ancients'.[125] This packaging of revolution in sinified guise is also evident in the interpretation of David Strand,

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Modernity', 248–49

[123] Zhang Qizhi, 'Sun Zhongshan dui Zhongguo chuantong wenhua de fansi' [Sun Yatsen's Reflections on China's Traditional Culture] in Sun Zhongshan yanjiu xuehui, eds., *Sun Zhongshan he tade shidai: Sun Zhongshan yanjiu guoji xueshu taolunhui wenji* [Sun Yatsen and His Age: Papers from the International Symposium on Sun Yatsen Studies] 3 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 1677; Zhang Kaiyan, 'Cong liyi dao huigui: Sun Zhongshan yu chuantong wenhua de guanxi' [From Separation to Return: Sun Yatsen's Relationship with Traditional Culture] in Sun Zhongshan yanjiu xuehui, *Sun Zhongshan he tade shidai*, 1703

[124] Shimada Kenji, 'Guanyu Sun Zhongshan xuanyang rujiao de dongji lun' [On Sun Yatsen's Motive for Promoting Classicism] in Sun Zhongshan yanjiu xuehui, *Sun Zhongshan he tade shidai*, 1738–50; Geng Yunzhi, 'Lüe Ping Sun Zhongshan Wannian dui chuantong wenhua de taidu' [Assessing Sun Yatsen's Attitude to Traditional Culture in His Later Years] in Geng Yunzhi, *Liaocao xuji* [Second Knotweed Collection] (Harbin: Heilongjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 2009), 85–88

[125] Li Kan, 'Sun Zhongshan yu chuantong ruxue' [Sun Yatsen and Traditional Classicism] in Sun Zhongshan yanjiu xuehui, *Sun Zhongshan he tade shidai*, 1714–37; Sang Bing, *Sun Zhongshan de Huodong yu Sixiang* [Sun Yatsen's activities and thought] (Guangzhou: Zhongshan daxue chubanshe, 2001), 339

following Paul Cohen: 'the completion of Sun's plans for unifying China required "indigenous validation"'.[126]

This chapter, by contrast, does not aim to resolve the questions of inspiration or motivation, but to understand the impact the Three Principles lectures had on Guomindang discourse. Until now, depictions of the Guomindang's 'turn', whether to 'conservatism', 'reaction' or to a cultural nationalist use of the past, have typically focused on the late 1920s or 1930s. Instead I would identify these 1924 lectures as playing a central role, shifting party discourse away from the explicit radicalism of the 'New Culture' engagement and doing much to define the alternative, revolutionary traditionalist cultural visions that would dominate the Guomindang in subsequent years.

This is best understood by viewing the lectures, versions of which would be printed and reprinted in party media long after Sun spoke, within the context of contemporary party discourse. As Strand's study suggests, it is important to consider the lectures not only as texts read by a wide readership, but also as spoken to a gathered audience. A significant part of the audience for Sun's lectures, in person and in print, was party members, and the lectures thus constituted a particularly influential intervention in party discourse.

For a broader readership outside the party, less impacted by the radical discourse associated with the 'New Culture', Sun's praise of China's historical culture might well be unsurprising. The Guomindang world of discourse to which Sun made the contributions he hoped would be definitive in 1924 was, however, still strongly defined by the radical tendencies identified in the previous chapter. Sun's criticism of the 'New Culture' was therefore at odds with common tendencies with which his party was associated. In particular, radical texts in party-associated journals of the early 1920s presented proponents of 'Eastern civilization' as conservative enemies of the revolution. Sun's lectures, by contrast, made very similar claims drawing on China's own cultural heritage central to his revolution.

In the process, the lectures greatly widened the scope for cultural elements associated with the Chinese past to feature in revolutionary discourse. By putting forward a vision of national culture and explicitly stressing its utility for the revolution, Sun claimed the

[126] Strand, *An Unfinished Republic*, 261

authority to define what from the legacy of the past could be considered 'good'. Yet the unprecedented breadth of his references meant that elements commonly linked to the late imperial orthodoxy and with more conservative cultural trends were brought into the mainstream of revolutionary discourse.

Attacking 'Eastern civilisation': radical discourse in the 1920s

After 1920 much of the Guomindang's explicit engagement with the 'New Culture Movement' ended, as Sun and others moved from Shanghai to Guangdong to pursue 'concrete reconstruction'.[127] Yet this did not bring an end to radical discourse associated with the party and explicitly evoking the 'movement'. In Shanghai, while its fellow journals ceased publication, *Awakening* continued as a supplement to the popular *Republican Daily* and provided space for cultural critique. The entry of Communist Party members into the Guomindang from 1922, followed by the formal 'united front' in 1923, created further opportunities for cultural-political radicalism, since these members were likewise inclined to lay claim to the 'New Culture' and associate it with their own political efforts. Wen Hsin-yeh has shown the importance of 'May Fourth provincial radicals' in the formation of the party.[128] Communist Party founder and leader Chen Duxiu in particular was one of the 'Movement"s most prominent and explicitly iconoclastic representatives.[129]

The March 1924 article 'A New Theory of Revolution' (*Geming xinshuo*) by Communist Chen Youkui, who in 1925 would head the Guomindang Propaganda Department in Hunan, exemplifies this radical discourse. Chen's article was published in the Beijing Guomindang journal *New Republic* (*Xin minguo*), which Fitzgerald identifies as published 'in association with the Beijing party branch of the CCP and left-wing Guomindang members'.[130] Like Hu Hanmin, Chen argued that revolution was not frightening. He did so, however, not by associating socialism with quotations from Mencius but with a more purely theoretical argument: that 'revolution' was an on-going, integral part of life for all

[127] John Fitzgerald, 'Hollow Words: Guomindang Propaganda and the Formation of Popular Attitudes toward the National Revolution in Guangdong Province, 1919 to 1926', doctoral thesis, Australian National University, 1983, 22

[128] Wen-hsin Yeh, *Provincial Passages: Culture, Space, and the Origins of Chinese Communism* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996), 196

[129] See e.g. Chen Duxiu, 'Ouxiang pohuai lun' [On iconoclasm], *Xin Qingnian* 5.2 (August 1918)

[130] Fitzgerald, *Hollow Words,* 230

beings, since it involved 'breaking through all impediments and [thereby] being active'.[131] The New Culture Movement stood in Chen's account as a paramount example of 'revolution'.

As with earlier radical texts, Chen's celebration of novelty targeted living defenders of the 'old'. According to him, their professions of morality could only be understood as a cover for their own self-interest, and thus constituted politico-cultural threats to the natural process of revolution:

> we must sweep away young and old loyalists of the former Qing and Ming; that group who call themselves followers of Sages and put on the hypocritical mask of the doctrine of rites, speaking constantly of 'the morality of humaneness and righteousness' [*ren'yi*, a combination of virtues present in the *Record of Rites* and prominent in Mencius] to pursue their desire to make robbers of men and prostitutes of women.[132]

In the continued radical discourse, the anti-modern threat of conservatism was captured in the term 'restoring antiquity' (*fugu*). This term, which in the imperial era had generally described the laudable aim of returning to the values and practices of the classical 'golden age', for radicals signified hidebound opposition to progress.[133] This can be seen in fellow Communist Party member Yang Xianjiang's 'This year's May Fourth and the third phase of the Restoring Antiquity movement' (*Jinnian de Wusi he disanqi fugu yundong*), printed in *Awakening* on May fifth 1924, which, like Chen Youkui's article, linked the New Culture Movement, May Fourth, and the national revolution. Yang noted that the 'struggle between new and old' initiated by the *New Youth* journal's attack on Confucius was unresolved, and the forces of 'the old' in fact appeared resurgent. His article claimed that New Culture activism had lapsed in the previous five years, while conservative efforts to 'restore antiquity' proliferated with the support of authorities in Beijing.

In each 'phase' of the 'restore antiquity movement' political opposition to the national revolution and cultural conservatism were closely linked. The first phase, immediately

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[131] Chen Youkui, 'Geming xinshuo' [A new theory of revolution], *Xin minguo zazhi* 1.5 (May 1924), 1

[132] Chen Youkui, 'Geming xinshuo', 5. For 'humaneness and righteousness' see e.g. Jiao Xu, *Mengzi zhengyi*, Vol. 2, 36, and Sun Xidan, *Liji jijie* [Collected Interpretations of the *Book of* Rites] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 8

[133] Dieter Kuhn discusses the earlier ideal of 'restoring antiquity' in Kuhn, 'Reflections on the Concept of Antiquity in Chinese Civilization' in Dieter Kuhn and Helga Stahl, eds., *Perceptions of Antiquity in Chinese Civilization* (Heidelberg: Edition Forum, 2008), 17–68, 42, 51–54

following the 1911 revolution, comprised the Confucian Religion Association's efforts to promote state-sponsored 'Confucian religion', while the second included various forms of opposition to the 'New Culture Movement': academics attacking Hu Shi, political moves to clamp down on student activism, and then-President Xu Shichang's 'promotion of morality, integrity, and filial piety, and reverence for Confucius'. Another manifestation of the second phase were the burgeoning 'redemptive societies', notably the Fellowship of Goodness (*Tongshan she*), which depended for their success on political support.[134] Likewise, Yang's 'third phase' included, among other elements, calls from the '[imperial] restoration faction and the Fellowship of Goodness' for the government to promote classics-reading, orders forbidding female students to cut their hair, a newspaper article's celebration of a woman dying to preserve her chastity in Kaifeng, the Hunan Education Bureau forbidding co-educational schools, and the establishment of Jinling College for the purposes of "combining old and new knowledge and morality... in the hope of promoting culture and preserving customs and discipline".[135]

That communist writers like Chen Youkui or Yang Xianjiang were critical about attempts to preserve some form of Chinese cultural essence and moral values associated with the imperial order is not surprising. But the perception of revolution as a culturally radical task is also evident in works by non-Communists. As Yang Youjiong's 'The national revolution and the cultural movement' (*Guomin geming yu wenhua yundong*) put it, 'the spirit of modern civilisation is a scientific spirit', and it was this spirit, rather than any distinctive cultural essence, that Sun Yatsen's Three Principles of the People embodied. '[U]ntil the revolution is completed', Yang noted, 'culture' itself could only be 'a decoration for the nobility and the militarists'; the task with regard to culture then was to 'reform and develop' it by 'massifying and socialising' it.[136]

As in 1919 and 1920, radical discourse in Guomindang-linked journals was part of a wider conflict over culture. Yang Xianjiang's article was typical not only in expressing support for individuals like Hu Shi who had become symbols of the 'New Culture', but also in attacking their intellectual opponents. A particular target, for Yang and other writers, were positive claims for 'Eastern culture' or 'Eastern civilisation', which

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[134] Yang Xianjiang, 'Jinnian de "Wusi" he disanqi fugu yundong' [This year's May Fourth and the third phase restore antiquity movement] *Juewu* 5 May 1924, 2

[135] Yang Xianjiang, 'Jinnian de "Wusi" he disanqi fugu yundong', 3

[136] Yang Youjiong, 'Guomin geming yu wenhua yundong' [The national revolution and the cultural movement], *Juewu* 30 April 1924, 2

concentrated around the visit of celebrated Indian poet and critic of the British Raj Rabindranath Tagore to China in April 1924.[137] As Yang put it, among his manifestations of efforts to 'restore antiquity': 'the "School of Mysticism" [*Xuanxue pai*] has emerged: lately the Lecture Society has invited Tagore to China to promote "Eastern culture" and sap the youth's revolutionary spirit'.[138]

Radicalism was thus constructed against the discourse of 'Eastern civilisation'. Prasenjit Duara describes how this discourse 'flourished' in China after 1911, defining it by claims for 'Eastern civilization… as superior to Western civilization or as necessary to redeem the latter'.[139] Thus, for instance, Du Yaquan, editor of the *Eastern Miscellany* (*Dongfang zazhi*) journal, celebrated in the 1910s 'the still or quiet civilization of the East, which was obliged to rescue the world from the restless civilization of the West'.[140] Du's arguments, which were opposed in the writings of celebrated 'New Culture' figure Chen Duxiu, were echoed in later texts by Liang Qichao, Liang Shuming and others.[141] As Liang Qichao put it in an address to 'our beloved youth', 'there are many millions on the other side of the sea, bewailing the bankruptcy of material civilisation… waiting for you to save them'.[142] Furthermore, as the involvement of Tagore suggests, the discourse of 'Eastern civilisation' was a transnational one in which 'Western' intellectuals like Bertrand Russell, Henri Bergson and Rudolph Eucken were involved.[143] Yang Xianjiang's attack was consequently a rejection of these claims.

Yet the discourse of 'Eastern civilisation', identifying contributions to a future global order drawn from a distinctive Chinese past, could come threateningly close to revolutionary traditionalism. Articles by Wang Jingwei in 1923 and 1924 illuminate this danger, with Wang's writing showing a common discursive ground followed by subsequent distancing through the adoption of an explicitly radical position.

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[137] For a discussion of Tagore's visit and the critical reaction, see Das, 'The controversial guest: Tagore in China', *China Report* 29.3 (1993) 237-273

[138] Yang Xianjiang, 'Jinnian de "Wusi" he disanqi fugu yundong', 3

[139] Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 99

[140] Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 100. See e.g. Cang Fu (aka Du Yaquan), *Jing de wenming yu dong de wenming* [Still civilisation and active civilisation], *Dongfang zazhi* 13.10, 1–8

[141] See Leigh Jenco, 'Revisiting Asian Values', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 74.2 (April 2013), 237–58, 243–45

[142] Liang Qichao, *Ouyou xinying lu* [Travel Impressions in Europe], *Liang Qichao quanji* [Complete works of Liang Qichao] Vol. 5 (Beijing: Beijing chubanshe, 1999), 2987

[143] Prasenjit Duara, Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern (Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 101

In 1923 Wang wrote a preface for Hu Pu'an's compilation of poems from the Southern Society, the politically anti-Qing literary organisation founded in 1909 of which both men had been members.[144] Wang's preface, celebrating the poems as 'revolutionary literature', was revolutionary traditionalist in its balance: it emphasised their 'form' as both 'rooted in national studies' (*guoxue*), incorporating 'the cream of the classics, histories, writings of various masters, and literary works', and equally rooted in 'western studies'.[145] Echoing Zhu Zhixin's article on nationalism, Wang described the role of each in balancing the other and stressing their utility for the political task:

> [W]ithout the former, the pain of the country's loss and the extinction of the race would both be forgotten… [w]ithout the latter… [China's people] would still think the ties between emperor and minister inevitable, and would not have heard the idea that sovereignty is vested in the people.[146]

The enterprise to which Wang gave this stamp of approval, however, shared much with the discourse of 'Eastern civilisation'. Hu first printed Wang's preface in his *National Studies Weekly* (*Guoxue zhoukan*), a supplement to the Guomindang-affiliated *Republican Daily* from the ninth of May 1923; the journal moreover included poetry by Wang and Hu Hanmin. The journal's first issue aligned the National Studies Research Society it represented with New Culture advocate Hu Shi's call to 'reorganise the national heritage': while insisting that 'national studies have value' it argued that 'most scholars have no leisure to pursue national studies, and those who are steeped in it are held back by their old thinking, and cannot find a systematic approach'.[147]

Yet this critical stance was immediately followed in the first issue by Hu Pu'an's essay 'On the special features of Chinese learning', which discussed the value of this learning in terms that echoed Liang Qichao's *Travel Impressions In Europe* and other evocations of 'Eastern civilisation'. Arguing that 'China's old learning must be preserved and

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[144] See Michel Hockx, *Questions of Style: Literary Societies and Literary Journals in Modern China, 1911–1937* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 35-46

[145] Dirlik shows how the term 'national studies' was adopted from Japan and closely linked to the 'national essence' in the 1900s, describing distinctively Chinese learning to be preserved as new academic disciplines entered the country and in contrast to the orthodox 'ruler's learning'. See Dirlik, 'Guoxue/National Learning in the Age of Global Modernity', 7–9.

[146] Wang Jingwei, 'Zhengzhi yu wenhua'

[147] 'Guoxue yanjiushe xuanyan' [National studies research society announcement], *Guoxue zhoukan* (9 May 1923)

expressed', Hu claimed that the 'material civilisation' of Europe and the USA had produced the agonies of the First World War, and 'its scholars look to China; [Bertrand] Russell's "The Question of China" is an example of this'.[148] In Hu's brief essay, Chinese learning met these foreign scholars' demands by rejecting the 'material': its key contribution was to 'establish an utmost plane in the realm of spirit, seeing all external power as empty', allowing the individual's will to remain 'uncontrolled by material things'.[149]

Wang Jingwei's 1924 contribution to the debate over Tagore's visit, published in the party's Beijing *Criticism of Criticism* (*Pinglun zhi pinglun*) journal, was sharply distinct from such claims to Chinese superiority on the plane of culture. Wang instead tapped into the on-going attack on the concept of 'Eastern civilisation' as a culturally conservative and thus counter-revolutionary force.[150] Wang, who had been confirmed as a member of the party's Central Executive Committee at the first National Congress that year, presented Tagore's visit as the latest in a string of appearances of foreign thinkers like Bertrand Russell and John Dewey in China, claiming that the crowds they had drawn had failed to investigate their ideas. Wang rejected these visitors' praise in terms that condemned 'Eastern civilisation' and even the explicitly utilitarian arguments of revolutionary traditionalism: the visitors' 'praise for the Chinese people' was only debilitating, making listeners and readers 'forget their sub-colonial status' and grow self-satisfied when the appropriate and urgent task was to 'press forward'.[151] Tagore, as the newest visitor, appeared in Wang's description to be still more dangerous in his praise for 'high' 'Eastern culture': 'I fear that they will be so overjoyed as to return to the remote antiquity of [legendary pre-imperial rulers] Wuhuai and Getian, and their souls will never return'.[152]

The Three Principles of the People lectures

Sun Yatsen's 1924 lectures countered these radical tendencies and put claims to the heritage of the past, which moreover echoed the claims of 'Eastern civilisation', at the centre of party discourse.

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[148] Hu Pu'an, 'Lun Zhongguo xuewen zhi tedian' [On the special features of Chinese learning], *Guoxue zhoukan* (9 May 1923)
[149] Hu Pu'an, 'Lun Zhongguo xuewen zhi tedian'
[150] Wang Jingwei, 'Women duiyu Taige'er de taidu yinggai zenyang' [How should we regard Tagore?], *Pinglun zhi pinglun* 6 (April 1924), 5
[151] Wang, 'Women duiyu Taige'er de taidu yinggai zenyang', 5
[152] Wang, 'Women duiyu Taige'er de taidu yinggai zenyang', 5

The lectures were well positioned to do so. All party members in Guangzhou were called to attend the series of sixteen didactic lectures, which began with the first lecture on nationalism on January 27 1924.[153] David Strand has argued that, as 'a final summation of his thought and his instructions for the revolution [Sun Yatsen] would not complete', the lectures constituted 'one of the most important examples of sustained oratory in China's modern era'.[154] Their subsequent life in print confirmed this significance. Sun gave his sixth and final 'nationalism' lecture on March 2 1924. Over the month that followed, Sun and others worked on party member Zou Lu's transcript from the lectures (which Sun stated had been given extemporaneously) to produce a version which first saw publication in April 1924, in the Guangzhou-based official journal *Chinese Guomindang Monthly* and in a separate booklet form.[155] The remaining lectures, six on 'the people's rights' and four on 'the people's livelihood', followed a similar process, and by the end of the year published editions of all of the lectures had appeared under the 'Three Principles of the People' title.

If efforts in 1924 to publish the lectures indicate that Sun and others placed great importance on them, Sun's death in March 1925 confirmed this importance, making them his final extended discussion of the party's doctrines. Sun himself ensured their status in his final days, naming the collected lectures as one of four key texts to guide party members in his 'Political Testament'. Inevitably, the lectures were prominent among the many works published and republished after Sun's death.

The published text of the lectures reflects its origins, moving eclectically (and, as Strand notes, not always consistently) across a wide range of subjects.[156] Yet Sun's major contributions to cultural debates were well positioned for impact, concentrated in the sixth lecture on nationalism and thus concluding Sun's words on the subject.

Recovering the nation

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[153] Guomindang Archives, Taipei, Han 0050
[154] Strand, *An Unfinished Republic*, 254
[155] Strand, *An Unfinished Republic*, 256, Guangdong sheng difang shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, 'Sanmin zhuyi' [The Three Principles of the People] (10 October 2004), http://www.zsda.gov.cn/plus/view.php?aid=284366
[156] Strand, *An Unfinished Republic*, 257–57

The assembled audience in the hall, and subsequently the wider Guomindang readership, was treated to an attack on radicalism. It was a misguided radicalism, rather than 'conservative' calls for 'Eastern civilisation' or to 'restore antiquity', which appeared as the chief cultural threat. In defining and arguing for nationalism, Sun constructed it against 'cosmopolitanism' (*shijie zhuyi*). Nationalism was a vital 'tool' for China's survival that would unite China and the 'weak and small nations' of the world, raising them to parity with the USA, Japan, and the European powers, and so serve as a necessary prelude to world unification.[157] The necessity of promoting 'national spirit' had been a theme of Sun's after the disappointments that had followed the 1911 revolution. In 1912 he had declared that the issues of nationalism and people's rights (*minzu* and *minquan*) had already been resolved, leaving only the people's livelihood (*minsheng*). By 1919, with the party forcibly removed from government, he had returned to the pre-1911 position that all three of his principles remained unrealised.[158] However, his restatement of the goal of nationalism in 1924 was coloured significantly by the influence of Leninist anti-imperialism. Sun's nationalism meant the awakening of the Chinese people to the demographic, political and economic threats posed by the imperial powers as primary antagonists.[159]

Sun thus attacked radicals for forgetting the nation. The 'New Culture Movement', as Sun described it, was corrosive to nationalism: 'lately the students who speak of a new culture also promote cosmopolitanism, thinking that nationalism does not fit in with the global tide [of historical progress]'.[160] Far from being forerunners and supporters of the revolutionary movement, this made the students the unwitting pawns of imperialism: '[t]he Great Powers are afraid that we will have this kind of [nationalist] thinking, and so they produce this kind of seemingly true but false reasoning, promoting cosmopolitanism to incite us.'[161]

Defined against the imperialist threat of cosmopolitanism, nationalism therefore drew attention to what was particular to China. More than this, however, in contrast to the

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[157] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: disan jiang' [Third Nationalism Lecture], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 9, 217-20

[158] Sun Yatsen, 'Zai Guomindang Chengli Dahui Shang de Yanshuo' [Speech at the Founding Meeting of the Guomindang], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 2, 407–409, 408, 'Sanmin Zhuyi' [Three Principles of the People], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 5, 185-97

[159] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu Zhuyi: Di'er Jiang' [Second Nationalism Lecture], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 9, 197-209

[160] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: disan jiang', 219, 'Minzu zhuyi: disi jiang' [Fourth Nationalism Lecture], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 9, 220–31

[161] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: disi jiang', 226

search for a 'new' and cosmopolitan future culture, Sun's nationalism meant restoring elements of China's past: the mission of the revolutionaries was 'recovering the status of our nation'.[162] The revolutionary traditionalist narrative of national decline and recovery was central to Sun's sixth lecture, which stressed that China in the past had been a 'very strong, very civilised country, the strongest country in the world' and went on to detail the distinctive cultural features that demonstrated this greatness.

Sun's lecture, however, expanded previous revolutionary traditionalist claims. One aspect of this was temporal, with an extended period of pre-decline greatness. As discussed in Chapter One, in 1919 Sun had put forward a 'golden age' ideal, stating that 'before the Zhou [Dynasty] was a time of progress; after the Zhou was a time of decline'.[163] The 1924 lectures, by contrast, avoided such specific temporal references. Instead, Sun suggested that China's 'national spirit' had been suppressed 'for several hundred years'. It appeared then that the coming of the Qing, rather than the advent of imperial China, marked a point of historical decline.[164]

In keeping with this broader temporal scope, Sun's lectures endorsed an unprecedentedly wide range of cultural elements of the imperial past. As the quote that opens this chapter shows, the approach remained explicitly utilitarian and selective: 'if the things inherent to us are good, then of course we should keep them'.[165] In addressing the question of which things were good, and therefore should be kept (or recovered), however, Sun's references and quotations were eclectic and general, drawn from across the record of Chinese history. Where Zhu Zhixin had in 1919 argued in the abstract for the importance of pride in the nation's historical culture (in the process anticipating Sun's arguments against cosmopolitanism), Sun's sixth lecture by contrast discussed the features of this culture at length, dividing them into 'inherent' morality, knowledge, and ability (*guyou daode, zhishi, nengli*).

Though supported by concrete examples, as Sun's sixth lecture presented them these elements were not products of a particular time or person; they were 'inherent' in being generalised features of the Chinese nation as a whole. This level of generality potentially

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[162] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 241
[163] Sun Yatsen, *Sun Wen xueshuo*, 199
[164] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: disan jiang', 210
[165] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 243

allowed a vast range of China's historical culture to be incorporated into Guomindang discourse. Moreover, despite the claim that 'bad' elements could be 'discarded', Sun did not elaborate on which elements these might be. The lecture could therefore be understood as a generalised endorsement of China's historical culture. This is indicated by one of the lecture's broadest traditionalist claims, that the revival of 'the entirety of our national essence' should precede learning from other countries.[166] As we saw in the previous chapter Dai Jitao in 1919 had used the term 'national essence', which in the 1900s had been linked to the anti-Qing cause, entirely pejoratively to describe a fixation of the opponents of revolution. Sun therefore restored it as part of revolutionary discourse.

Suiting national conditions and conforming to the global tide

Though Sun's lecture therefore widened the scope of traditionalism, it remained 'revolutionary' in tying national culture to the party's programme. What was 'good', as Sun's lecture made clear, was what was useful to the realisation of his Three Principles through revolution, and consequently Sun's summation of China's culture amounted to a reinvention.

Sun's statement in a 1923 speech to party members that 'the doctrine of this party truly suits China's national conditions and conforms to the global tide' aptly characterises his vision of what was 'good' in China's culture.[167] Sun used an argument familiar from the National Essence discourse of the 1900s, that China's existing cultural legacy suited it to revolution and the political form of the Republic.[168] These phenomena were part of the universal process Sun called 'the global tide' or 'the tide of the evolution of world civilisation'. Like that of Marx, Sun's doctrine described a universal process of historical change according to a definitive principle, namely 'the people's livelihood' (*minsheng*). His account of history was therefore, like that of contemporary Marxists and many others, an evolutionary one of progress through stages, and the features Sun celebrated anticipated or prepared the way for China's future progress.[169] China's inherent morality,

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[166] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 251

[167] Sun Yatsen,'Zai Guangzhou Guomindang Kenqin Dahui de Yanshuo' [Speech at the Guangzhou Guomindang Friendship Meeting], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 8, 284

[168] E.g. Hu Hanmin, 'Minbao zhi Liu Da Zhuyi'

[169] Cemil Aydın argues that 'non-Western elites' retained the vision of universal 'civilizational progress' even as they challenged European imperialism: Aydın, 'Beyond Civilization: Pan-Islamism, Pan-Asianism

knowledge and ability were particular to the nation, but at the same time matched universal requirements.

One of these requirements was nationalism. As Sun explained China's decline by a loss of 'national spirit', nationalism itself was among the elements to be 'recovered' for China to progress. As with the expansion of China's 'golden age', here Sun's lecture went beyond his earlier claims. In 1919 Sun had written a much shorter piece laying out his Three Principles, in which he had declared 'the Chinese nation is the most ancient… the largest… and the most civilised nation… yet… it has never had nationalism.'[170] In 1924, by contrast, Sun stated that 'national spirit' had been largely lost at an unspecified point in history when the Chinese became so convinced of their own superiority that they adopted cosmopolitanism, viewing their own culture as universal instead of identifying with the nation. It was for this reason that the Qing had conquered China.

The recovery of 'national spirit' would be aided by China's longstanding social conditions. Sun's fifth nationalism lecture presented the process of unification as an extension outward from and connection together of the 'very firm family and lineage groups', which could be united together as a social basis for the 'recovered' national community.[171] This grand vision stood in direct contradiction to attacks by 'New Culture' advocates on the patriarchal family system as despotic.[172]

Sun's sixth lecture departed still further from radical discourse when it came to the question of morality: the process of recovery, and therefore the mission of the party, was in large part a moral one. Awaiting recovery, and entirely compatible with the global tide, were the virtues that Sun identified as China's 'inherent morality': loyalty, filial piety, humane love, trust, righteousness, and peace *(zhong, xiao, ren'ai, xin, yi, heping*). Collectively, these virtues explained China's lasting past greatness and represented its hope for the future. As with earlier instances of revolutionary traditionalism, Sun's argument here was explicitly utilitarian: 'a country is strong initially due to the development of military strength; if this is followed by the development of all kinds of culture, it will succeed. But in order to maintain a lasting position for a nation or state, there is also the problem

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and the Revolt against the West', *Journal of Modern European History* 4.2, 204–23

[170] Sun Yatsen, 'Sanmin Zhuyi' [The Three Principles of the People], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 5, 186

[171] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diwu jiang' [Fifth Nationalism Lecture], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 9, 238

[172] See Susan Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915–1953* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003), 38–44

of morality: a state can only be kept in lasting order when it has good morality'.[173] Ethics were invaluable then because they served the nation-building process.

The lectures' specific arguments for the virtues reversed radical attacks, including those in party journals such as the articles by Chen Youkui (who as we have seen criticised 'humaneness and righteousness') and Yang Xianjiang. The first virtue, loyalty, was the only cultural feature to be 'recovered' that raised explicitly the problem of incompatibility between past and present, since Sun admitted the word had previously meant loyalty to the Emperor, and 'ordinary people... think that... now the Republic has no monarch, this word 'loyalty' is unnecessary'.[174] Yet as Sun put it this problem was a simple one: some, including the Guomindang's own soldiers, had taken to removing the 'loyalty' characters that had decorated the walls of temples, but they simply failed to understand that in the Republic citizens must be loyal to their country and their fellow citizens. Loyalty could be transferred without difficulty to appropriate new targets. Sun did not mention the contemporary use of the word in its original sense by the Qing loyalists that Chen Youkui had attacked; the Guomindang could appropriate and reinvent this most political of virtues to build a modern nation, while leaving its uncomfortable former meanings firmly in the past.[175]

In the case of filial piety, contemporary iconoclasm was not even mentioned: it appeared as an unproblematically positive Chinese virtue, in sharp contrast to Yang Xianjiang's attack on its promotion by the Beijing government and ignoring New Culture critiques of it as the foundation of the 'oppressive' and 'feudal' family system by Wu Yu, Lu Xun, Fu Sinian, Gu Jiegang and many others.[176] Citing the Han Dynasty *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiaojing*), Sun praised this virtue as 'all-encompassing' and not a sign of backwardness but the reverse: its realisation in China was 'much more advanced than in other countries'.[177]

Humane love (*ren'ai*) marked another expansion beyond Sun's earlier claims. In a 1912 speech to the Chinese Socialist Party in Shanghai, Sun had referred to the term as a

[173] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 242
[174] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 244
[175] See Lin Zhihong's extensive study of Qing loyalists, *Minguo nai diguo ye: zhengzhi wenhua zhuanxing de Qing yimin* [The Republic is an enemy state: Qing loyalists in the transformation of politics and culture](Taibei, Lianjing, 2009)
[176] See Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment*, 107-17
[177] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 244

notably limited classical precedent for *bo'ai*, 'universal love', a term used to translate both Jesus' teachings and the *fraternité* of the French revolution. Humane love, Sun had stated, was graduated according to the closeness of relationship and therefore limited, as were other terms from the classics: 'in ancient times in our country, [examples] such as Yao and Shun spreading benevolence to save the masses, Confucius esteeming humanity [*ren*], and Mozi's general love [*jian'ai*] were close to universal love, but these were all universal love in the narrow sense… unable to extend to each person. The universal love of true socialism is a broad universal love'.[178] Thus modern doctrines improved upon and could realise demands imperfectly recognised by enlightened individuals of the Chinese past. The 1924 lectures, however, equalised all these terms, without mentioning past debates: Sun's citation for humane love as a part of the nation's inherent morality was from Mozi, whose concept was 'the same as Jesus' universal love'. In Sun's account foreigners appeared to show this virtue to a greater extent than did Chinese people; however, Sun stressed that this was not a fundamental difference but simply one of putting it into practice. Its effective recovery in China would produce this practice.[179] 'Humane love', then, was not distinctively Chinese but a meeting point for Chinese and foreign cultures as part of the 'global tide'.

Likewise serving as a meeting point was China's 'inherent knowledge'. In Sun's lecture this was represented by a sequence of activities listed in the *Great Learning*, which was part of the *Book of Rites* (*Liji*) attributed to Confucius' disciple Zengzi, but even more importantly circulated independently as one of the 'Four Books' that had formed the basis of the Ming and Qing dynasties' civil service examinations. This sequence famously set out the process by which a sage would proceed from self-cultivation to setting the entire world right: 'investigate things, extend knowledge, make sincere one's intentions, set right the heart, cultivate the person, regulate the family, govern the kingdom, bring peace to the world'.[180] Sun suggested that this learning had in fact surpassed that of foreign scholars, as 'the most systematic political philosophy, which the great political thinkers abroad still have not seen and have not spoken of so clearly'.[181]

As with 'love', however, China's particular cultural resources here provided a way to

[178] Sun Yatsen, 'Zai Shanghai Guomin Shehuidang de yanshuo' [Speech for the Shanghai Chinese Socialist Party], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 2, 510
[179] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 244–45
[180] Great Learning passage: Zhu Xi, *Si shu zhangju jizhu*, 3–4
[181] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 247

match universal standards. John Fitzgerald has noted that what Sun derived from the *Great Learning* was not so much an argument for his political proposals as a lesson on the importance of self-cultivation.[182] Sun detailed Chinese failures to restore and practice the personal conduct required by this 'inherent knowledge', in the form of spitting, breaking wind, letting fingernails grow long and failing to brush the teeth, resulted in their ridiculing by foreigners as 'barbaric'. Such customs supposedly showed that the Chinese could not cultivate themselves and were therefore unfit to govern their country.[183] The result of successfully recovering the legacy of the *Great Learning* would lead to proper conduct in the eyes of foreigners and, by following the chain up, allow national independence and self-determination. While the 'inherent learning' was particular to China, then, it appeared to lead China to compatibility with a global modernity in which progress was measured by 'Western' standards.[184]

Defining the global tide

Meeting existing international standards was only part of the value of China's 'inherent' features, however. Sun's sixth lecture made an even stronger claim, in which it joined other authors' claims about 'Eastern civilisation': China's cultural legacy could define the world's future.

The 'evolution of world civilization' Sun depicted in 1924 did not mean simply following the prior examples of Western Europe and the USA. In his 1919 work on the Three Principles, perhaps out of enthusiasm for President Wilson's declarations on national self-determination, he had praised the USA as 'one of the most advanced, greatest, richest and most powerful countries in the world', 'stand[ing] forward and preserving world peace, promoting the true justice of humanitarianism'; his stronger, Lenin-inspired emphasis on anti-imperialism in 1924 had little room for such praise.[185] In this respect Sun fits into the argument of Erez Manela, who has described a 'Wilsonian moment' in which Chinese and other anti-colonial nationalists placed their hopes in Wilson's advocacy of national 'self-determination' and projected 'League of Nations', before

[182] Fitzgerald, *Awakening China*, 104–5
[183] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 249
[184] Fitzgerald notes that this 'paradox at the heart of modern Chinese nationalism', in which the imperialists to be driven out supplied the standards for criticism, indicates the 'derivative character of Chinese nationalism'. Fitzgerald, *Awakening China*, 105–6
[185] Sun Yatsen, 'Sanmin Zhuyi', 187

seeing these hopes dashed as the Treaty of Versailles re-affirmed the colonial order.[186]

Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, however, Sun was clear that reaching the level of the 'Great Powers' was not his ultimate goal for China or the definitive standard for civilisation, because they had not solved the problem of the people's livelihood; by adopting socialism, 'China's civilisation will be able to do more than just run alongside Europe and America'.[187] His 1924 lectures added to this that their political systems were flawed and that their narrow nationalism had produced imperialism and in the devastation of The Great War.[188]

China's contributions were in part institutional: the country's unique social and cultural legacy, as Sun's lectures depicted it, gave it specific advantages over other countries. Clan lineages overcame the problem of individualism, allowing for nationalism to be less inhibited in its spread through China, and provided an 'intermediate society' between the individual and the state: in 'the structural relations between citizen and state, foreign countries cannot compare to China'.[189]

Like Sun's evocation of orthodox moral values, his assessment of imperial institutions in the 1924 lectures was unprecedentedly positive. In 1906 Sun described the imperial Chinese examination system as having 'good intentions' in choosing the most able for government, but in the 'monarchical autocratic state' of China the ruler's individual caprice held sway and these intentions were rendered 'empty words'; it 'became an admirable system after improvement' by the foreign countries which had adopted it. The imperial censors too were in practice 'no more than the servants of the ruler'.[190] The People's Rights lectures eighteen years later by contrast stated that

> ...China in ancient times enacted independent structures for examinations and the censorate, and produced excellent results. Both the Manchu Qing censorate and the Tang Dynasty Grand Masters of Remonstrance were excellent censorial systems... only the three powers

[186] Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 99–117, 216.
[187] Sun Yatsen, 'Zhina wenti zhenjie' [A True Solution of the Chinese Question], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 1, 247-48; 'Zai Nanjing tongmenghui huiyuan jianbiehui de yanshuo' [Speech at the Nanjing Farewell Dinner for Revolutionary Alliance Members], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 2, 323-24
[188] Sun Zhongshan, 'Minzu Zhuyi: Disi Jiang', 221
[189] Sun Zhongshan, 'Minzu Zhuyi: Diwu Jiang', 238
[190] Sun Yatsen, 'Zai Dongjing "Minbao" chuangkan zhounian qingzhu dahui de yanshuo' [Speech at the Tokyo Meeting to Celebrate the Anniversary of *Minbao*], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 1, 330-31 (published *Minbao* 10 (2 December 1906)

> of the judiciary, legislative and executive were in the hands of the Emperor; the remaining censorial and examination powers were independent... even China's autocratic government had a tripartite division of powers, very different from the autocratic governments that foreign countries used to have.[191]

The Chinese past–even at the level of the 'autocratic court', and even into the Qing dynasty that the revolution had overthrown–provided not only ideals but also political practices that had and would continue to contribute to global modernisation.

These resources allowed for improvement to the flawed systems established abroad for the achievement of 'the People's Rights'. Sun put forward the 'five power constitution', which he had advocated since 1906, proclaiming that '[n]ow we should combine the best of China and foreign countries, preventing any abuses, and… adopt the foreign executive, legislative, and judicial powers, and add China's examination and censorial powers, forming a perfect union... this kind of government alone is the world's most complete, most humane government'.[192] This marked another case in which the modernity of 'inherent' features of China was proved by their consonance with 'foreign' practices and by the praise they received abroad: Sun noted that the power of the imperial censorate was that of 'impeachment', which other countries had (belatedly) included but failed to separate from the legislative, while 'foreign scholars' had recently praised the 'independent system of China's examinations' of which the civil service examinations held in England were a direct copy, but which had 'not yet reached the true independent spirit of China's examinations'.[193]

More crucial to Sun's claims for China's global role than these native social and political structures, however, were the moral values that received particular attention in 1924, and formed the conclusion of the lectures on nationalism.

'Trustworthiness', appearing as a generalised national characteristic without appeals to textual sources, was another virtue whose appearance in China was judged by foreign observers. However, in this case the virtue as described by Sun did not need to be recovered or put into effect in order to meet their standards. By Sun's account western traders had instead found that the inherently honest conduct of their Chinese

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[191] Sun Yatsen, 'Minquan Zhuyi: Diliu Jiang' [Sixth People's Rights Lecture] *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 9, 353
[192] Sun Yatsen, 'Minquan Zhuyi: Diliu Jiang', 353-54
[193] Sun Yatsen, 'Minquan Zhuyi: Diliu Jiang', 353

counterparts far outweighed their own contract-dependent practices and in particular was far superior to that of Japanese traders.[194]

'Righteousness' provided another point of Chinese superiority; in this case, however, Sun's criticism of the foreign powers became far more explicit. His lecture recalled points made on Chinese history in the previous lectures on nationalism; that 'in its age of great strength [China] did not completely wipe out other countries'.[195] The Chinese nation had historically used its pre-eminent power peacefully through cultural suasion. Sun here offered by way of contrast a criticism of Japan, which had reluctantly joined the war against Germany to fulfil its treaty obligations to the 'very strong' Britain, but when it came to the 'weak' China had not felt so constrained, breaking past agreements and 'wiping out' Korea by military force. Sun's conclusion, that 'the trustworthiness and righteousness emphasised by China [was] far more advanced than that of other countries', thus connected the grand scale of foreign policy to the day-to-day conduct of individual traders, presenting these virtues as present at all levels; even the imperial court had acted with 'righteousness'. At the same time he extended them back into the past to depict an essentialised, unchanging national community as fundamentally more principled than others and thus restrained from acting in its own self-interest.[196]

Sun's climactic point on 'inherent morality' explained the consequences of this superiority: 'among countries in the world today, only China values peace; other countries all emphasise war and advocate imperialism to wipe out others' countries.' 'Peace' appeared as the most important of China's virtues, 'still more superior to other countries' than were the others; Sun argued that it constituted the 'natural character' of the Chinese people.[197]

A quotation from Mencius stressed the political import of this point: 'those who not kill indiscriminately can unite [the world]'.[198] China's essential peacefulness, and its righteous refusal to pursue self-interest at the expense of moral principle, together with its sheer size, made it the world's hope for overturning the violent, self-interested imperialism that had robbed 'weak, small nations' of their freedom and had resulted in the devastation of

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[194] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 245
[195] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 245-6
[196] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 245
[197] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 246
[198] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 247. Source quote: Zhu Xi, *Si shu zhangju jizhu*, 206

the Great War. Using 'the inherent virtue of peace as a base', the Chinese people could then 'fulfil the great responsibility of uniting the world' and achieving the utopian 'Great Unity' (*datong*).[199]

Sun's lecture thus integrated Leninist anti-imperialism with a sense of mission drawn from unique national culture. The 'inherent' qualities did far more than define the national community and provide a compatible basis for modernisation: as China's contribution to a global 'new culture', they gave the nation a mission in the service of which nationalism was presented only as a necessary tool for survival. Sun's revolutionary traditionalism gave China's uniquely pronounced emphasis on 'loyalty, filial piety, love, trust, righteousness, and peace' a leading role in the definition of a new global order.

The Three Principles as inheritance

Sun's reinvention of China's 'inherent' culture thus made it part of the Guomindang's revolutionary mission. At the same time, the lectures presented the legacy of the Chinese past as the inspiration for that mission. Through his lectures, Sun not only claimed the authority to define and lead the Chinese revolution against rivals within China, but also to project a future world order and therefore to improve on thinkers like Marx. In these interlinked claims to authority, 'inherent' cultural features played a crucial part: Sun's principles appeared distinctive and superior to his local audience because they drew on a native Chinese legacy.

The argument that his proposals had native precedents was not new for Sun, but, like his other traditionalist claims, it appeared considerably strengthened in the 1924 lectures. At least as early as 1919 Sun had claimed that Confucius had used the term 'revolution' (*geming*) to mean the process that 'removed human inequality'.[200] Similarly, he had traced his Three Principles of the People back to show their consonance with pre-existing Chinese thought and social needs. Though his 1924 lectures were novel in discussing the 'recovery' of nationalism, he had long identified the People's Rights and the People's Livelihood with a line from the *Book of Rites* which described the Great Unity, and which he often repeated and adopted as a kind of personal motto, even calligraphing it as a gift to people: 'when the Great Way is carried out the world will belong to all' (*Da Dao zhi*

[199] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 253
[200] Sun Yatsen, 'Sanmin Zhuyi', 185

xing ye, tianxia wei gong).[201] Sun interpreted this as Confucius' aspiration for popular rule, in the sense that the public (*gong*) would take control of the affairs of the world, and as a call for equitable distribution of wealth among citizens of the world. The realisation of this 'Great Way' was thus the achievement of a democratic and socialist global Great Unity, and as Sun presented them the Three Principles would be the means to achieve it.[202]

In the 1919 article, however, the appearance in classical history of this ideal was merely 'a crack of light' before the emergence of imperial autocracy; Sun's critique of the latter was moreover a radical one, extending beyond the institution of the emperorship to attack the scholars and cultural system that supported it:

> ...for thousands of years sages and wise philosophers, passing [their teachings] from one to the other, have all thought that people were born of heaven and earth... so they produced the doctrine of the lord and his ministers, making it one of the three bonds to bind the people's hearts. This is why China could not make political progress.[203]

A 1923 speech noted too that this previous aspiration for the People's Livelihood and People's Rights had been no more than an ideal: 'there was only the thought, not the fact' of 'the world belonging to all'. As with Dai Jitao's article on the new morality and Hu Hanmin's description of classical 'socialism', it could only be in a far-reaching modernisation that needs voiced in China's pre-imperial era could truly find their answer.[204] Sun's first lecture on the People's Rights, however, went further in his positive appraisal of China's past that these earlier writings, by arguing that Confucius had praised the sage-kings Yao and Shun because they were 'in name using monarchical power, but in fact carrying out popular power'.[205]

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[201] In 1919 the *Sun Wen xueshuo* identified the 'objective of human evolution' as 'Confucius' " when the Great Way is carried out the world will belong to all " and Jesus' "thy will be done as it is in Heaven", again indicating the ultimate congruence between the progressive Chinese past and foreign ideals: Sun Yatsen, *Sun Wen xueshuo*, 196. The original *Book of Rites* section referred to a past golden age and hence might be translated into the past tense; Sun's use of it, however, was consistently forward-looking. For original text see Sun Xidan, *Liji jijie*, 582

[202] E.g. Sun Yatsen, 'Minquan zhuyi: diyi jiang' [First People's Rights Lecture], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 9, 262, 'Minquan Zhuyi: Di'er Jiang' [Second People's Livelihood Lecture], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 9, 394

[203] Sun Yatsen, 'Sanmin zhuyi', 188

[204] Sun Yatsen,'Zai Guangzhou huanyan ge jun jiangling hui shang de yanshuo' [Speech at banquet for the generals of each army], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 8, 470. Published in *Guomindang zhoukan* 5 (23 December 1923)

[205] Sun Yatsen, 'Minquan zhuyi: diyi jiang' p. 262

The inspiration of 'inherent morality' and knowledge, with the Great Unity as final goal, therefore legitimated the Three Principles of the People as both uniquely Chinese and universally applicable, offering a global solution to the problems of nationalism, people's rights and people's livelihood to which existing European and American ideas had presented only partial solutions.

Sun's concern to label his own thought as authentically Chinese, and consequent claim against rival visions of the world, is demonstrated in an interview with 'a certain Japanese person' published in the Japanese-funded Beijing journal *Shuntian Times* (*Shuntian shibao*) in February 1924, and later in the *Taiwan People's Newspaper* (*Taiwan minbao*):

> Question: Regarding your Excellency's proposed Three Principles of the People, we hear some judge it a replica of the dregs of Lenin and other recent socialists... [are you] truly aping what Lenin and others have said?
> Answer: ...we have already proposed the three great principles… for thirty years! It is just that the explanation has been brief... [they] had their origin with Mencius, and are further based on the ideas of Cheng Yichuan [Song dynasty 'School of the Way' thinker Cheng Yi]. Mencius was truly the founding ancestor of our principle of the People's Livelihood. Social reform was originally introduced by Cheng Yichuan, making him a foreseer of the People's Livelihood… [With regard to] nationalism [by contrast], we have seen a hint of it in Mencius, and seeing it again reflected in the recent trend of events in the world we promote it. In sum, the Three Principles of the People are not the dregs of Lenin, but are simply formed by deducing from the ideal of 'governing the country and bringing peace to the world', held by the Han nation throughout three thousand years of Chinese history... Communism is no more than a small ideal remaining from Chinese antiquity.[206]

This ideological competition is also evident in Sun's claims that the Russian revolution was a victory not for Marxism but for the Three Principles of the People. This was so not only because the Bolsheviks had ultimately realised the importance of national (as opposed to purely internationalist) revolution and with Lenin's New Economic Policy had turned away from an excessively radical and destructive approach to the problem of 'the people's livelihood', but also because they had turned toward the inherent morality of China: 'now the Slavic nation of Russia also promotes peace; this means that the Slavs

[206] Sun Yatsen, 'Yu mou Ribenren de tanhua' [Talk with a certain Japanese person], in *Guofu quanji* [Complete Works of the Father of the Nation] Vol. 2 (Taibei: Zhongguo Guomindang dangshihui, 1973), 601

have already caught up with us Chinese'.[207] The Russian adoption of the ultimate goal of world peace and unity and renunciation of self-interested, imperialist foreign policy was presented as a sign that they 'have left the white race, and do not approve of the white people's invasive actions. Now they seek to join the oppressed weak and small nations of Asia, to resist the violent nations'.[208] China's morality could represent not only first China and then Russia, but it could even stand for the cause of all the 'weak and small nations'. Sun followed this theme up in November of the same year with his speech in Japan on Pan-Asianism, which proclaimed 'Eastern culture is the Kingly Way [of peace and moral suasion], Western culture is the hegemonic Way'.[209]

Restoring 'orthodox thought'

In reinventing the broad cultural legacy of the past in line with the party's mission, Sun's lecture amounted to a claim to authority over it. Yet his were not the only claims to these cultural elements, and his lecture could not unilaterally determine their meaning. As noted in the cases of loyalty and filial piety, many of the terms and quotations Sun evoked were those most strongly associated with the late imperial orthodoxy, and which cultural radicals had therefore attacked. 'Love' (*ren'ai*) and 'trustworthiness and righteousness' (*xin'yi*) must likewise have recalled for listeners and readers criticisms such as that by Chen Youkui of 'the morality of humaneness and righteousness' (*ren'yi*).

The eight-character structure used to describe 'inherent morality' itself raised such associations. Sun's selection was idiosyncratic in that 'love' and 'peace' were represented by two-character compounds, so that the list, though subsequently conventionally referred to as the 'eight virtues' (*ba de*), was in fact a list of only six. Yet the eight-character formula, and four of the chosen virtues, matched similar lists that were 'the most frequently cited in terms of educational purpose in Ming and even Ch'ing China': filial piety, respect for elders, loyalty, trust, propriety, righteousness, sense of honour, and

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[207] Sun Yatsen,'Zai Guangzhou benying dui Guomindangyuan de yanshuo' [Speech to Guomindang members at Guangzhou general staff], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 8, 438, published *Guomindang zhoukan* 2 (2 December 1923); Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: disi jiang', 230

[208] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: disi jiang', 225

[209] Sun Yatsen,'Zai Shenhu shangye huiyisuo deng tuanti de yanshuo' [Speech at meeting for commercial and other groups at Kobe], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 11, 407. Published in collection *Sun Zhongshan xiansheng you Shanghai guo Riben zhi yanlun* [Mr Sun Yatsen's Speeches when travelling from Shanghai to Japan] (Guangzhou, Minzhi shuju, 1925). The contrast between the humane 'king' and the aggressive 'hegemon', and the term 'kingly way', derives from Mencius: Zhu Xi, *Si shu zhangju jizhu*, 235, 203

sense of shame (*xiao, ti, zhong, xin, li, yi, lian, chi*).[210] As with these virtues, points of reference such as Mencius' writings and the *Great Learning*, both celebrated by the School of the Way in the Song Dynasty and subsequently canonised as key texts in the imperial examination system, inevitably directly recalled the imperial regime. When it came to the principle of 'saving the weak and supporting the toppling' (in regard to foreign states, in contrast to predatory imperialism), moreover, Sun made the point explicit: it was the 'orthodox thought of China's political culture'.[211]

More than merely recalling orthodoxies of the imperial era, these elements could readily be associated with more contemporary political enemies of the Guomindang as well as with cultural 'conservatives'. As we have noted, Yang Xianjiang condemned Beijing President Xu Shichang's 'promotion of morality, integrity, and filial piety' while Chen Youkui associated 'the morality of humaneness and righteousness' with Qing loyalists. Xu Shichang's predecessor Yuan Shikai, similarly, had promoted the earlier 'eight virtues' as 'the great principles' on which the country was founded.[212]

Sun's reinvention was a secular one, without mention of the ritual and religious elements that were essential to imperial orthodoxy as well as wider Chinese culture (as Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer put it 'separating the religious from the secular in traditional society is impossible').[213] The 'eight virtues', however, played an important role in the publishing and other activities of groups which championed ritual and focused on the sacred: the then-flourishing redemptive societies, notably the Fellowship of Goodness which Yang Xianjiang had condemned.[214]

The 'Great Unity' provided another point of commonality with the Beiyang authorities, religious groups, and intellectuals condemned as conservatives by 'New Culture' advocates. Hu Pu'an, as we have seen, likewise projected a Great Unity, although Hu's vision was very different in that China's contribution to the world would lie in the anti-materialism of its intellectuals, whereas for Sun it would be expressed at the level of

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[210] Thomas H.C. Lee, *Education in Traditional China: a History* (Leiden, Brill, 2000), 625

[211] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 253

[212] 'Linshi da zongtong ling' [Order by the Provisional President], *Zhengfu gongbao* 144 (21 September 1912)

[213] Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2011), 7

[214] Paul Katz, 'Illuminating Goodness: Some Preliminary Considerations' in Philip Clart and Gregory Scott, eds., *Religious Publishing and Print Culture in Modern China: 1800-2012* (Berlin, De Gruyter, 2015), 265–94, 282–283

international politics. In both cases, however, the term 'Great Unity' recalls late Qing reformer Kang Youwei, who had in the 1900s been the leading constitutionalist opponent of Sun's revolutionary allies, and in the 'New Culture' era was a target of criticism by cultural radicals and Guomindang revolutionaries alike for his advocacy of 'Confucian religion' and for his collaboration toward this end with Yuan Shikai. Kang drew the term from a description of a utopian golden age in the *Book of Rites*, but radically reinterpreted the text as a prophetic vision of the world's future. As Dominic Sachsenmeier notes, Kang Youwei's vision provided a basis and inspiration for Eastern civilisation discourse in China.[215] It was also adopted by campaigners for Confucian religion and the redemptive societies; in the last years of his life, Kang Youwei himself served as head of the World Wide Ethical Society (*Wanguo daode hui*).[216]

The impact of Sun's lectures

As the following chapter will show, Sun's lectures could not instantly or comprehensively transform the Guomindang's diffuse and eclectic discourse. Instead, in the power vacuum created by Sun's death in March 1925, the particular forms of revolutionary traditionalism that the sixth lecture on nationalism inaugurated provided a basis for conflicting claims to authority within the party. Yet we can see in a speech given by Wang Jingwei at the Guangzhou Zhixin College in June 1924, and published in the Shanghai Pure Martiality martial arts journal (*Jingwu zazhi*), both the impact of Sun's revolutionary traditionalist formulations and the limits of this impact.

The theme of Wang's speech, titled 'Resisting Cultural Invasion', was very different from his attack on Tagore:

> Ours is the most famous ancient civilised country in the world. Although the inherent culture passed down by former sages and worthies in the course of time met the incursion of Buddhism, and conflict was stirred up, from the Northern Song on Chinese and Indian culture tended toward fusion and settled… This lasted until the ending of the [Ming and Qing dynasty] ban on maritime voyages and the gradual Europeanization of the east. On top of this, through repeated foreign policy failures foreigners obtained the rights to preach and teach, and build churches and universities far and wide, promoting Christianity. Western culture rapidly seemed to be replacing the

[215] Sachsenmeier, 'Searching for Alternatives to Western Modernity', 254–255
[216] Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 95

> inherent culture of our country. This truly is a cause for the utmost concern.[217]

Like Sun, Wang appealed to 'inherent culture' as a source of pride in the face of imperialism. Yet Wang's speech differed from Sun's in avoiding discussion of which features of 'Chinese culture' ought to be preserved. Like Zhu Zhixin in 1919, Wang instead stressed the utility of this generalised 'culture' for the promotion of nationalism and thus for the Chinese people's survival: 'everybody knows that if a race's culture cannot hold, then that race cannot hold'.[218]

Moreover, and again unlike Sun, Wang also explicitly claimed a balance between iconoclasm and conservatism and disassociated this national pride from contemporary 'conservatives', recalling the revolutionary traditionalism discussed in the previous chapter more than Sun's less problematic embrace of what was 'inherent':

> …our attitude should not be that of conservatives doing nothing but protecting what is already lost and spitting at western culture. At the same time, I hate those who only copy the surface of western culture and do not know what their own country's culture is. Thus my aim is to "preserve Chinese culture and absorb global culture".[219]

Conclusion

Sun Yat-sen, like Wang Jingwei, had put forward a dual vision, making the recovery of Chinese culture the key to matching and defining the 'global tide' of progress. Yet in the contrast between the speeches we can see how distinct Sun's lectures were.

As we have seen, the Three Principles of the People lectures were far from unique in their positive use of moral terms and quotations from classic texts of the imperial orthodoxy. Sun's words shared much with widespread phenomena such as intellectual appeals to the distinctiveness and superiority of 'Eastern civilization', redemptive societies offering salvation through moral and ritual practice, popular morality books, and promotion of ethical norms by Yuan Shikai and his successors. For readers used to this cultural landscape, Sun's cultural claims were unlikely to be surprising. Indeed, by

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[217] Wang Jingwei, 'Minglun: dikang wenhua qinlüe' [Resisting cultural invasion], *Jingwu zazhi* 43 (1924), 37
[218] Wang Jingwei, 'Minglun: dikang wenhua qinlüe', 37
[219] Wang Jingwei, 'Minglun: dikang wenhua qinlue', 37-38

reinterpreting familiar terms and tying them to the Guomindang's revolutionary message, Sun is likely to have broadened his party's appeal with what Strand calls 'indigenous validation'.[220]

If Sun brought Guomindang revolution to these readers, however, his lectures also brought 'Eastern civilisation' and the language of moral rejuvenation to his more immediate audience of Guomindang members. The phenomena with which Sun's lectures intersected were precisely those elements that radical discourse condemned as signifying a 'restoration of antiquity'. Though Sun's was a revolutionary reinvention of China's past, he explicitly criticised radicalism, drew on precisely those 'orthodox' cultural resources most condemned by radicals, and did not attack rival use of such resources by contemporary 'conservatives'. Moreover, his lectures placed these cultural resources at the heart of the party's political programme. The lectures thus marked a significant turn in Guomindang discourse, and, canonised as Sun no doubt hoped, would provide the basis for revolutionary traditionalism over the following decades. As the following chapter will show, however, this did not occur without a struggle.

[220] Strand, *An Unfinished Republic*, 261

3. Radicalism and Traditionalism in Competition

No doubt Sun Yatsen hoped that his lectures on the Three Principles of the People would serve as a rallying point for his party. Instead they became a battleground. In the wake of Sun's death in March 1925 the Guomindang became ever more openly fractious, with the presence of Communist Party members in the party the chief point of controversy. With Sun as a shared figurehead whose words were canonised as the heart of party doctrine, disputes were carried out through claims to authoritatively interpret Sun's words.

This chapter argues that rival claims to radical and revolutionary traditionalist cultural positions played an important role in this struggle, as participants in disputes over the meaning of Sun's principles and the party's mission defined their positions, and those of their opponents, in cultural terms. This is particularly evident in the writings of Dai Jitao, who had served as Sun's personal secretary and had shifted from an early interest in Marxism to oppose Communists within the Guomindang. Dai's writings, particularly important in the reaction they elicited from allies and opponents, drew on Sun's traditionalist cultural claims to separate his doctrines from Marxism by linking them to Confucius and a pre-imperial cultural legacy. Though as a result Dai has been seen as an arch-conservative or as 'restoring tradition', I intend to show instead how he radically reinvented the Confucian 'transmission of the Way', reconciling traditionalism with the 'New Culture' radicalism he had earlier espoused. In this sense, far from being conservative, his cultural arguments were more radical than Sun's.

At the same time, Dai's writings and the responses to them show how reinvention is limited by the associations others attribute to the terms used. Dai's line of transmission clearly echoed a key point of the Song Dynasty 'School of the Way', which had a privileged place in the late imperial examination system and thus the imperial orthodoxy. This left Dai open to attack from Communist writers, who continued to claim the label of cultural radicalism and in the process constructed their own position not only against Dai's approach but revolutionary traditionalist arguments in general. This radicalism was exceptional, however: following Sun Yatsen different versions of revolutionary traditionalism were adopted more widely across Guomindang discourse. In particular, an anti-Communist 'right' formed around traditionalist language, with this language

differentiating their national revolution from the global, class-based and culturally radical model put forward by Dai's Communist opponents. These revolutionary traditionalist writings were diverse, but shared a common concern with those of Dai Jitao: how to incorporate references to the past into revolutionary discourse while avoiding the charge of conservatism.

Revolutionary Apotheosis: Dai Jitao and the Transmission of the Way

Dai's 1925 writings, in particular *The Philosophical Foundations of Sunism* (*Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu*), published in late June 1925, are best understood as efforts to establish orthodoxy within the Guomindang in the wake of Sun's death. His subsequent contribution entitled *The National Revolution and the Chinese Guomindang* (*Guomin geming yu Zhongguo Guomindang*), which followed in July, made this explicit: 'any doctrine must have a monopoly and exclusivity, and at the same time must have unity and command... this is still more the case for a group that upholds a doctrine'.[221] Dai's pamphlets were a means to give the party doctrines this unity and authority at a point of dangerous division. For Dai, the chief threat was the presence of Communist party members within the Guomindang; opposition to this threat was still implicit in the vision expressed in his *Philosophical Foundations* of party doctrines entirely separated from Marxism, but then was raised explicitly in *The National Revolution and the Chinese Guomindang*.[222]

Dai Jitao's effort to define the party's principles, like others in 1925, came in the form of an interpretation of Sun Yatsen's thought. The latter served as the centre around which disputes revolved: as Chen Yunxi notes, '[a]fter Sun Yatsen's passing, although the Guomindang continued its internal power struggles, each faction's positioning of and reverence for Sun was the same'.[223] Sun's words were varied enough to allow for a wide variety of interpretations, justifying alliance with Communists or distancing from them, stressing foreign or native Chinese inspiration, and legitimating a range of policies and practices.

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[221] Dai Jitao, 'Guomin geming yu Zhongguo Guomindang' [The National Revolution and the Chinese Guomindang] in Gao Jun et al, eds., *Zhongguo xiandai zhengzhi sixiangshi ziliao xuanji* [Selected Materials for the History of Modern Political Thought in China] 1 (Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1983), 442

[222] Dai Jitao, 'Guomin geming yu Zhongguo Guomindang', 477–78

[223] Chen Yunxi. *Chongbai yu Jiyi: Sun Zhongshan fuhao de jiangou yu chuanbo* [Worship and Memory: the Construction and Transmission of Sun Yatsen as a Symbol], (Nanjing, Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2009), 74

From this diversity, Dai seized on Sun's quotations from classical texts and references to moral terminology readily and commonly associated with the late imperial orthodoxy. The *Philosophical Foundations* built on Sun's traditionalist statements in the 1920s to explicitly connect Sun himself, and the party's fundamental doctrines, to the person of Confucius. Dai's description of this intellectual inheritance evoked for his readers the 'transmission of the Way' (*Daotong*). As deployed by Zhu Xi, this concept had been central to the self-definition of the Song Dynasty 'School of the Way' (also known as Neo-Confucianism), the writings of which became central to the orthodoxy of late imperial China.[224] Central to the 'transmission of the Way' was the idea of disruption: for Zhu Xi, the true meaning of Confucius' teachings was lost after his successor Mencius' death, to be obscured and misunderstood for centuries, until Tang Dynasty scholar Han Yu and others began to rediscover it: Zhu Xi's own reinterpretation, part of this 'transmission', was thus true orthodoxy. Likewise, Dai argued that, following Confucius' death, only Sun Yatsen had truly understood and recovered his teachings. Like Sun's own lectures, then, Dai's writing was an effort to establish an authoritative party orthodoxy by connecting itself to idealised past Chinese orthodoxies.

This move on Dai's part has generally been portrayed as a repudiation of both 'New Culture' radicalism and revolution. As discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, Dai Jitao's writings in 1919 and 1920 had been notable for celebrating the 'New Culture' and for attacking cultural conservative groups to a much greater extent than had Sun Yatsen. Dai linked these groups to the Beiyang government, with both constituting threats to the Guomindang's revolution, and opposed their 'superstitious belief in Confucius and Mencius' to 'the omnipoatence of science'. Moreover, Dai had been present at the founding of the Communist Party and was one of the first to publish writings on Marx: for those who have followed the Communist Party narrative, then, Dai's cultural betrayal equalled a political one as well. His 2007 biography by Fan Xiaofang, Bao Dongpo and Li Jianli, for example, charges that Dai 'neutered the revolutionary content… and used and exaggerated the negative sides of Sun Yatsen's thought', placing Sun's thought within 'China's feudalist ideology'.[225]

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[224] See Thomas Wilson, *The Genealogy of the Way*, passim

[225] Fan Xiaofang, Bao Dongpo and Li Jianli, *Dai Jitao zhuan* [Biography of Dai Jitao] (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 2007), 116. See also e.g. Shen Decheng, 'Dai Jitao zhuyi qiantan' [A Brief Discussion of Dai Jitaoism], Chuancheng 2008 no. 6, 90–91

This view of a turn to conservatism is also clear in English-language scholarship. Doctoral theses by Herman Mast III and William Saywell from the late 1960s and early 1970s, which remain the most detailed accounts of Dai Jitao in English, highlight the 'obvious psychological relief' for Dai of his return 'to his own tradition'. In this they show the influence of Levenson and share his tendency to essentialise 'tradition' against 'modernity'.[226] Thus they argued that the *Philosophical Foundations* 'virtually ignored the previous decade's iconoclasm, and made no effort to restate the truths of tradition in terms that would bring conviction to a sceptical generation', and were an 'uncomplicated restatement... of revered truths'.[227]

By contrast, I view Dai's writing as a conscious effort to reconcile traditionalism with a 'New Culture'-related radical compulsion to cut ties with all that was undesirable in the past. Dai did not abandon his earlier radical language. Instead, his pamphlet explicitly separated his proposed 'cultural revival' from 'conservative' or 'feudal' influences and the contemporary social and political groups that were held to represent them. Thus Dai, very much in keeping with the historical role of the 'transmission of the Way', reinvented China's 'orthodox thought' and Confucius itself. To dismiss him as merely reiterating tradition misses this point entirely.

Reinventing and restoring morality

Though the adoption of the 'transmission of the Way' marked a distinct turn, Dai Jitao's 1925 reinterpretation of Sun drew on and elaborated themes he had earlier addressed. Central to this was a point which connected him to Sun as well as to many others: he described China's national crisis as at least in large part a moral one, for which the solution would depend upon the transformation of culture and the promotion of a suitable morality. This vision was shared by radicals as well as by their 'cultural conservative' opponents, with the main distinction between them lying in whether this morality was constructed as a radically new creation or as a restoration or preservation of past values. In 1919 Dai Jitao had placed himself in the former group by consigning the values of the past to the past and offering his own utopian scheme of 'socialist ethics'.

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[226] W.G. Saywell, 'Modernization Without Modernity: Tai Chi-t'ao, a Conservative Nationalist', *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 5.4 (1970), 261

[227] Herman Mast and W.G. Saywell, 'Revolution Out of Tradition: The Political Ideology of Tai Chi-t'ao', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 34.1 (1974), 88

As noted in Chapter One, however, even this text arguing for the obsolescence of the past incorporated traditionalist elements in the use of quotations from Mencius to describe the ultimate social requirements which the new morality would fulfil. Moreover, given that the new, universal ethics would require a radical restructuring of society, in the short term Dai explicitly argued for conserving the existing moral order.[228]

Therefore this shift between his more radical texts of 1919 and his reformulation of 1925 should not be understood as a sudden conversion. An example of this understanding is the doctoral dissertation from 1991 by Cai Yuanjie, who focuses on Dai's rescue after a suicide attempt on the Yangtze in June 1922 as a turning point at which Dai converted to Buddhism and recognised the virtues of the fishermen who saved him, using as evidence Dai's own account:

> Some decadent Communist Party members, blindly following a few foreign Communist slogans… go on about seeking happiness for the proletariat and building civilisation for all of humanity; they're really a gang of beasts. If things continue, they'll completely destroy the few good virtues the Chinese nation has, preserved among the poor class, and make a world of raging floods and wild beasts. When I think of my confusion at that time, underestimating the good points of the Chinese people, randomly importing foreign theories and thinking that we could use them to save the country and the people- not only was I too ignorant, but truly it was a crime.[229]

This denunciation of Communism and of his past radical 'ignorance', however, was written in the latter half of 1926, and should not be taken literally as an account of 'spiritual conversion'.[230] As Cai himself notes, Dai's earlier writings already valued the rural 'folk' as honest and reliable, and denigrated the modern metropolis of Shanghai as a place of moral corruption. We will encounter numerous examples of this in our following discussion. His retrospective praise of the fishermen who saved him, in addition to being coloured by his writings in 1925, may be seen as a confirmation of this pre-existing tendency.[231] More importantly, his idealisation of the rural was far from

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[228] Dai Jitao, 'Jiu Lunli de Benghuai yu Xin Lunli de Jianshe'

[229] Cai Yuanjie, 'Kangzhan qian Guomindang zhi Zhongguo benwei de wenhua jianshe yundong' [The Guomindang Cultural Construction on a Chinese Basis Movement Before the War with Japan] (Doctoral thesis, Guoli Taiwan Shifan Daxue, 1991), 55-56. The original Dai Jitao speeches from July–September 1926 can be found in 'Xie bajue jingguo ji mudi de jiangci' [Speeches on my Experience and Motivations in Writing the Eight Realisations], in *Dai Jitao xiansheng wencun zaixunbian* [Second sequel to the collected writings of Mr. Dai Jitao] (Taibei: Taiwan shanwu yinshuguan, 1968), 738-47

[230] Cai Yuanjie, 'Kangzhan qian Guomindang zhi Zhongguo benwei de wenhua jianshe yundong', 55

[231] Cai Yuanjie, 'Kangzhan qian Guomindang zhi Zhongguo benwei de wenhua jianshe yundong', 50

unconditional, and cannot be taken as a carte blanche affirmation of all aspects of 'traditional morality'. His letter reporting on a trip to Sichuan, published as part of a longer article in the *Republican Daily* in late January 1924, was scathing about the extent of the 'destruction of customs' there, noting 'superstition', 'idol-worship', 'fortune-telling', and opium-smoking: the remedy for these appeared to be not restoration, but progress. This letter continued from Dai's 1919 writings by attacking expressions of cultural conservatism, including claims to the 'national essence', and in the process affirming the transformation of society as a unitary line of progress:

> …truly nothing is as serious as this in holding back the progress of civilisation. Particularly strange is that among the superstitious people, not one is not conservative, not one does not boast of preserving the national essence, trumpet Confucius and Mencius… speak grandly of the beauty of the old morality, saying that science is not worth studying, and European and American culture is not worth learning from. Is this not laughable?[232]

What was consistent, and present in his 1919 essay on morality as well as the 1924 letter from Sichuan, was an emphasis on the moral force of 'love' (*ai*). Fitzgerald suggests that Liu Luyin in 1921 'anticipated' Dai's 1925 writings by stressing the importance of 'universal love' (*bo'ai*).[233] However, love was already an important element in Dai's writings before this time.

In 1919 the term 'humane love' (*ren'ai*) appeared in Dai's diagram of the ethical values he proposed; the text offered no explanation of it, but it appeared to embrace or motivate the whole scheme. His letter in 1924 developed this concept more explicitly by linking it to Sun Yatsen's thought, in the process switching to 'universal love' (*bo'ai*): 'the basis of our party's Three Principles of the People is… the morality of universal love. For decades every time someone has asked for [Sun]'s calligraphy, he has written the words 'universal love' for them; it is deeply significant that the revolutionary teacher who created the Three Principles of the People firmly believes in universal love'.[234] Dai's 1924 letter presented universal love as a force to be spread through society to purge it of the

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[232] Dai Jitao, 'Zhi Xiong Jinfang zhu xiansheng shu' [Letter to Xiong Jinfang and Others], in Chen Tianxi, ed., *Dai Jitao xiansheng wencun* [Writings of Mr. Dai Jitao] Vol. 3 (Taibei: Zhongyang Guomindang Zhongyang Weiyuanhui, 1959), 963

[233] Fitzgerald, *Awakening China*, 229, and Liu, 'Guomindang de zhuyi' in Zhongguo Guomindang quan meizhou tongzhi di'er ci kenqin dahui shimoji [Record of second friendship congress of Guomindang comrades across America] (1921), Historical Commission of the Guomindang, Taipei, 429/1, 93-94

[234] Dai Jitao, 'Zhi Xiong Jinfang zhu xiansheng shu', 963

above-noted social problems.

While Dai, like Sun, used 'universal love' and 'humane love' interchangeably, however, just as in 1919 his letter did not explicitly identify this love as a uniquely Chinese or ancient morality. 'Humane love' might well be seen as such by his readers, since its component characters recurred in close proximity throughout classical texts promoted as part of the late imperial orthodoxy like the *Analects* and the *Mencius*. Yet rather than referring to this textual basis, Dai recalled his 1919 work by emphasising the new, stating that 'the Three Principles of the People... are truly the basis for building a new ethics for the world'.[235]

If Confucius and Mencius were not necessarily the originators of 'humane love', however, they were credited in Dai's letter as a model for its 'propagation'. Yet here Dai's invocation appeared self-conscious and apologetic, suggesting that he expected his readers to think of Confucius not as an unproblematic national symbol but as a representative of superseded and ineffectual thinking, from whom his claims needed to be disassociated. Thus, while Dai argued that morality was the cure for China's social ills 'to say this today might seem to have nothing to do with the needs of the time, much like Confucius and Mencius trumpeting humaneness and righteousness while a group of violent pretenders carved up the land'.[236]

In 1925, by contrast, Dai explicitly tied his claims for morality with the Chinese past. In this he drew on Sun Yatsen's much less equivocal championing of 'inherent morality'. Dai's public fusing of his own thoughts with Sun's began just four days after the latter had died with the short essay 'Filial Piety' (*Xiao*), written in mourning for Sun. The piece opened with a direct quote from Sun's comments on filial piety and proceeded to expand upon the brief treatment of it in the Three Principles lectures as 'all encompassing' and as a superior feature of Chinese culture. Filial piety was in Dai's account all encompassing because 'in ancient times' it had served as the 'realisation' of humaneness (*ren*). Through this connection, the moral basis for action was explicitly identified as Chinese.

Filial piety as Dai presented it was, however, reinvented for a new age. Dai asserted that

[235] Dai Jitao, 'Zhi Xiong Jinfang zhu xiansheng shu', 964
[236] Dai Jitao, 'Zhi Xiong Jinfang zhu xiansheng shu', 963

'the greatest point in the history of Sun's life was that he used a creative spirit to revitalise [*fuxing*] our culture'.[237] This 'creative spirit' involved adaptation to the needs of the time: Dai pre-empted radical criticisms by drawing on his past arguments about the 'evolution of society'. Like the virtue of 'loyalty' in Sun's lecture, Dai stated that filial piety needed to be repurposed, directed not toward the individual family heads who had been its objects in 'the simple agricultural groupings' of the previous age, but to the modern national community as a whole and towards the departed leader.[238] Thus Dai's article ultimately reinterpreted 'filial piety' as earnest action to fulfil Sun's national revolution.

Dai's essay on filial piety can be seen retrospectively as a preview of his newly evolving traditionalist line of argument: the *Philosophical Foundations* of June 1925 argued for the contemporary relevance of ancient morality as the basis for the national revolution.

Humane love against class struggle

In the *Philosophical Foundations*, 'humane love' served as the basis for revolutionary action. Dai opposed this moral commitment to the Communist doctrine of class struggle, because through it different classes could unite to act selflessly for the national revolution, and revolutionaries, who themselves might be of relatively privileged class background, could represent and work for the interests of the 'oppressed'.[239]

Just as in Sun's lecture, however, humane love was not presented as a uniquely Chinese virtue. Dai's version of 'Sunism', like Sun's, could not merely be a 'policy' for China but needed validity as a universal 'doctrine'.[240] Attacking the Communist doctrine of class struggle as the basis of history, Dai described humane love as an 'inborn human characteristic' that served as the moral basis of the doctrine of 'people's livelihood', which in Dai's account was the central doctrine of the Three Principles. Consequently the Three Principles were 'in essence completely different from the materialist

[237] Dai Jitao, 'Xiao' [Filial Piety], *Juewu* 20 March 1925, 2

[238] This argument that Sun could be the object of 'filial piety' anticipated the use of the title 'national father' (*guofu*) at his funeral on the first of June 1929; the national government's central executive committee made this title official in March 1940. See Chen Yunxi, *Chongbai yu Jiyi*, 79-84

[239] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 137-38

[240] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 125

revolutionary theories of Karl Marx... and others'.[241] While it was an innate and universal human characteristic, then, it was only in Sun's superior theory that it achieved a central role.

If humane love was universal, however, it also had a particularly important presence in the Chinese past: Dai argued that Sun had inherited his special understanding of it as a force for revolution from native sources. As with the ideal of Great Unity and the Chinese nation's inherent peacefulness in Sun Yatsen's lectures, an emphasis on love in Dai's pamphlet served to define Chinese thought. At the same time, echoing the discourse of 'Eastern civilization', Dai expanded from this view of national culture: humane love was 'the national morality of the orient'. According to Dai, echoing Sun, Russia's revolutions showed that it had accepted this moral force, and used love to carry out its revolution, which marked 'the victory of Eastern culture', whereas Japan had turned away from it and towards foreign imperialism.[242]

As in Sun's lectures, then, moral learning from China would bring peace to the world in a global Great Unity. This would involve a meeting of 'revitalised' classical doctrines with the demands of the modern world. Sun himself was the meeting-point: Dai identified him as the 'sage' able to combine the 'potential action' (*nengzuo*) of the apparently eternal love-centred morality and putting it into practice through the 'carried-out actions' (*suozuo*), which were Sun's 'political proposals', adapted to the organisation of states, economies and international relations of the modern world.[243] Dai stressed to a greater degree than Sun had done the degree of opposition between the 'moral civilisation' of the east and the 'material civilisation' represented by Europe and America, announcing that Sun had 'declared war' on the 'basic thought' of the latter by finding an altruistic ethical basis for action.[244] The 'fundamental thought of European culture' was, as Dai put it, individualism, which in turn was productive of capitalism and, through that, imperialism. Dai at the same time added Marx's Communist theories to this group of thought, dependent as they were on historical materialism. He stressed as had Sun that Marxism was incomplete, but added that this was because it lacked understanding and application of the motive force of 'humane love' (*ren'ai*).[245]

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[241] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 136
[242] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 131, 133
[243] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 112
[244] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 131
[245] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 132

The Transmission of the Revolutionary Way

The most striking and controversial element in Dai's traditionalism, however, was the means by which Sun had inherited his understanding of love: an 'orthodox transmission' from Confucius. Dai based this claim on his close relationship to Sun: he had been Sun's personal secretary from 1912 on, which allowed him to assume the role of principal transmitter and interpreter of Sun's ideas. According to Dai's account, at a meeting with an unnamed Soviet revolutionary, when asked about the source of his revolutionary thought Sun had claimed that 'China has an orthodox transmission [*zhengtong*] of moral thought, from Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, and the Duke of Zhou to Confucius, after whom [the transmission] was severed. My thought has inherited this orthodox thought in order to develop and carry it forward'.[246]

Although it used the term 'orthodox transmission' (*zhengtong*) rather than 'transmission of the Way' (*daotong*), this claim would obviously be reminiscent for Dai's readers of Zhu Xi's use of the latter term. As previously mentioned, Zhu had claimed that he and others of the 'School of the Way' had rediscovered the true Way, which had been transmitted from the ancient sages to Confucius and then Mencius before being lost. De Bary's definition of Zhu Xi's concept, as including the claims that '(1) the ancient Sage-king's knowledge of government and learning was highly discontinuous throughout history; (2) during periods when this tradition was lost, heterodox theories threatened and displaced the "true Way" (*dao*); (3) over time, only a few extraordinary individuals had been able to revive and thus "succeed" (*tong*) to this Way' indicates how closely Dai's claims for Sun matched it.[247]

Accordingly, leading Chinese Communist Party member Qu Qiubai's August 1925 attack on Dai, along with other critiques that followed, identified his argument as 'a kind of idealist theory of the transmission of the Way'.[248] Qu's use of the term *daotong* drew attention not only to Dai's apparent rejection of modern revolutionary thought (which

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[246] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 137

[247] William Theodore De Bary, *Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy and the Learning of the Mind-And-Heart* (Columbia University Press, 1987), 2-13

[248] Qu Qiubai, 'Zhongguo guomin geming yu Dai Jitao zhuyi' [The Chinese national revolution and Dai Jitaoism] in Qu Qiubai and Chen Duxiu, *Fan Dai Jitao de guomin geming guan* [Against Dai Jitao's view of national revolution] (Xiangdao, 1925)

for Qu and his allies could only be historical materialism) but also to the 'transmission''s 'idealist' nature. As Thomas Wilson puts it, the Song School of the Way 'transmission' was defined by its proponents' claims to 'collapse a thousand years into a mere instant' by intuitive realisation of the otherwise occluded metaphysical truth of the Way, and thus by absolute fidelity in its apprehension and transmission.[249]

Aside from using 'orthodox transmission' rather than 'transmission of the Way', Dai's version of orthodoxy was very different from that of his Song predecessors. Dai, like Sun before him, was no classical scholar, and he stripped the concept of its metaphysical claims and the actual political and philosophical 'truths' it was said to transmit: his explicit textual references were in fact largely to Sun, with only brief quotations from Mencius and the *Doctrine of the Mean*.

Nonetheless, his reference to Sun Yatsen as a 'sage' and lack of detail on precisely what China's 'orthodox thought' consisted of, or how Sun was the only person in over two thousand years able to comprehend its truth, left his writing open to suggestions of mysticism and 'pure daydream-ism' from critics like Qu. Moreover, a commemorative couplet calligraphed by Dai in March 1925 used the term *daotong*, stressing the dual position Dai emphasised for Sun as heir to a Chinese tradition and as world revolutionary: 'Inheriting the past and unlocking the future, [he] inherited the transmission of the Way direct from Confucius; comforting the people and punishing criminals, his achievements are as magnificent as Lenin's'.[250]

Although this revival of Song Dynasty terminology might appear entirely out of keeping with Dai's earlier celebration of the 'new', however, the notion of interruption and of exclusive truth contained in the transmission of the Way had radical consequences for Dai's presentation of the imperial past. While Sun's lectures had claimed to inherit from a generalised and positively presented national tradition, Dai's version of Chinese history was very different. The past contained not a host of 'inherent' values, knowledge, and abilities that could easily be recovered and used to serve revolutionary and nation-building purposes, but a single correct tradition that had, moreover, been lost for two thousand years of imperial rule; unlike Sun, when Dai referred to China's 'glorious

[249] Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way*, 92
[250] Liu Zuozhong, *Wan Sun Zhongshan xiansheng lian xuan* [Selected writings commemorating Mr Sun Yatsen] (Shanxi gaoxiao lianhe chubanshe, 1994), 70-71

history' he appeared to exclude the entire span of imperial China. Dai Jitao's only use of the term *daotong* in his pamphlet was to denigrate the previous claims of 'pedantic scholars' (including, by implication, Zhu Xi) to have inherited and understood the true meaning of the classical tradition. In reality, they could only be part of an imperial history that had nothing positive to offer. As Dai put it, 'all social progress stopped completely... the body and spirit of the nation also disappeared... in literature, in art, in the organisation of villages, in the architecture of cities, in the organisation of the state, there was not a bit of progress and not a bit of invention... [a]fter the breakdown of the feudal system, China not only had not the slightest progress, but on the contrary declined to an unimaginable state'.[251]

Dai therefore put forward an extreme version of the revolutionary traditionalist narrative of decline and recovery. His pamphlet echoed not so much Sun's expansive cultural nationalism of 1924, which had affirmed features of Qing government, as the more radical 1919 *Theories of Sun Yatsen*'s depiction of pre-imperial progress and post-imperial decline. Dai's description of the past in fact suggested a more dramatic break than previous versions of this narrative. With regard to 'National Essence' scholars like Liu Shipei, Deng Shi, and Huang Jie, who pioneered this anti-imperial reading of Chinese history, Martin Bernal has noted that the professional engagement of these scholars with later texts complicated the conveniently stark temporal division they drew between the pre-imperial and imperial eras.[252] Even Sun in 1919, calling as he was for the retention of Chinese characters, was motivated to claim some progress in the age of decline, noting progress in literature 'since the Han dynasty'.[253] Dai's apparently absolute division, by contrast, went even further in its criticism of the imperial past than the known 'iconoclast' and New Culture spokesman Hu Shi, who had argued for 'scientific development' in a 'linear progress' in certain areas of learning through imperial China.[254]

In referring to an 'orthodox transmission' while condemning the years of imperial rule, Dai's argument faced a problem which would be obvious to many readers: Chinese

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[251] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 147

[252] Martin Bernal, 'Liu Shih-p'ei and National Essence' in Furth, ed., *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976) 90–112, 105. See also Hon, 'National Essence, National Learning, and Culture', 262-63

[253] Sun Yatsen, *Sun Wen xueshuo*, 181

[254] Q. E. Wang, *Inventing China through History: The May Fourth Approach to Historiography* (State University of New York Press, 2001), 60. See Hu Shi, *Zhongguo zhexue shi dagang* [Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy] Vol. 1 (Shanghai, Shanghai shudian, 1989), 5–10

dynasties, particularly following the Song Dynasty, had canonised Confucius and the classics associated with him. Dai needed to sever the link between Confucius and imperial autocracy. As he put it, the empire appeared to have been united 'completely under Confucius' thought', but in fact the dominant influence on this superficially Confucian imperial orthodoxy was Laozi.[255] The latter appeared as a champion of 'individualism'; thus, while attacking imperial autocracy, Dai incorporated Sun's 1924 argument that China had had 'too much freedom'. Laozi's 'nihilism', 'unscrupulousness', 'fatalism', and 'hedonism' also explained the lack of development in China, as these elements prevented the 'creation of culture' and in particular the progress of 'scientific culture' in China.[256] At the same time as condemning individualism, however, Dai's negative portrayal of the imperial past further incorporated the radical discourse associated with the 'New Culture' by criticising patriarchs and the lineage system.[257]

The 'orthodox thought' which Sun had apparently inherited was thus entirely separated from the political and social institutions most associated with it. Denying the interpretations of the past two thousand years, Dai could radically re-interpret "'Confucius' thought'". This still presented problems, in that the classical texts thought to be dating from Confucius' time or shortly thereafter, which according to Dai embodied that thought, themselves made extensive reference to the patriarchal family as a social unit. Dai addressed this issue by identifying the 'universal ways of the world' referred to in the *Doctrine of the Mean* (the relationships between ruler and minister, father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brothers, and friends) as means of 'social organisation', and thus as tied to their specific era.[258] Here Dai's argument recalled his 1919 views on the progressive development of society. The difference in the *Philosophical Foundations* was that he claimed that despite these social changes Confucius' thought was still relevant, because its overall goal was the same as that of Sun Yatsen: the realisation of 'the people's livelihood'.[259] The classical past provided lofty moral ideals to be realised with modern means.

Dai's pamphlet thus constructed a version of 'Confucius' thought' that was defined by

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[255] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 145
[256] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 146
[257] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 147
[258] Zhu Xi, *Si shu zhangju jizhu* [Collected Commentaries on the Four Books] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 28
[259] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 144

rejecting individualism, asserting that 'benefiting oneself is contradictory to the true meaning of human co-existence'. Its essence was 'the doctrine of mutual social responsibility'.[260] Despite the claim that it constituted a 'political philosophy', there was no discussion of its approach to questions of political power; indeed, Dai's assertion that the relation between monarch and minister was subject to changes in social organisation suggests that such questions were excluded from its fundamental, timeless truths. Dai Jitao's version of Confucius, separated from 'autocratic' political structures and from the whole historical legacy of two thousand years, was therefore made compatible with a modernising national revolution.

The true meaning of China's 'orthodox learning', as Dai defined it, in fact lay in the 'Three Principles of the People'. Where the original *Doctrine of the Mean* identified five 'universal ways', the *Philosophical Foundations* directly echoed the structure of the original text to give a very different message:

> The universal ways of the world are three: nationalism, people's rights, people's livelihood. The means by which they are carried out are three: wisdom, humaneness, and bravery.[261]

In highlighting 'wisdom, humaneness and bravery' (*zhi*, *ren*, *yong*) Dai was here following Sun Yatsen's published 1921 speech 'The Spiritual Education of Soldiers' (*Junren jingshen jiaoyu*), which presented these values–originally emphasised together in the *Analects*–as essential attributes for the revolutionary army.[262] Thus Dai used Sun's earlier references to stress the consonance of his revolutionary doctrines with the classics. At the same time, however, by replacing the original terms with Sun's principles and stressing that only Sun had correctly understood the message, the *Philosophical Foundations* insisted on the interpretive priority of the doctrines.

Nevertheless, in merging the 'Three Principles' with the classics in this way Dai evidently anticipated accusations that he sought to 'restore antiquity'. As with previous examples of revolutionary traditionalism we have discussed, Dai constructed misguided extremes

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[260] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 143-44

[261] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 112; *Doctrine of the Mean* reference: Zhu Xi, *Si shu zhangju jizhu*, 28–29

[262] Sun Yatsen, 'Zai Guilin dui Dian, Gan, Yue jun de yanshuo' [Speech in Guilin to the Yunnan, Jiangxi and Yunnan Armies], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* Vol. 6, 9–40, 16–17. Published as '*Junren jingshen jiaoyu*' [The Spiritual Education of Soldiers] (Shanghai: Minzhi shuju, 1922). *Analects* reference: Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, 116

of conservatism and radicalism as straw men, thus allowing him to triangulate his own argument in the centre ground. On one side were 'counter-revolutionaries' who, as Dai put it, celebrated Confucius, or at least did not attack him, but did not understand the meaning of either Confucius' thought or 'culture' itself: they held rigidly onto the past imperial culture instead of appreciating the necessary dynamism of 'cultural creation'. On the other side were 'revolutionary youths' who, by contrast, had the modern 'scientific' knowledge required to understand culture but in practice failed to apply it to discover what was valuable in China's own culture, instead ignorantly attacking Confucius.[263] In this Dai's pamphlet echoed Sun Yatsen's criticism of New Culture 'cosmopolitanism': Dai stated that, for the excessively radical youth, the distinction between counter-revolutionary and revolutionary thought had nearly become one between Chinese and non-Chinese thought.

Accompanying Dai's positioning against 'radicals' and 'conservatives' and his extreme version of the 'golden age' narrative was a further feature we have noted as a characteristic of revolutionary traditionalism: an explicit stress on utility. In dealing with Sun's call to restore 'inherent' culture, Dai avoided the specific arguments for the continued utility of the 'eight virtues' in favour of the psychological benefits of a more general appeal to native values, which would produce national 'self-confidence'. This in turn was useful for the goal of creating culture, which leading New Culture spokesman Chen Duxiu too had identified as 'a weighty responsibility of the nation'.[264] According to Dai's account, Sun had recognised that the 'real value' of inherent culture was in the ability to 'produce, develop and reproduce culture', which Dai presented as essential for 'the life of the nation'. Though there was little indication of what form this culture should take, Dai suggested that it was 'scientific'.[265] Dai's presentation of the relationship between the nation and its culture thus seemed closer to the vision of Zhu Zhixin than Sun Yatsen: he stressed not so much the specific content of the culture as its role as a vehicle for confidence in a unique national culture, the strength of which must be shown through continued cultural creation.

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[263] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 139

[264] Chen Duxiu, 'Wenhua yundong yu shehui yundong' [The cultural movement and social movement] in Chen Duxiu, *Chen Duxiu wencun xuan* (Guizhou jiaoyu chubanshe, 2005), 217–19, 219

[265] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu' [The philosophical foundations of Sunism], in Gan Naiguang , ed., *Sun Wen zhuyi yanjiuji* [Anthology of research on Sunism] (Shanghai: Shanghai dadong shuju, 1927), 107–154, 114, 130

While Dai's pamphlet quoted from the Analects, the *Doctrine of the Mean* and Mencius and evoked the 'transmission of the Way', it thus also incorporated a radical critique of imperial China and an explicit stress on the utility of the past for revolution. This made Dai's argument narrowly focused, in contrast to Sun Yatsen's lectures, which, as we have seen, potentially legitimised a broad swathe of Chinese culture. Moreover, in dismissing past readings the *Philosophical Foundations* insisted on the priority of the Guomindang's doctrines. The cultural legacy of the past appeared meaningful and valuable insofar as it was interpreted through the lens of party ideology, and the central figure in this synthesis was Sun himself, the unique and authoritative 'crystallisation of Chinese culture'.[266]

Communist attacks on Dai Jitao and revolutionary traditionalism

Although Dai Jitao's revolutionary traditionalist approach redefined both 'humane love' and the 'transmission of the Way' as forces for revolution, divorced from their late imperial context, the imperial associations of these terms nevertheless made him vulnerable to radical attack.

Attacks from Communists were inevitable given Dai's anti-United Front arguments. By October 1925 opposition to his pamphlets was sufficient for the Communist Party to issue an order reprimanding Dai and demanding that copies of *The National Revolution and the Chinese Guomindang* be seized and burnt.[267] Prior to this, opposition was already evident in the Communist Party-affiliated journal *The Guide* (*Xiangdao*), which published a pamphlet in September 1925 titled *Against Dai Jitao's View of National Revolution* (*Fan Dai Jitao de guomin geming guan*), containing criticisms by CCP leaders Qu Qiubai and Chen Duxiu. As the name of this pamphlet implied, the focus of these criticisms was on the immediate political threat Dai's writings constituted: despite Dai's protestations that he wished Communists only to accept the Three Principles, figures such as Qu, Chen and others evidently recognised Dai's call for a 'pure' party and party doctrines as a move against the Guomindang-Communist United Front. Yet in the process of formulating their criticisms they also needed to deal with Dai's claim to authoritatively interpret Sun's words. Therefore they seized on the implications of

[266] Dai Jitao, 'Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue di jichu', 112
[267] Yang Kuisong, *Guomindang de 'liangong' yu 'fangong'* [Kuomintang: Unity with Communists and Anti-Communism] (Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2008), 85 n. 2

the 'transmission of the Way'.

We have already noted Qu Qiubai's criticism of the notion of the 'transmission' as 'idealist', and thus as retrograde compared to modern materialism. For Qu a materialist understanding of history entailed class struggle, which Dai specifically opposed with his presentation of 'humane love' as a motive force for national class solidarity and thus a tool of revolution. Qu mocked this as 'making revolution into an act of charity' and drew on the pre-revolutionary connotations of such language which Dai himself had in 1923 noted apologetically: 'this makes [revolution] into a benevolent, people-loving policy enacted by Sun Yatsen, Dai Jitao, and other "superior men" (*junzi*).[268] With this latter term, common to classical texts such as the *Analects*, Qu presented Dai's focus on moral prescriptions at the expense of class struggle as evocative of the authoritarian imperial hierarchy.

More than merely attacking Dai Jitao's interpretations, however, his Communist critics rejected revolutionary traditionalism itself. Yun Daiying, editor of the Communist *China's Youth* (*Zhongguo qingnian*) journal in Shanghai, published a criticism of Dai in the journal, arguing that 'cultural self-confidence' was not essential to revolutionary success.[269] As well as denying the utility of tradition, Yun moreover presented the narrative of loss and recovery of ancient thought as incoherent, in that Dai Jitao was claiming both that Sun's thought was an 'orthodox' inheritance from 'China's culture' and that its message had not been understood for two thousand years.[270] Where Dai (and Sun) had claimed Sun's thought both to be particularly Chinese and universal, for Yun the former was unnecessary: 'we don't say that Marx's theories are German culture or Lenin's theories are Russian culture'.[271]

Qu Qiubai too rejected particularistic national claims. Without mentioning Sun's own appeal to China's 'inherent morality' and traditions of thought as a means to unite the Chinese with global revolutionary movements and ultimately construct the Great Unity,

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[268] Qu Qiubai, 'Zhongguo guomin geming yu Dai Jitao zhuyi'

[269] Yun Daiying, 'Du "Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue de jichu"', *Zhongguo qingnian* 87 (8 August 1925), 540. For Yun Daiying's career see Shakhar Rahav, *The Rise of Political Intellectuals in Modern China: May Fourth Societies and the Roots of Mass-party Politics* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015)

[270] Yun Daiying, 'Du "Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue de jichu"', 541. *China's Youth* was founded in 1923. See Wang Guilin, Zhu Hanguo, eds., *Zhongguo baokan cidian (1815–1949)* [Dictionary of Chinese Periodicals, 1815–1949] (Taiyuan, Shuhai chubanshe, 1992), 119

[271] Yun Daiying, 'Du "Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue de jichu"', 541

Qu identified Dai's thought as 'bourgeois nationalism, taking the culture of country [*guojia*] or nation [*minzu*] as its so-called "highest principles".[272] In Qu's account the only role of 'national culture' was as a 'false mask' used to oppose class struggle, and as a marker for 'narrow nationalism' which would bring about the suppressing of the working classes and could lead ultimately only to 'the right and imperialism'. Global revolution by Qu's description could come only through class-based revolution; as with Hu Hanmin's writings in 1919 and 1920, historical materialism guaranteed the exclusive correctness of this vision.[273]

Qu's vision of a modern revolution in fact denied that the Three Principles of the People needed a 'philosophical basis at all'. They were instead merely 'the collective political demands of the classes that make up the ordinary Chinese masses', and thus the appropriate philosophical framework would presumably be a Marxist one.[274] Such an interpretation departed from Sun's own claims about the distinctness of his principles as well as from Dai's: the Communist position was thus constructed as a radical and universalist one, opposed to nationalism itself.

Revolutionary traditionalism and Dai Jitao in anti-Communist discourse

In contrast to these Communist arguments, the wider Guomindang discourse in 1925 incorporated a range of revolutionary traditionalist positions centred on Sun Yatsen and quoting his words; Dai Jitao's writings were a part of this phenomenon. In the previous chapter we noted that in 1924 Wang Jingwei adopted Sun's terminology about China's 'inherent culture'. In 1925 other writers more explicitly made constructions of China's past culture, as encapsulated in classic texts, part of their presentation of Sun Yatsen.

As the case of Dai Jitao suggests, this was especially important as a feature of the Guomindang 'right'. The rapid and detailed refutations of Dai's arguments indicate that Communists saw him as a considerable threat. Yet Dai's pamphlets were only a part, albeit a prominent one, of the emergence of the anti-Communist 'right-wing Guomindang' into the open, culminating in the November 1925 'Western Hills

[272] Qu Qiubai, 'Zhongguo guomin geming yu Dai Jitao zhuyi'
[273] Qu Qiubai, 'Zhongguo guomin geming yu Dai Jitao zhuyi'
[274] Qu Qiubai, 'Zhongguo guomin geming yu Dai Jitao zhuyi'

Conference'. This was a meeting in Beijing of senior party members who claimed to be Sun's true successors, who called for Communists to leave the party, and subsequently established a power base in Shanghai.[275] As Communists stressed a universal vision of revolution that rejected cultural particularity, highlighting native origins for Sun's thought served those who opposed the Communists to differentiate their vision of national revolution. Yet even those who explicitly sided with Dai Jitao did not necessarily fully endorse his clearly controversial 'transmission of the Way'. Instead, we see a diverse field of traditionalist claims reconciled with revolution in alternative, often less extreme ways, reflecting the dangers of association with conservatism.

Changes in the *Awakening* supplement to the Shanghai *Republican Daily* demonstrate the rise of anti-Communism in the Guomindang and the growing significance of Dai Jitao. In 1924 and early 1925 explicitly Communist and, as we have seen, culturally radical articles were common. In May 1925, however, one of its editors Shao Lizi left Shanghai for Guangzhou, and at the end of the year *Awakening* published a speech by party member Zhou Fohai openly stating that 'it cannot be said that to be anti-Communist is to be anti-revolutionary'.[276] This shift reflected the political inclinations of Ye Chucang, who (along with Shao Lizi) was one of the *Republican Daily*'s chief editors, and who attended the Western Hills Conference with Dai Jitao.[277] Traditionalist arguments were already evident in the journal over the course of 1925, however: *Awakening* published Dai Jitao's 'Revolution and Cultural Rejuvenation' (*Geming yu wenhua fuxing*) and 'Filial Piety' in March 1925, and in July and August of that year serialised Dai's *Philosophical Foundations*.

Accompanying the dissemination of Dai's arguments were statements in support of them or clearly inspired by them. Shao Yuanchong, another Western Hills conference attendee, recommended Dai's 'systematic diagram of the people's livelihood', a diagrammatic summary of his argument in the *Philosophical*

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[275]See Keith Schoppa, *Blood Road: The Mystery of Shen Dingyi in Revolutionary China* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998) 165–71

[276] Zhou Fohai, 'Jiangyan: Guomin geming zhong de jige wenti', *Juewu* (16 December 1925). See discussion of Shao Lizi's departure and the change in *Awakening* in Chen Duo, "'*Juewu*' *fukan dui chuanbo Malie zhuyi de gongxian*' [The Contribution of the Awakening journal in transmitting Marxism-Leninism], in Ren Wuxiong , ed., *Zhongguo Gongchandang chuangjian shi yanjiu wenji* [Documents on the history of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party] (Shanghai, Baijia chubanshe, 1991), 442–50, 448

[277] Schoppa, *Blood Road*, 166–67

Foundations, in the *People's Livelihood Daily* (*Minsheng ribao*) newspaper in 1925.[278] Texts associated with the Sunist Study Society (*Sun Wen zhuyi xue hui*, an anti-Communist organisation which formed at the Whampoa Military Academy in early 1925) and made available in an article by Li Yunhan likewise frequently cite Dai's words; Li suggests that the society adopted its name following Dai's use of 'Sunism'.[279] The society, for example, published an announcement after the assassination of leading party figure Liao Zhongkai in August 1925, claiming that 'traitors' in the party who were manufacturing rumours about imminent takeover by Communists had carried out the assassination. The society further argued, however, that China '[did] not need Communism', and in the process described a national revolution in which 'recovering the culture of our nation' was a necessary part. Cementing the link to Dai Jitao, the statement further quoted him by name on the importance of unity in the party.[280] On the day the Sunist Study Society held its formal foundation meeting, the 29th of December 1925, the Guangzhou Student Union issued an announcement likewise echoing Dai's interpretation of Sun's words, stating that the first priority was to 'recover the Chinese nation's ability to create culture and its national self-confidence' before 'using the culture of humane love and peace to transform the competitive nature of other nations and reach the rule of Great Unity'.[281]

Yet recommending and quoting Dai did not necessarily mean fully endorsing his particular vision of the 'transmission of the Way' between Confucius and Sun Yatsen: writers took up diverse stances on the question of Sun's inspirations. These did not necessarily invoke a Chinese historical legacy at all: Zhou Fohai, an associate of Dai Jitao's whose interpretation of Sun's principles featured a preface by Dai, explained the 'background' of Sun's thought entirely by reference to relatively recent historical developments outside of China, such as the French and American revolutions.[282]

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[278] Li Yunhan, 'Jieshao Sun Wen zhuyi xuehui jiqi youguan wenjian' [Introducing the Sunist Study Society and Related Documents], *Jindai shi yanjiusuo jikan* 4 (1974), 497–522 , 500

[279] Li Yunhan, 'Jieshao Sun Wen zhuyi xuehui jiqi youguan wenjian', 500

[280] 'Sun Wen zhuyi xuehui wei Liao Zhongkai bei ci shi gao tongzhi shu', reprinted in Li Yunhan, 'Jieshao Sun Wen zhuyi xuehui jiqi youguan wenjian', 510–11

[281] 'Guangzhou xuesheng lianhe hui jinggao quanguo minzhong shu' (29 December 1925), reprinted in Li Yunhan, 'Jieshao Sun Wen zhuyi xuehui jiqi youguan wenjian', 514–15

[282] Zhou Fohai, 'Zhongshan Xiansheng sixiang gaiguan' [Overview of Mr Zhongshan [i.e. Sun Yatsen]'s thought] (Shanghai, Minzhi shuju, 1925). Fitzgerald notes the relationship between Dai and Zhou in

Despite the attention his version drew in subsequent years, Dai Jitao was not unique in tracing Sun's–and consequently the party's–principles back to a native legacy of ideas. Guomindang member Luo Dunwei anticipated Dai's argument in a June 1924 article titled 'Sun Yatsen's ideals and their realisation' (*Sun Zhongshan de lixiang yu shiji*), published in the Shanghai journal *New Construction* (*Xin jianshe*), which had been launched in 1923 as an official party journal under the editorship of Yun Daiying.[283] Luo traced precedents for Sun's thought throughout pre-imperial and early imperial Chinese history, going into greater detail and dealing with a far more diverse range of texts than Dai Jitao would in 1925. Elements of the principle of People's Livelihood appeared, according to Luo, in eastern Han writer Ban Gu's explication of the Book of Documents, the *Classic of Poetry*, and the *Classic of Changes*, as well as thought 'compatible with the People's Livelihood' being evident in 'writings like those of Confucius, Mencius, and Guanzi'.[284] Like Dai, Luo focused particularly on the 'Great Way' passage of the *Book of Rites*, finding it to be a description of a 'political organisation based on the People's Rights', including rights for labourers and the 'right to exist' guaranteed by communal support for the elderly and the young.

In 1925, too, we see similar claims, as traditionalism became a marker for the anti-Communist 'right'. Yang Xingfo, in a speech marking the founding of the Shanghai branch of the Sunist Study Society, stated that Sun Yatsen's doctrines were 'formed from the combination of the Eastern Confucian teaching of the Great Unity and Western material civilisation'.[285] Yang's term for 'Confucian', *Kongjiao*, was that which was used by Kang Youwei and his followers advocating a 'Confucian religion'. Sun Jingya, who worked as a secretary for the 'Western Hills' faction following their move to Shanghai, produced a discussion of Dai's ideas which criticised Dai's focus on 'people's livelihood' at the expense of the other two principles, but then proceeded to construct native origins for Sun Yatsen's thought in a similar manner to Dai, although without directly endorsing the 'transmission

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Fitzgerald, *Awakening China*, 230

[283] Ma Guangren, 'Xin Zhongguo chengli qian Shanghai dui dangbao jianshe de gongxian' [Shanghai's Contribution to the Construction of Party Periodicals Before the Founding of New China] in Ma Guangren, *Ma Guangren wenji* [Writings of Ma Guangren] (Shanghai, Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2004), 268–284, 276

[284] Luo Dunwei, 'Sun Zhongshan de lixiang yu shiji', *Xin jianshe* 2.1 (July 1924), 1–14, 4-5

[285] Reprinted in Li Yunhan, 'Jieshao Sun Wen zhuyi xuehui jiqi youguan wenjian', 521

of the Way'. Sun Jingya, like both Dai and Luo Dunwei, focused on the *Book of Rites*: the Three Principles were presented as a direct elaboration of the quote 'when the Great Way is carried out the world will belong to all' (*dadao zhi xing ye, tianxia wei gong*). Sun Jingya even went so far as to refer to Sun's Three Principles of Nationalism, People's Rights, and People's Livelihood as 'commentaries' on sections of this passage, which might imply that the principles were subordinate to the classic.[286]

Yet Yang Xingfo's use of the term *Kongjiao*, with its conservative associations, was unusual: like Dai's pamphlet, other traditionalist writings stressed the new and explicitly avoided association with conservatism. Luo Dunwei disassociated his argument from the discredited late Qing traditionalist notion that 'Chinese origins' could be found for most or all beneficial western innovations:

> I am not like those who find tenuous connections, thinking Zhuge Liang's 'wooden cow and gliding horse' [Three Kingdoms era transportation devices] was the same thing as today's steamers and trains, and thinking that every novelty has already appeared in China.[287]

Similarly, in a 1926 article praising Dai Jitao's interpretation of Sun, Luo Dunwei raised the problem of the term 'revitalisation' (*fuxing*): it was 'easily thought of as restoring antiquity' (*fugu*).[288] Against this notion of return, Luo's article stressed the new: 'the cultural revitalisation of the Three Principles of the People is… opening up a new prospect'.[289] While Sun drew on Confucius' spirit, then, and his achievements were comparable, his task and his approach were a new one: as Luo put it, with Confucius Chinese culture reached a mountain peak before a long descent, reaching its nadir with the Boxer Rebellion. Sun's mission was to climb a new mountain, and 'while admittedly his spirit drew on the spirit the ancients used to climb their mountain, because the route up this mountain is different, [Sun's]

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[286] Sun Jingya, 'Duiyu "Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue de jichu' zhi shangque' [Discussion of the Philosophical Foundations of Sunism], in Gan Naiguang, *Sun Wen zhuyi yanjiuji*, 154–193, 160. First published as a pamphlet Shanghai, Ruiwen yinshua suo, 1925.

[287] Luo Dunwei, 'Sun Zhongshan de lixiang yu shiji', 7. For a discussion of 'Chinese origins' see Theodore Huters, *Bringing the World Home: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China* (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 23–42

[288] Luo Dunwei, 'Sanmin zhuyi yu Zhongguo ji shijie' [The Three Principles of the People and China and the world], in Gan Naiguang, *Sun Wen zhuyi yanjiuji*,, 93. First published Shanghai, Sanmin Gongsi, 1926.

[289] Luo Dunwei, 'Sanmin zhuyi yu Zhongguo ji shijie', 93–94

method cannot but be somewhat different'.[290]

In addition to condemning conservatism and highlighting novelty and creation, these texts used a further familiar revolutionary traditionalist approach in stressing the utility of references to the past. Thus 'Western Hills' member Cao Renyuan explained Sun Yatsen's appeal to 'inherent culture' as a matter of revolutionary strategy: Sun 'sought to use China's old inherent culture… converting family and lineage thinking into nationalist thought… With these propaganda methods he could make everybody in the country know of nationalism'.[291] Similarly, in Luo Dunwei's 1926 article the roots of China's modern crisis of social decline and foreign invasion were cultural, and 'the shaking of China's ancient culture' and the 'forced entry of western culture' had caused a 'cultural panic': to overcome this, Sun promoted nationalism and 'praised Chinese culture to the utmost and resisted western culture'.[292]

As presented in party discourse after his death, Sun Yatsen was therefore able to put native culture to use for his revolution. He appeared both Chinese and modern, able to draw on both native and foreign sources: citing the 1919 *Theories of Sun Yatsen*, Sun Jingya described Sun as a unique genius able to put the ancients "to service" and extract the 'cream of native civilisation', and to apply the same principles of utility to foreign ideas. Sun was both a 'modern Chinese person' and 'a Chinese person who surpassed all predecessors'.[293]

Conclusion

The canonisation of Sun Yatsen's words after his death was a process of cultural struggle. Where the radical discourse of Communist Party members rejected the practices of revolutionary traditionalism altogether, however, Sun's statements on 'inherent culture' proved a rallying point for others within the Guomindang.

Among these, Dai Jitao's vision was not a simple 'return to tradition'. Like other

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[290] Luo Dunwei, 'Sanmin zhuyi yu Zhongguo ji shijie', 94
[291] Cao Renyuan, 'Zhongshan xiansheng de minzu zhuyi' [Mr Sun Yatsen's nationalism], *Sun Wen zhuyi yanjiuji*, 30
[292] Luo Dunwei, 'Sanmin zhuyi yu Zhongguo ji shijie', 93
[293] Sun Jingya, 'Duiyu "Sun Wen zhuyi zhi zhexue de jichu' zhi shangque', 160

writings in party discourse in the wake of Sun Yatsen's death, his pamphlets presented an image of Sun Yatsen drawing on and 'crystallising' both the modern world and the cultural legacy of Chinese thought. Moreover, Dai took unusual pains to make this vision new, and to disassociate his references to the past from conservatism and the 'restoration of antiquity'. In this, Dai's interpretation of Sun was part of a wider revolutionary traditionalist discourse which followed Sun Yatsen's lectures and his death.

At the same time, however, the case of Dai Jitao demonstrates that even a dramatically and explicitly revolutionary traditionalist approach could be open to the charge of conservatism: for Communist critics at the time, and for generations of historians in their wake, Dai's cultural 'turn' represented a betrayal of revolution. The references on which Dai Jitao drew in describing Sun's thought as distinctively Chinese and superior to Communism were familiar to readers, and thus could serve as a common cultural grounding, precisely because they were widely disseminated through the late imperial orthodoxy. For this reason, however, in a context of still strong cultural radicalism (to which members of the Communist Party laid particular claim), these references could be dangerous.

4. Teaching Culture and Morality

> The Guomindang has always waved a banner proclaiming 'wipe out feudal forces, smash feudal thinking'; how could an important figure in the Guomindang publish this kind of reactionary thought that defends traditional culture? What, in the end, is the Guomindang's attitude towards the question of new and old culture?[294]

In November 1929 the intellectual Hu Shi, renowned as a leading figurehead of the 'New Culture', raised a challenge to the newly established Guomindang party-state with its capital in Nanjing, condemning it for turning away from progress. Hu's article set the tone for countless subsequent critical accounts: the new National Government (represented in Hu's article by then Propaganda Minister Ye Chucang, whose own article Hu was criticising) had turned toward the 'old culture', and this served as the cultural counterpart to its embrace of illiberal, 'reactionary' policies.

Hu's criticism captured an important feature of the Nanjing regime, which was formed in 1927 and established pre-eminence by the end of 1928: its adoption of traditionalist discourse. Pronouncements issued in the name of the party-state put forward a narrative of the decline of national culture and morality, and presented their recovery as the government's mission. The state's discourse incorporated specific terms for moral values associated with the imperial orthodoxy, as well as a potentially broad vision of 'inherent' culture. Thus the traditionalist language discussed in the preceding chapters was elevated to the position of state orthodoxy.

This development was not an abrupt turn. As the preceding chapters have shown, revolutionary traditionalist discourse was a feature of the party from its engagement with the 'New Culture' on. Elements of this earlier discourse (especially the 'inherent morality' and 'inherent culture' as loosely defined by Sun Yatsen) formed the basis of government members' pronouncements. Yet the circumstances and forms through which traditionalist discourse was produced and interpreted were very different: over the course of 1927 and 1928 members of the Guomindang associated with the party's military leader Chiang Kaishek shifted from an aspiring revolutionary party to a government claiming pre-eminent national authority.

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[294] Hu Shi, 'Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang', 2-3

Though the prominence of traditionalism has been identified with Chiang Kaishek as the new government's leading figure, it was not simply dictated by him.[295] Chiang's published statements on culture and morality were only part of the wider revolutionary traditionalist discourse we have identified in this thesis. In this chapter I show that 1928 saw a confluence of several discursive elements: the specific terms promoted by Sun Yatsen as 'inherent morality' and 'inherent culture', a conception of the government as a tutelary institution, the construction of the Communists as a foreign threat to the revolution, and a broader language of moral revival that extended beyond the Guomindang and entered its official discourse as the party expanded to form a National Government. This state discourse retained key elements of Guomindang revolutionary traditionalism, however: traditionalist cultural references were accompanied with a stress on novelty and on revolution.

Hu Shi's attack exemplifies, however, the challenges facing Nanjing's revolutionary traditionalism. Claiming the mantle of the 'New Culture', Hu and others denied that revolution and tradition could be combined. Their challenges were powerful, since although the Guomindang had reached an unprecedented level of national power it remained beset by enemies and internally fractured. Having violently broken with the Communists and suppressed more socially radical elements within the party, the Nanjing state was open to charges of having turned away from revolution, and its official traditionalism allowed critics to claim that Nanjing sought to 'restore antiquity'.

These charges gained further power from the continued sense of cultural conflict. As Hu Shi's attack indicated, the radical language associated with the 'New Culture' remained a powerful part of Nanjing's discourse. Appeals to revolution, including statements issued in the name of leading figures in the regime, identified 'reactionary' cultural forces as holding back revolution. Given the recentness of the revolution and the activity of social and political movements deemed 'conservative' (including those calling for restoration of the Emperor), all agreed that the 'feudal' past still had the power to threaten modernisation. Appeals to tradition were therefore inevitably contested: there were major restrictions on the Guomindang's ability to rely on a native cultural legacy.

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[295] C.f. the reference to Chiang's 'cultural dictatorship' in Luo Yuming, Chen Xinzheng, 'Jiang Jieshi yu 20 shiji 30 niandai de dujing yundong' [Chiang Kaishek and the classics-reading movement of the 1930s]. *Huaihua xueyuan* xuebao vol. 27 no. 4 (April 2008), 61

Thus, although revolutionary traditionalism was increasingly prominent, its contents remained loosely defined, allowing for a plurality of readings and interpretations, and its position as an orthodoxy was limited and contested. Faced with accusations from within and outside the party-state, writers adopted diverse forms of traditionalism, differently reconciled with on-going claims to revolution.

Revolution and authority: the Nanjing state

Hu Shi's attack reflected the increased profile of the Guomindang as it established a national government. For Peter Zarrow the adoption of 'neo-traditional' discourse was a logical expression of the shift from revolutionary to autocratic governing party; this view is also shared by mainland Chinese writers like Luo Yuming and Shen Decheng.[296] But the nominal achievement of national authority did not mean an end to the party's claim to represent a revolution; nor did it bring power struggles to an end.

The transition from revolutionary party to national government in the late 1920s was partly a process of expansion. From July 1926, following the late Sun Yatsen's plans and under Chiang Kai-shek's generalship, the party launched a military 'Northern Expedition' from its base in Guangdong, heading north toward the capital of the Beiyang government in Beijing. This advance succeeded largely through the co-optation of regional military leaders, whose armies and civilian staff joined Chiang's forces and played important roles in the new government, inevitably influencing it with their own diverse agendas.

At the same time, the Guomindang under Chiang acquired new enemies and experienced new divisions. The new regime was to a considerable degree defined against the Communists. When the Northern Expedition was launched the Communists and Guomindang remained united, although in May 1926, when securing his position as commander-in-chief, Chiang had also successfully restricted the number of Communists in central and local Guomindang Executive Committees to one third of the total. Tensions grew during the advance, however, and after the Revolutionary Army took control of the central Chinese cities of Wuhan and Nanchang early in 1927 they became rival power centres, with Communist-allied members of the party under Wang Jingwei's

[296] Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution*, 265, Luo Yuming, '1934 nian Nanjing zhengfu zun Kong si Kong huodong shuping', 56–58; Shen Decheng, 'Dai Jitao Zhuyi qiantan', 90–91.

leadership setting up their own party headquarters in Wuhan while Chiang's supporters did the same in Nanchang. On April 12 1927 this tension broke into open hostility: Chiang Kaishek, having taken control of Shanghai, ordered the violent suppression of Communist unions and militias there. The 'National Government' of Chiang's allies was established in Nanjing only six days later. Though the Wuhan faction subsequently split with the Communists, power struggles continued; it was not until the beginning of 1928 that Chiang's government in Nanjing stood pre-eminent as the centre of power in the Guomindang-controlled areas of China. Yet constant challenges to Chiang's control continued throughout the following decade, as the regional military leaders who had pledged allegiance during the Northern Expedition enjoyed considerable autonomy in practice and on occasion turned their arms against the central government. Among longstanding Guomindang members too factional division persisted, with Wang Jingwei and Hu Hanmin in particular raising open challenges to Chiang's leadership.

The late 1920s thus saw the Guomindang transition from a revolutionary party using military means and popular agitation to oppose existing authorities in Beijing to an internationally recognised national government—albeit one constantly troubled by instability and threats to its authority.[297] For critics sympathetic to the Communist Party, both at the time and in the decades that followed, Chiang (and subsequently Wang Jingwei)'s turn against the Communist Party naturally marked the abandonment of any claim to revolution; the Guomindang in government became suppressor of and thus target for revolutionary action.

The Guomindang under Chiang, however, retained their claim to represent and continue Sun Yatsen's vision of revolution. At least in its pronouncements the party was committed to higher goals framed by Sun Yat-sen: Chiang's regime never abandoned its claim to represent the 'national revolution', promising to establish a new political, social and economic order that would realise Sun's Three Principles of the People. As discussed in this thesis's introduction, a large number of studies, particularly from Lloyd Eastman's work on, have taken these claims seriously. As William Kirby puts it, the party-state's leaders can be called 'conservative' in a relative rather than an absolute sense:

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[297] The Nanjing regime won recognition by the US in July 1928, and by 'all of the major powers' by the end of that year. See Warren I. Cohen, 'The Foreign Impact on East Asia' in Merle Goldman and Andrew Gordon, eds., *Historical Perspectives on Contemporary East Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 1–42, 16

> Here the term 'conservative' is not used in the de Maistrean sense of unwavering defense of a principle of order, seeking return to the *status quo ante*; nor is it the Burkean concern that change be harmonized with the organic progression of a generally healthy body politic. Nor is it–Marxist views of the class interests of the KMT leadership to the contrary–simply the parochial defense of special interests. For the leaders of the Kuomintang were revolutionaries, having fought for much of their lives for the overthrow of established orders... [A]s a ruling party in the years after 1927, the Kuomintang was dedicated to change, to 'nation-building,' and pursued its work to a considerable degree as a force unto itself, aloof from society... Chiang and his follows were 'conservative' in a general situational sense, and in the reactive sense defined by Mannheim, Huntingdon, and others, for they were less 'progressive' than their erstwhile Communist and leftist allies...[298]

The Nanjing regime as a whole certainly sought dramatic change rather than the preservation of an existing order. Even if we were to adopt the critical Communist perspective, denying any claims to revolution for the good of the nation as a whole as merely a cover for self-interest, the weak position of the party-state did not encourage mere preservation of a status quo; at a minimum its members were committed to increasing Nanjing's reach and power. Given the multitude of obstacles they faced, and in particular the variety of local powers and elites which would need to be co-opted or neutralised, at least at the top level the party-state needed a general transformation.

The means of transformation, however, changed under the National Government, which now emphasised centralised discipline and order. In Guangdong and during the Northern Expedition Guomindang members, working with Communist allies, had conducted agitation among students, peasants, workers, soldiers, and others, encouraging protests and action against 'reactionary' targets including foreign imperialists, the militarists, and business leaders; as Murdock puts it, however, such means were 'horribly ill-suited for the needs of modern nationalistic order'.[299] In Murdock's account, however, this change was not the product of ideological differences between a radical 'left' and an authoritarian 'right' but, at high levels in the Guomindang if not at the grassroots, a product of the 'specific demands of the era' and a matter of strategy.[300] Agitation had

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[298] William Kirby, *Germany and Republican China*, (Palo Alto: Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 45

[299] Michael Murdock, *Disarming the Allies of Imperialism: Agitation, Manipulation and the State During China's Nationalist Revolution*, 1922–1929 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University East Asia Program, 2006), 285

[300] Murdock, *Disarming the Allies of Imperialism*, 287

served party leaders, including Chiang before 1927, not as an end in itself but as a means of fighting opponents and promoting the party's cause, and thus ultimately of state-building: '[a]ll Chiang did was drop the pretext of… interest in an autonomous agitative agenda in favor of open and transparent acknowledgement of state-building principles'.[301]

Popular autonomy, however, remained the declared goal, and to this end state building meant instructing the people. The fifth plenum of the Second Executive Committee formally announced that, in line with Sun Yatsen's outline for the 'National Revolution', the period of 'military government' was officially over, and the period of 'tutelary government' had begun.[302] Having militarily unified the country, the Guomindang's next mission was to educate the people of China, transforming them into modern citizens capable of exercising the democratic rights they would ultimately assume. Though the process of state-building involved centralising authority, its declared aim was preparing the people for self-government.[303] Nanjing's authoritarian rule, which was in theory but not in practice matched by 'a simultaneous mobilization at the grassroots level', was thus according to the state's own rhetoric a temporary measure.[304]

Chiang Kai-shek's role

The revolutionary traditionalism adopted in 1928 was not simply dictated by Chiang Kaishek. Although speeches and writings published in his name frequently contained textual references to the classics, with a specifically moral focus, Chiang was far from unique in this. His words were a part of the wider revolutionary traditionalist discourse described in the first part of this thesis. They were, however, an important and in some respects distinctive part of the published texts through which the new Nanjing regime was presented, given that he had established himself as the dominant figure in the new regime. It is therefore worth identifying his place in party discourse. We can see the texts associated with him in the 1920s as fitting into the revolutionary traditionalist model in

[301] Murdock, *Disarming the Allies of Imperialism*, 282

[302] 'Zhongguo Guomindang er jie wu zhong quanhui xuanyan' [Declaration of the fifth plenum of the second Central Executive Committee of the Guomindang], *Minguo ziliao huibian* [Compendium of archival materials on the history of the Republic of China] (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1979–99) 5.1, 51. Hereafter this series referred to as *Minguo ziliao.*

[303] Julia Strauss, *Strong Institutions in Weak Polities: State Building in Republican China, 1927-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 25

[304] Patricia Thornton, *Disciplining the State: Virtue, Violence and State-Making in Modern China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), 73

both senses: far from being unremittingly traditionalist, Chiang's published speeches reconciled evocations of the past with revolution.

Studies of Chiang, to a much greater extent than those of his predecessor Sun, emphasise a personal conservatism. Both Chinese and English-language assessments have identified a direct, particularly strong connection to the pre-revolutionary past as a definitive feature of Chiang's thought. The first chapter of Jay Taylor's recent biography, for instance, is titled 'A Neo-Confucian Youth', and describes 'neo-Confucianism' (i.e. School of the Way learning with an education oriented around the Four Books) as a formative influence on Chiang's character through schools in his village and county before his journey to study in Japan at the age of eighteen.[305] Yang Tianshi's extensive study of Chiang based on his diary similarly highlights moral self-cultivation, in which the diary itself served as a tool of self-reflection, criticism and improvement, as a key defining feature of Chiang's lifestyle. Although Yang mentions that Chiang read the *New Youth* journal consistently up to 1925, demonstrating an interest in cultural radicalism, the stronger influence according to Yang was early training in School of the Way moral cultivation, which 'left him cleaving to traditional culture, unable to take greater steps in accepting new culture and new thought... [these] medieval methods of cultivation could not completely fit into the life of modern society'.[306]

Where Yang Tianshi's view of this essential conservatism is more sympathetic, critics have presented unusually strong ties to the Chinese past as the natural accompaniment to a 'reactionary' political career: that much of Chiang's thinking drew on writings and values of the imperial past in their eyes serves to highlight his own quasi-imperial autocracy and resistance to progress understood politically, socially, and culturally. Thus Qin Yingjun, in line with the many Communist Party critiques of Chiang Kaishek, labels him a 'reactionary' whose 'thought largely stemmed from the Chinese transmission of the Way [*daotong*]; he had an unbroken connection with China's traditional culture'.[307] Implicit or explicit in many mainland Chinese critiques of Chiang is the Communist Party claim to embody China's truly progressive revolution, against which Chiang

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[305] Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 12-17

[306] Yang Tianshi, *Jiang shi midang yu Jiang Jieshi zhenxiang* [Secret archives and the real Chiang Kaishek] (Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2002), 57

[307] Qin Yingjun, 'Jiang Jieshi yu Zhongguo chuantong wenhua' [Chiang Kaishek and China's traditional culture], *Shixue yuekan* 3 (1999), 59

represented political and cultural reaction. Writers who do not share this perspective, however, have made similar criticisms of Chiang as a figure out of his time. Taiwanese scholar Wang Rongzu, in the highly critical biography he co-authored with Li Ao, denies that Chiang could be called a 'revolutionary' on the grounds that revolutionaries must break through their emotional involvement with 'old thought'; in his estimation Chiang Kaishek, by contrast, possessed a 'firm feudal superstitious consciousness'.[308] This perceived failure to be politically and culturally modern ultimately serves for Wang to explain Chiang's retreat to Taiwan: '[a]fter all, Chiang's era was different from that of the ancient emperors; for the leader of a country, some basic modern knowledge is indispensable. Chiang's was evidently insufficient'.[309]

In contrast to these accounts, Chiang's intellectual influences and intentions are not the primary concern of this study. The focus here is instead on the impact of his words within party discourse. Even if we could judge this thought to be unusually close to that of earlier reformers rather than to Sun and other revolutionaries, his words were nonetheless presented and understood in a wider context very different from that of Qing dynasty reformers; Chiang could not help being of his time. Moreover, the texts produced under Chiang's name cannot be simply treated as the product of one man's thought: aside from the collaborative process of transcribing, editing and publishing, as Dahpon Ho shows ghost-writers like Chen Bulei played an important role in producing Chiang's words and 'public image'.[310]

Seen in the broader context of Guomindang media, the published texts of Chiang's speeches and writings in the mid-1920s featured distinctively traditionalist language. At the same time, however, they were marked by the same balancing strategies and reconciliations with revolutionary rhetoric that we have observed in the texts of Sun Yatsen, Dai Jitao, Hu Hanmin and others.

Chiang's speeches from the early 1920s stressed moral values, quotes, and positive historical examples associated with China's past. Moreover, even more than Sun Yatsen's

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[308] Wang Rongzu, 'Lishi tiancheng shang de Jiang Jieshi' [Jiang Jieshi in the scales of history] in Wang Rongzu and Li Ao, *Jiang Jieshi pingzhuan* [Critical biography of Chiang Kaishek] (Zhongguo Youyi Chuban Gongsi, 2000) Vol. 1, 16.

[309] Wang, 'Lishi tiancheng shang de Jiang Jieshi', 17

[310] Dahpon D. Ho, 'Night Thoughts of a Hungry Ghostwriter: Chen Bulei and the Life of Service in Republican China', *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* Vol. 19 No. 1 (Spring 2007), 1–59, 15–16

Nationalism lectures, and unlike Dai Jitao's efforts, Chiang's references tended not to mention any potential contradiction with the self-consciously modernising revolutionary discourse. In a 1924 speech at the Whampoa military academy, for instance, Chiang implored his audience to sacrifice their individual freedom and equality for the sake of the nation's freedom and equality with an eclectic range of quotations: Mozi's 'wear away your body from head to heel if it benefits the world', the Analects' 'sacrifice one's life to keep intact one's virtue', and Mencius' 'let life go and choose righteousness'.[311]

The *Analects* and *Mencius* were, like the texts Sun Yatsen had cited, foundational texts of the late imperial 'School of the Way' orthodoxy which Chiang (like many others) had studied in his youth. More distinctive was Chiang's approval of Zeng Guofan and Hu Linyi, who were not figures of a safely antique 'golden age' but had been military heroes of the Qing dynasty, active less than fifty years before Chiang spoke. In 1924 Chiang commissioned a booklet of Zeng and Hu's writings for use by Whampoa students, noting in the preface that

> 'Zeng [Guofan] advocated morality, vigorously and personally practicing it... he could change the customs of the time, arresting [China's] decline... [H]is painstaking willpower, his method of establishing himself and others and extending himself and others, are enough for us to learn from... [T]he words of Zeng, Hu, and Zuo [Zongtang] are words for the ages, and are what I myself would say if I could only express them. Their meaning is penetrating and their language simple; they are not only a treasure for instructing soldiers, but a fine guideline for governing the country.[312]

This statement appears to mark a more comprehensive deliberate connection to the pre-revolutionary past, by celebrating figures who had defended the Qing dynasty against the Taiping rebellion. Sun Yatsen, by contrast, had identified the Taiping rebels as 'pure representatives of national revolution'.[313] With the Qing court still alive in the Forbidden City and an abortive restoration attempt as recently as 1917, and against the background

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[311] Chiang Kaishek, 'Junxiao jiaoyu de fangzhen: 'yan' zhi biyao' [The direction of education in the military academy: the necessity of 'strictness'], in Qin Xiaoyi , ed., *Xian zongtong Jiang gong sixiang yanlun zongji* [Compilation of the thought and speeches of the late President Chiang] (Taibei: Zhongguo Guomindang zhongyang weiyuanhui dangshi weiyuanhui, 1984) Vol. 10, 57. Sources for quotations: Zhu Xi, *Si shu zhangju jizhu*, 357 (Mozi, as described in *Mencius*), 163 (*Analects*), 332 (*Mencius*); The Mozi line, which Chiang's speech presented as a quotation from Mozi, was in fact a paraphrase of Mencius' description of the former, which perhaps reflects Chiang and his speechwriters' reliance on the Four Books.

[312] Chiang Kaishek, 'Zengbu Zeng Hu zhibing yulu xu' [Preface to extended edition of Zeng Guofan and Hu Linyi's sayings on commanding soldiers], In Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* Vol. 35, 101

[313] Sun Zhongshan, 'Zai Nanjing Tongmenghui huiyuan jianbiehui de yanshuo', 319

of the legitimating importance of the Guomindang's claim to have overthrown the Qing, Chiang Kai-shek's summoning of these figures certainly left him open to charges of conservatism. Aside from their Qing loyalties, Hu and Zeng were specifically known as 'conservative' thinkers in terms of culture, since they were held to represent the late Qing 'Chinese essence, Western utility' school of strengthening China, against which subsequent radicals had defined their calls for fundamental change.[314]

The specific context of Chiang's speeches and writings of the early 1920s, however, was very different from that of Sun's and Dai Jitao's. Whereas Sun, aspiring to national power, sought to address the party as well as the nation as a whole, and Dai Jitao and his rivals sought to shape the Guomindang as a whole, Chiang was a general, directing his speeches to the soldiers under his command. The scope of his remarks was much smaller, with Zeng and Hu evoked specifically for their well-attested abilities to command and inspire successful armies. Although Chiang's 1924 speech suggested approval of the *Analects*, Mencius and Mozi, it explicitly cited them for a very specific stated end: to inspire self-sacrifice by soldiers in the cause of the National Revolution. Chiang was not at this point explicitly putting forward a vision for society in general.

Chiang's appeals to the past were moreover counterbalanced, like those of Dai Jitao, by an insistence on his own revolutionary credentials. A speech in September 1925 at Whampoa again called on established heroes of the imperial era, but traced a positive history not of dynastic loyalty but of nationalist ideals: Song dynasty heroes Wen Tianxiang, Lu Xiufu, and Yue Fei were inspirational in that they had selflessly died for 'racial revolution' against the invading Jurchens and Mongols, and thus served as forerunners and positive role models for the 'revolutionary party' in explicit contrast to the self-interested and autocratic emperors they nominally served.[315] While this speech thus separated the positive inheritance of ideas of race and nation from harmful and now superseded imperial autocracy, another on the fourteenth of August 1925, given to the seventh and eighth Guomindang armies at Changsha, was more direct in addressing the problems of culture. Chiang's speech appears to reveal the influence of the New Culture writings highlighted by Yang Tianshi, with its explicit embrace of the historical

[314] Pamela Crossley, *The Wobbling Pivot- China since 1800: An Interpretive History* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell & Sons, 2010), 119

[315] Chiang Kaishek, 'Zhen Gemingdangyuan bi juexin chengren' [True Guomindang members must be determined to die for the cause], In Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* Vol. 10, 179

rupture of revolutionary modernity:

> ...our old actions, old habits, must be completely changed. The former thoughts, actions and habits belonging to the feudal system, lineage hierarchies, and privileged classes must be smashed![316]

This speech identified a 'glorious history' which, like Sun's 'benevolence and love', was to be 'developed and carried forward', but tellingly Chiang here placed this history not in the past but in the future: 'previous history all belongs to the past now, while the history of the future is new... the glorious history of our country and our people must begin with our national revolutionary army'.[317] 'Glorious history' was to be created by the future-oriented actions of party members.

Chiang's speeches could thus emphasise both inheritance from the national past and path breaking novelty. Where Chiang's words balanced and combined the two, they appealed to moral cultivation, focused particularly on a selfless commitment to group interests, as an inspiration to revolutionary activity, and by tracing this activity, focused on the national community as the highest priority, back through time, while denouncing the institutions of imperial rule. Reflecting the diverse character of the texts published in his name, Chiang's image in the eyes of others prior to and even after the 1927 split was flexible. Michael Murdock notes foreign impressions at the time of Chiang as a 'Red General' until spring 1927, showing how impressions of his ideological leanings were in flux even after his initial move against Communist influence in the Guomindang a year earlier, and in contrast to his subsequent portrayal as arch-reactionary.[318] Similarly, in August 1926 the 'national essence' scholar and anti-Manchu revolutionary Zhang Binglin, who had in the 1900s been an ally of Sun Yatsen, declared Chiang 'an obedient subject of Red Russia'. For Zhang, Chiang was evidently no upholder of national culture: Zhang made his own appeal to Zeng Guofan to call for the Communists' expulsion.[319]

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316 Chiang Kaishek, 'Dang he zhuyi shi junren weiyi de baozhang' [Party and principles are the soldier's only safeguard], In Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* Vol. 10, 213

317 Chiang Kaishek, 'Dang he zhuyi shi junren weiyi de baozhang', 212

318 Murdock, *Disarming the Allies of Imperialism*, 286

319 Zhang Binglin, 'Yu Zhao Hengti' [Letter to Zhao Hengti], in Ma Yong , ed., *Zhang Taiyan shuxin ji* [Collected Letters of Zhang Binglin], (Shijiazhuang, Hebei renmin chubanshe, 2003), 751–52. Originally published in the *Shenbao*, 15 August 1926

The Nation against the Communists

Chiang Kai-shek's statements following his split with the Communists, which defined the party-state he claimed to lead, continued this indeterminacy. The new Nanjing regime was not immediately marked by a shift towards traditionalism: texts published in Chiang's name, addressed now to his party and all 'compatriots' as well as his soldiers, instead focused on identifying his regime with the Chinese nation, against the Communists as representing foreign invasion.

Despite the symbolic importance of establishing a 'capital' in April 1927 at Nanjing, site of the early Ming Dynasty court, Chiang's position against his many rivals was far from secure. The Beiyang government in Beijing, as well as a host of regional militarists, remained, the Communist Party was now in open opposition to him, and within the Guomindang Wuhan still stood as an alternative, Communist-allied power centre governed by his rival Wang Jingwei. The task for Chiang and his allies, then, was to present him as national leader and put forward a distinctive Guomindang vision of China to legitimate the optimistically named 'National Government' in Nanjing.

Identifying the nascent party-state, and Chiang himself, with the nation was a crucial element in this programme. The Nanjing-based Guomindang retained its anti-imperialist language, adding its new enemy the Communist Party to the foreign forces threatening the nation. Chiang's 'Declaration to Comrades in the Guomindang', issued immediately in the wake of his move against the Communists, announced that 'the Chinese nation should have the right to determine China's future, and should not suffer systematic manipulation from foreign countries'.[320] More explicitly, his speech at the establishment of the government in Nanjing declared that the Communists 'have no scruples about being the tool of foreign special groups' and accused Soviet advisor Borodin of acting as 'puppet master' to the Guomindang government.[321] The militarists, too, could be defined against the collective interests of the nation, representing 'feudal' divisions of what should be a unified national territory.

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[320] Chiang Kaishek, 'Gao Zhongguo Guomindang tongzhi shu' [Letter to comrades in the Chinese Guomindang], In Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* Vol. 30, 32

[321] Chiang Kaishek, 'Jiandu Nanjing gao quanguo tongbao shu' [Letter to all compatriots on the founding of the capital at Nanjing], In Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* Vol. 30, 40-41

As with previous Guomindang discourse, this identification with the interests of the nation did not necessarily involve a stress on positive traditions representing its historical continuity. As Chen Yunxi's work has shown, the more recent figure of Sun Yat-sen himself served as the party's figurehead and as the apotheosis of the Chinese nation.[322] As we saw in the previous chapter, celebrating Sun did not necessarily mean identifying him with a native intellectual heritage as Dai Jitao had done. A July 1928 speech by Chiang in Beijing, for example, instead stressed that the Three Principles' importance to China lay in their suitability to China's 'national conditions' (*guoqing*). This vague term stressed China's uniqueness, but could refer to particular geographical features, social and economic structures, historical developments and geopolitical position rather than the cultural legacy implied by terms like 'national essence' (*guocui*).[323] Chiang thereby dismissed Communism as 'not suited to China'.[324]

As well as identifying the party with the nation, Chiang also needed to associate it with the social transformation represented by the term 'revolution'. Communist and other opponents claimed to represent revolution while denouncing Chiang and his followers for betraying it. Thus Chiang wrote in his address to the party that, of the Communists' crimes, 'the most painful is that while our soldiers fight hand-to-hand with the enemy… they slander them as "not revolutionary" or even "counter-revolutionary"'.[325]

'Revolution' implied radical cultural change. In his July 1928 speech in Beijing Chiang criticised existing habits and mentalities for holding back national progress. Prefiguring his 1934 launch of the New Life Movement, a national campaign which aimed at national revival through self-disciplined conduct in the minutiae of daily life, Chiang comprehensively criticised the people of China for failing to live up to foreign standards of punctuality, discipline, and order. He even went as far as to use the resulting national weakness to explain China's acceptance of the Unequal Treaties. Chiang's pessimistic conclusion was that China's people 'must truly be unequal to foreigners in some

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322 Chen Yunxi, *Chongbai yu Jiyii*, passim

323 See Gerald Barmé, "To screw foreigners is patriotic: China's avant-garde nationalists", *The China Journal* 34 (1995), 212. Xiuwu Liu critiques translators' conflation of *guoqing* with both 'national identify' and 'national essence': Liu, *Western Perspectives on Chinese Higher Education: A Model for Cross-cultural Inquiry* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996), 80-81

324 Chiang Kaishek, 'Zhongguo jianshe zhi tujing' [The road to reconstructing China] In Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* Vol. 10, 322

325 Chiang Kaishek, 'Gao Zhongguo Guomindang tongzhi shu', 29

respects'.[326]

At the same time, Chiang's addresses were not devoid of traditionalist appeals. Chiang's address marking the foundation of the new capital on the 18th of April 1927 briefly suggested that the notion of native moral values served to differentiate him with his opponents:

> Though the Communist Party renounces what it calls the moral character of 'slave morality'. I… possessing this ethical character, await the judgement of future generations.[327]

This short mention left unclear precisely what values Chiang affirmed as a positive 'moral character'. The term 'slave morality', however, recalls Chen Duxiu, who in 1915 had used this Nietzschean term to describe the orthodox values of 'loyalty, filial piety, integrity, and righteousness' (*zhong*, *xiao*, *jie*, *yi*).[328] Consequently readers could readily interpret Chiang's words as a positive claim for pre-revolutionary values. Attacks on these values were of course by no means limited to Communists; Chiang's remark could thus be read as positioning him against radicalism in general.

Reaching towards Orthodoxy: Culture and Morality take Centre Stage

The Nanjing state did not establish traditionalism as an official cultural stance until 1928. Statements first promoted the importance of the nation's historical culture and the narrative of decline and recovery, before specifically identifying 'inherent morality' as the key cultural element. With the new orthodox view evoking Sun Yatsen's generalised terms rather than identifying specific values, this traditionalism was a broad one which could be interpreted as affirming much of the imperial past.

This development reflected the political situation in 1928, as Chiang's supporters were finally able to secure their position in power–within the Guomindang, and increasingly within the wider territory of China as Chiang's Northern Expedition pushed towards Beijing. The formal unification of China under Guomindang control was not

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[326] Chiang Kaishek, 'Zhongguo jianshe zhi tujing', 324
[327] Chiang Kaishek, 'Jiandu Nanjing gao quanguo tongbao shu', 43
[328] Chen Duxiu, 'Jinggao qingnian', unpaginated. This specific four-character formula appeared in Song Dynasty writer Hong Mai's collection of tales *Record of the Listener*: Hong Mai, *Yijian zhi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 485

accomplished until December 29 1928, and the degree of control established varied hugely across the various regions of the country. Nonetheless, as Rebecca Nedostup notes, the fourth plenum of the Second Executive Committee of the Guomindang at the start of February 1928 marked the Guomindang's 'transition from revolutionary and mobilizing force to governing party'.[329] With Chiang's chief competitor Wang Jingwei temporarily neutralized by the failed Communist uprising in Guangzhou December 1927, which took place under the watch of Wang's allies. Chiang's supporters were able to dominate the plenum and provide him pre-eminent security and legitimacy as the head of the governing party.

The fourth plenum thus outlined the shape of the Guomindang and the national state it was in the process of constructing. The declaration at the opening of the plenum set the traditionalist narrative of past national glory, subsequent decline, and projected recovery front and centre, beginning with the words

> Of all the nations of the world, the Chinese nation has the oldest culture and has made the greatest contribution… [o]ver the course of the last hundred years, due to falling behind culturally and economically, it suffered oppression from the eastern depredations of European imperialism, becoming weaker by the day; at the same time, the revolutionary movement for independence and self-strengthening arose in response to imperialist invasion. For this reason this last century has seen the apparent decline of China's national strength, but at the same time as this decline, efforts to revitalise this nation with its five thousand years of culture have ceaselessly advanced. The national revolution led by Sun Yat-sen… is the movement to save the country that is leading the Chinese nation towards independence, its culture towards revitalisation, and the people's livelihood toward development, engaging in the great effort of the revolutionary building of the nation.[330]

'Culture' thus occupied a central position in the party's programme. The term was a multivalent one. The notion of China 'falling behind' in cultural terms suggested a universal process of historical development, in which the revitalising process might

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[329] Rebecca Nedostup, 'Civic Faith and Hybrid Ritual in Nationalist China' in Dennis Washburn and A. Kevin Reinhart, eds., *Converting Cultures: Religion, Ideology, and Transformations of Modernity,* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 36. The party-state, of course, continued to claim to be both, still legitimating its government through the rhetoric of revolution.

[330] 'Zhongguo Guomindang dierjie zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui disici quanti huiyi xuanyan' [Declaration of the fourth plenum of the second Central Executive Committee of the Chinese Guomindang], in Luo Jialun, ed., *Geming wenxian* [Documents of the Revolution] Vol. 69 (Taibei: Guomindang dangshihui, 1976), 184

involve coming closer to more modern international standards of behaviour and thought. Yet 'culture' also appeared to refer to what was distinctively–and valuably–Chinese, in direct comparison with presumably foreign-derived scientific knowledge:

> In creating the Three Principles of the People Sun Yat-sen brought together the cultural spirit of the Chinese nation's history and the experience of present-day world science, forming the highest principles for guiding revolution.[331]

As in the interpretation of Sun Jingya in Chapter Three, Sun, as the most important symbol of the revolution, thus appeared to unite two valid sources of revolutionary knowledge: a native cultural inheritance and an understanding of the latest historical trends. Though this announcement's 'cultural spirit' might readily suggest to readers Sun's appeal to 'inherent morality', however, it did not make this connection explicit.

It was two months later, through the auspices of the new national government's Ministry of the Interior, that Sun Yatsen's concept of 'inherent morality' was explicitly and formally established as central to this national culture. This change came about through an April 1928 proposal by Xue Dubi, the Minister of the Interior, and this in itself shows that Nanjing's adoption of 'inherent morality' was not purely dictated by Chiang Kaishek: it was rather a confluence of broader moral concerns, positioned against the Communists and adopting the specific vocabulary of Sun Yatsen.

Xue's high rank in the Nanjing government was a sign of the Guomindang's transition from aspiring revolutionary army and party to a broader national government. Rather than being a long-standing Guomindang member, Xue had served in administrative roles in Northern China as a follower of military leader Feng Yuxiang, including periods as the Beiyang government's Vice-Minister of the Interior and as mayor of Beijing. His high position in the Nanjing government, which followed Feng Yuxiang's decision to join Chiang's National Revolutionary Army as it marched north from Guangdong, was therefore an example of the rapid expansion of the army, party, and state as Chiang enlisted new allies.

Although Xue's background was different from that of long-standing Guomindang

[331] 'Zhongguo Guomindang dierjie zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui disici quanti huiyi xuanyan', 184

members, however, he shared the moral language of Chiang and others. As Jan Kiely shows, he had made a name for himself by publishing moral exhortations quoting from the classics, morality books, Zeng Guofan and others as well as foreign sources.[332] We can therefore see Xue's move to establish moral instruction at the heart of Nanjing's discourse as a meeting of several discursive strands: appeals to moral decline and revival, which were broadly shared inside and outside the Guomindang, the specific vocabulary of Sun Yatsen, and the position of the Communists as 'foreign' antagonists.

Xue's April 1928 proposal to the National Government began as follows:

> Every nation in the world depends for its perpetual existence on its own special spirit, and the expression of this spirit is culture. Our China has existed as a country for thousands of years, and was the earliest nation in the world to become civilised. Over recent centuries it has suffered internally from its sovereigns' dictatorship, and externally from the senseless invasion of the Great Powers. As a result the country could not compete, and many of the ordinary people lost their self-confidence; worshipping of foreigners soared daily, and they discarded our country's culture like a pair of battered shoes.[333]

'Culture' here lost any ambiguity, referring to a distinctive, apparently trans-historical and definitive attribute of the nation in contrast to foreign elements; as in Sun's earlier writings, it also served as a focus for 'self-confidence'. Xue's version identified the attack on 'inherent culture' as a weapon of the Communists, who sought to 'overthrow and completely uproot' 'ethics and morality'; the result was a loss of proper social functioning and proper human behaviour, with 'people's appetites running rampant and the laws of nature extinguished'.[334]

Against the Communist attack on morality, Xue's proposal positioned the Nanjing party-state as its defender. This was to be achieved through the state adopting the role of moral instructor, issuing orders to promote Sun Yatsen's 'inherent morality' and 'inherent knowledge and ability' in order to 'make the citizens aware, and set right their direction'. The education system would incorporate 'the morals the ordinary people should have'

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[332] Jan Kiely, *The Compelling Ideal: Thought Reform and the Prison in China, 1901–1956* (Yale University Press, 2014), 63–64

[333] 'Xingzheng yuan zhuan neizhengbu guanyu fayang Zhongguo wenhua zhongxin yi dian guo ji cheng yu guomin zhengfu pi' [Ministry of the Interior proposal to promote the heart of Chinese culture to establish the country's basis, passed to the national government for approval by the Executive Yuan], *Minguo ziliao* 5.1, 11-12.

[334] 'Xingzheng yuan zhuan neizhengbu guanyu fayang Zhongguo wenhua zhongxin', 12

into textbooks for classes on 'general knowledge for citizens'. The means to effect the 'cultural revitalisation' the Central Executive Committee had announced as the party's goal in February 1928 therefore appeared to lie in the recovery of 'inherent morality' and, Xue's proposal added, in the 'inherent knowledge and ability' that lay in the *Great Learning* chain from 'the investigation of things' to 'bringing peace to the world'; 'in this [Sun Yatsen] has truly selected the heart of our nation's culture, and revealed it to the party and our country as the only true path'.[335]

This moral instruction further accorded with Nanjing's publicly stated role as a 'tutelary' institution. Reflecting his own concerns as well as those of Sun Yatsen and Chiang Kaishek, Xue Dubi was therefore making moral instruction a key part of this process.

This combination of tutelary government, moral revival, revolution and anti-Communism was quickly promoted by the National Government. Its order drew largely on Xue's proposal for its wording, identifying Sun's 'inherent morality' and 'inherent knowledge' with the government's tutelary mission:

> ...now the period of tutelary government is just beginning, it is especially important that we follow [Sun's] bequeathed teachings, and establish them as standards. All citizens of this country should hold to this decree; those who hold positions of public service ought in particular to act as examples...[336]

Aside from this announcement, publicised through media like the *Shenbao* newspaper, the government further tasked the University Council with editing the textbooks Xue Dubi had called for. The new National Government thus identified the elements already selected by Sun at the centre of national culture and as a key element in the project of the tutelary state. It promoted them, however, without explication or discussion of what they meant or how exactly they might function in a post-imperial China.

With this official government sanction, appeals to 'inherent morality' as a defining feature of the Nanjing party-state started to appear throughout Guomindang media. From a topic of open discussion, traditionalism as mediated through Sun's words now became the party line, although as we will see this did not make it uncontroversial. In the

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[335] 'Xingzheng yuan zhuan neizhengbu guanyu fayang Zhongguo wenhua zhongxin', 12

[336] 'Guofu tichang jiuyou meide' [The national government promotes the old virtues], *Shenbao* 20 April 1928, 6

process, and following the example of Sun, terms strongly associated with the late imperial orthodoxy and positive references to imperial history became a marked feature of official discourse.

Chiang's addresses on the national days of 1928 and 1929, published in the official media, demonstrate the growing significance of this language. The address on the tenth of October 1928 called for 'uniting the whole country's revolutionary thought to get rid of the heresy of class struggle'. Revolutionary thought as defined here included 'inherent morality', which Chiang did not define in detail but presented as a positive legacy to be 'preserved' amongst the Chinese people. Its purpose, following Chiang's earlier emphases on selfless commitment to the nation, lay in opposing 'seeking temporary safety' and self-interest.[337] Chiang's address a year later showed a notably greater emphasis on this morality and replaced the notion of 'preservation' of existing features with the established trope of decline and recovery:

> Compatriots! I tell you that in today's China foreign aggression should not trouble us and internal discord should not be hard to pacify. It is only that our nation's inherent moral character has been almost completely lost; everybody is dedicated to trickery and opportunism… they know only of themselves and not of the country, know only to contend for power and not to fulfil their responsibilities. Trust and righteousness have fallen, the Way of integrity and a sense of shame is lost. If this continues… the disaster of extinction will happen without waiting for imperialist invasion and Communist upheaval.
>
> Compatriots! What was the vital Way [Sun Yatsen] taught us to make revolution and establish the country? It was benevolence, wisdom, and bravery, brought together with the words 'all under Heaven belongs to all'. We must be public-minded before we can be benevolent, wise, and brave, before we treat seeking temporary safety as benevolence, opportunism as wisdom, and [in-] fighting as bravery.[338]

Here the failure to preserve 'inherent morality' stood as the central reason for China's problems, while serving as a means to differentiate and attack the Communists and Chiang's opponents within his own party: those who advocated 'class struggle' and 'agitating the masses' stood accused of 'destroying our nation's native moral character'.

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[337] Chiang Kaishek, 'Zhonghua minguo shiqi nian guoqing jinian gao quanguo tongbao shu' [Letter to all compatriots for national day 1928], In Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* Vol. 30, 106

[338] Chiang Kaishek, 'Zhonghua minguo shiba nian guoqing jinian gao quanguo tongbao shu' [Letter to all compatriots for national day 1929], In Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* Vol. 30, 127-128. Chiang's reference to 'benevolence, wisdom and bravery' here echoes Sun's earlier *Spiritual Education of Soldiers*, which Dai Jitao had highlighted. See previous chapter.

In a similar vein, an article by Hu Hanmin in the *Jinpu sanri kan* (a newspaper produced for the Tianjin-Nanjing railway) drew on Sun's celebration of what was 'inherent' to China to define China against foreign imperialism. Hu's source was not the Three Principles lectures but Sun's speech on Pan-Asianism given in Kobe in November 1924, which evoked the 'Kingly Way' (*wangdao*):

> [Sun] said: 'Our Chinese culture was always the highest culture. All the good events in China were [the result of] concentrating on the Kingly Way, and not the Hegemonic Way [*badao*]. What I call 'the Kingly Way' is such things as universal love [*bo'ai*], benevolence and justice [*renyi*], and peace, causing people to willingly submit; what I call 'the Hegemonic Way' focuses on material gain, power, and military force, causing people to submit by force.'[339]

Hu's description thus broadly affirmed China's historical culture, and more specifically elements of orthodox learning, through a two-stage citation. By quoting Sun, Hu evoked the tradition of the 'Kingly Way', which as mentioned in Chapter Two can be traced to Mencius. This cultural claim, moreover, defined the Chinese nation against the enemies that threatened it, since they did not share the moral force that motivated it: 'Europeans', he claimed, 'have never understood the morality of benevolence and righteousness'.[340] As in Sun's own lectures, then, China was left with a historical responsibility: by promoting its own 'inherent spirit', it could demonstrate the Kingly Way to the world and thus ultimately establish the Great Unity.[341]

A 1929 text by Ye Chucang, then the Nanjing government's Propaganda Minister, shows how traditionalism could imply comprehensive claims for the value of the Chinese past. Ye, as noted in Chapter Two, had enthusiastically supported the 'New Culture Movement' as *Republican Daily* editor in Shanghai from 1919 and had been particularly critical of the person of Confucius as well as the uses to which his thought had been put. In 1929, however, Ye followed Chiang's national day address in the official Central Weekly (*Zhongyang zhoubao*) journal with an article of his own that offered a startlingly comprehensive approval of the moral legacy of the past:

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[339] Hu Hanmin, 'Wangdao jingshen yu feichu bu pingdeng tiaoyue' [The spirit of the Kingly Way and annuling the unequal treaties], *Jinpu sanri kan* 20 (1929), 7

[340] Hu Hanmin, 'Wangdao jingshen yu feichu bu pingdeng tiaoyue', 7

[341] Hu Hanmin, 'Wangdao jingshen yu feichu bu pingdeng tiaoyue', 8-9

> China was originally a golden world made of virtue. Since the Qing emperors, Emperor Yuan [Shikai], Noble General Feng [Yuan's successor as President Feng Guozhang], Prime Minister Xu [Feng's successor Shichang], and military and official bureaucrats passed their positions down through the generations, each digging a great hole, political morality is nowhere to be found. Eminent foreigners, men skilled in foreign affairs, compradors, runners, houseboys, have also dug a great hole, and the national spirit is nowhere to be found...[342]

Where Dai Jitao had carefully identified a pre-imperial 'golden age' as the source of China's valuable traditions, Ye's description advanced this 'golden age' to a much later date; decline was precipitated not by the advent of the imperial system but simply by the Qing invasion and by the arrival of foreign imperialism.

Balancing Strategies: Reconciling Revolution with Tradition

Although it thus appeared to allow for broad approval of the imperial past, Nanjing traditionalist discourse remained explicitly revolutionary. It was accompanied by celebrations of the new and by the construction of undesirable cultural elements as 'superstitious' or 'feudal', legacies of the past which stood in the way of building a modern nation. With the addition of criticism, even Ye Chucang's apparently comprehensive appeal to the culture of the past could appear selective in its approach to the problem of culture.

Members of the Guomindang, like their Communist rivals, continued to claim the legacy of the retrospectively constructed 'New Culture Movement'.[343] This is clear from the official *Central Daily* (*Zhongyang ribao*) newspaper's 1929 commemoration of the May Fourth movement's tenth anniversary. Head of the central government Documents Office Yang Xiji's speech focused on the anti-imperialist character of the movement, presenting the Three Principles of the People as the historically correct answer to its demands and highlighting the new traditionalist orthodoxy by calling on his listeners and readers to obey Sun's 'bequeathed teachings and last testament… and develop and carry forward the inherent culture and morality of our ancestors to recover our national

[342] Ye Chucang,'You dang de lixing wanhui fengqi' [Retrieving the situation through the party's vigorous action], *Zhongyang zhoubao* 71 (1929), 13-14, 14. Ye's article, like Chiang's, was printed in a range of publications, including the Central Party Affairs Monthly (*Zhongyang dangwu yuekan*) and *Jiangsu*.

[343] See Wagner, 'The Canonization of May Fourth'

position'.[344] This was followed, however, by a speech by party member, prominent historian, and head of Beijing's National Tsing Hua University Luo Jialun, who had been involved in publishing the *New Tide* journal and had been a student leader in the events of 1919. The published text of Luo's speech included a brief history of the 'New Culture Movement' which appeared to characterise Chinese modernity largely by the importing of foreign values, even when it came to the 'self-confidence' that for Sun Yatsen had been lost over the course of China's historical decline:

> The Chinese people had always been highly conceited... it was only after coming into contact with western culture that they realised its value lay not only in strong armour and sharp weapons: there was also national self-confidence and the ability to unite. Because of this the outlook of the youth of the time changed; the New Culture Movement was a product of this change, and in a short time [this movement] produced the May Fourth Movement.[345]

Texts associated with leading government figures likewise celebrated the new as well as the 'inherent'. In Chiang's October 1928 speech, the call to preserve inherent morality was one of a number of equally weighted 'indispensable ways to build a new China'. Others included 'increas[ing] necessary scientific general knowledge to root out foolish and obstructive superstitions' and, still more obviously indebted to the radical discourse associated with the 'New Culture', 'bring[ing] in the newest global culture to seek progress for our country's society'.[346] Two months later Chiang stressed the importance of the modern still more strongly in a speech at the Nanjing party headquarters that appeared to contradict his 1925 praise for the suppressors of the Taiping Rebellion (discussed above):

> [Sun Yatsen] taught us to be people of the twentieth century... our speech should not be nineteenth century speech, and still less that of the eighteenth century… we cannot talk now of nineteenth century things, and still less can we do nineteenth century things. The country, society, politics, economy, culture, and laws that we recognise should all be modern; as we are modern people, we can only accept modern culture, laws, economics, and politics to strengthen ourselves.[347]

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[344] 'Beizhuang ji'ang de Wusi Yundong shi zhou jinian hui' [Sombre and stirring commemorative assembly on the tenth anniversary of May Fourth], *Zhongyang ribao* 5 May 1929, 2.3

[345] 'Beizhuang ji'ang de Wusi Yundong shi zhou jinian hui', *Zhongyang ribao*, 2.3

[346] Chiang Kaishek, 'Zhonghua minguo shiqi nian guoqing jinian gao quanguo tongbao shu' [Letter to all compatriots for national day 1928], In Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* Vol. 30, 106

[347] Chiang Kaishek, 'Beifa chenggong hou zui jinyao de gongzuo' [The most essential tasks after the success of the Northern Expedition], In Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* Vol. 10, 336-337

Continuing to celebrate and promote the modern involved attacking those features of the native past which held back its realisation. Attacks on 'superstition', like that made in Chiang's December 1928 speech, were a frequent feature of party discourse.[348] By valuing the 'inherent' while attacking 'superstition', state actors presented a consciously selective approach to cultural elements presumably inherited from the pre-revolutionary past. Likewise, in a speech at the Nanjing Central Political Academy in September 1929 Chiang quoted Sun's statement that 'to make revolution we must first change minds' in order to suggest that a thoroughgoing removal of the vestiges of the past was a necessary dimension of party members' education: 'if we cannot remove all old habits and beliefs left over from the old society, then we can never create the talent that we need, and politics will never see progress'.[349] It was only a month later that Chiang's National Day address bemoaned the loss of 'inherent moral character'. As with previous evocations of the decline-and-revival narrative, the immediate past appeared as a source of pernicious 'habits and beliefs', while what was positive needed to be 'recovered' from a long-vanished past.

In making a self-consciously revolutionary appeal to 'morality', government actors needed to separate the term from its pre-existing associations with the Qing court, Yuan Shikai, and conservative intellectuals and groups which the Guomindang had previously identified as opponents of revolution. While Ye's editorial held up a past 'golden age' as a moral example, it did so as part of a call to party members to dedicate themselves to the revolution, extolling the example of those martyred in its name. Ye followed his attack on the Qing, Yuan Shikai, and the Beiyang government with a further list of morally undermining forces which also included the 'monarchist faction', Liang Qichao's moderate Research Clique, and the Tongshanshe, a 'morality society' which at the time was identified by the Guomindang and intellectuals alike as a 'reactionary', anti-modern and even restorationist group.[350] While the past appeared as a source of positive values, then, the correct interpretation and revival of these values depended on the revolutionary Nanjing state.

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[348] See Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, passim

[349] Chiang Kaishek, 'Peizhi xin zhengzhi rencai yu jianshe xin Zhongguo' [Cultivating new political talent and building a new China], In Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* Vol. 10, 437

[350] Chan, *Religious Trends in Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), 167-68

Challenges to Orthodoxy: the Spectre of Restoring Antiquity

Despite these balancing strategies, the government's traditionalist discourse was a target for attack. For important critics of the regime, its continued claim to represent revolutionary novelty was entirely incompatible with 'recovery' from the past. Challengers made their own claim to represent China's future progress, and did so by presenting culture as a zero-sum game in which to advocate for 'recovery' (*huifu*) or to celebrate the old automatically meant to denigrate the new: 'recovering' from the past meant 'restoring antiquity' (*fugu*). Levelling this accusation at the Nanjing regime, critics denied that Guomindang under Chiang could separate the useful, positive past from obstructive and harmful 'superstition', 'reaction', and imperial restoration.

These attacks were powerful because readers could still interpret Nanjing's traditionalist discourse as a broad affirmation of the imperial past. Chiang's April 1927 reference to Communist attacks on 'slave morality', for example, in its very non-specificity potentially associated Chiang with whatever the Communists attacked. Similarly, although Ye Chucang listed contemporary 'conservative' enemies and stressed revolution, his reference to the 'golden world' could be read as applying to the entire span of pre-Qing imperial history. Where texts referred to more specific terms, these were the terms highlighted by Sun Yatsen. As we have seen, however, the terms Sun celebrated were themselves drawn from the elementary texts of the late imperial orthodoxy.

The notion of 'recovery' was itself a point of controversy, and not only for writers declaring themselves absolutely opposed to Nanjing. The National Government's promotion of 'inherent morality' met with an immediate critical response from the Shanghai *Xin pinglun* (New Critic) journal, which published criticisms of Nanjing but also, according to its founding statement, sought to 'make everything artistic' instead of taking a fixed political stance, and which praised Chiang Kaishek for the 'revolutionary' step of divorcing his previous wives on his marriage to Song Meiling.[351] The anonymous writer accepted the nationalist premise that a nation must have its 'particular expression', but went on to say the following:

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[351] Benshe tongren (A member of our society), 'Women de lizu dian zai nali? Women de mubiao shi shenme?' [What is our position? What is our aim?], *Xin pinglun* no. 1 (December 1927), 1-3; Zhang Naiqi, 'Jiang Jieshi de hunyin geming' [Chiang Kaishek's marriage revolution], *Xin pinglun* no. 1 (December 1927), 6-7

> ...the word 'recover' arouses suspicion. In the first place these ethics have not disappeared at all; it is just that they are not too popular at the moment. In the second, 'recover' suggests restoring-antiquity thinking.[352]

Revolution, in this modernist account, was a unilinear process in which, while not everything need be transformed, there was no room for a revival of the past: 'in the midst of this revolutionary tide, we can only preserve what is 'inherent', and cannot speak of recovering [it]'.[353] Though the government might claim both revolutionary credentials and cultural recovery, this brief critique pointed to the danger posed by genuinely non-progressive elements in society: 'as soon as [the word] "recovery" is raised, even if the speaker is not expressing restoring-antiquity thought, listeners can't help but misunderstand. The result is that corrupted elements will seize the opportunity to act, and youth with ideals will hesitate and become lost'.

The writer therefore agreed with Chiang Kaishek and Ye Chucang's statements that 'old habits and beliefs left over from the old society' and 'reactionary' groups remained to threaten the revolution. It was precisely the existence of these threats, however, that made talk of 'recovery' dangerous. This attack thus followed radical constructions of cultural politics since the 'New Culture' era, presenting a divide between progress and reaction too deep and important to allow for would-be-progressives like the Guomindang to call for 'recovery'; the result could only be 'restoration of antiquity'.

This sense of irreconcilable divide also informed critiques from within the nominally unified government, which in 1928 remained in practice fiercely divided; amidst the power struggles, the rhetoric of recovery could serve as a target as well as a weapon. In the Jiangxi provincial government's *Cejin* journal, a September 1928 article entitled 'Restoration of antiquity thought and revolutionary construction' rejected the model of 'recovery' altogether by insisting on a complete separation between modernist revolutionary discourse and any kind of traditionalism:

> ...[r]evolution is a means of transforming a declining society into a progressive one. At this time the common thought is to smash the former so-called 'morality' and 'ethics', exposing all old or ancient

[352] 'Guofu tichang jiuyou meide', 7
[353] 'Guofu tichang jiuyou meide', 7

> hypocrisy, inequality, filth, and cruelty to build new, free and equitable beliefs. However, when the revolutionary tide wanes, and the evil forces of the old society have not yet been rooted out and the new has not yet been constructed, most people's minds, though initially roused by inequality to oppose and overthrow all the old evils, begin to tire of disorder and seek temporary refuge; at this time common thinking will turn back toward restoring antiquity.[354]

As the article put it, this general principle was particularly strong in China thanks to the 'conservative and peaceful' character of its people; this explained the emergence in the period of 'construction' of 'restoring antiquity'. The task of the revolutionary party presented here was to resist these tendencies: following the military victory over the 'feudal forces' of the militarists, the next stage was, as Sun Yatsen had mapped it out, a period of 'political tutelage' to break those 'feudal institutions' that were still present in wider society. This language was that of the Nanjing government. The specific vision of tutelage presented here, though, was in sharp contrast to the latter's declared aims:

> Revolutionary construction certainly does not mean following old methods, conservatism, 'restoring the inherent', or being afraid of mentioning destruction; it is revolutionary, pulling out the old and replacing it with the new.

Without mentioning its origins in Sun Yatsen's speeches, then, the article made 'restoring the inherent' itself a counter-revolutionary approach, as part of a generalised development in which 'all "restoring antiquity" thought is spreading and thriving, whether in government or among the average people'. Cultural 'restoration of antiquity' and political repression accompanied each other and constituted the opposite of revolution:

> all revolutionary, socially progressive forces–groups, organisations, actions, and speech–are banned and destroyed, apparently for a most reasonable cause: preventing 'destruction'. Because of this, reverence for Confucius, Buddhification, national essence (in which the national martial arts are particularly active), and 'spiritual civilisation' of all kinds are slowly spreading through contemporary opinion. This, quite simply, proves the failure of the new forces and of the revolution. The government's restoration of antiquity proves the mutual fear and distrust between it and the people.[355]

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[354] Sheng Bai, 'Fugu sixiang yu geming de jianshe' [Return-to-antiquity thought and revolutionary construction], *Cejin* 2.50 (September 1928), 3

[355] Sheng Bai, 'Fugu sixiang yu geming de jianshe', 4

This uncompromising critique of tendencies under Chiang undercut the claim to combine revolution and recovery: Nanjing was failing to be truly revolutionary, and could be so only through iconoclasm.

Hu Shi's November 1929 attack on Ye Chucang, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, was therefore far from alone in putting forward a definition of revolution, and the modern nation it aimed to bring about, as incompatible with the 'recovery' of the past. His attack was, however, a particularly high profile and potentially threatening one. As a result, it elicited responses which demonstrate the challenges for the revolutionary traditionalist synthesis in the face of radical attack.

Hu had made his name as a proponent of literary reform and cultural radicalism in the 1910s, and had earlier in 1929 criticised the government's dictatorial policies and called for freedom of expression, a provisional constitution, and the defence of individual rights through articles in the *New Moon* (*Xinyue*) journal he and his associates had founded in Shanghai in 1928. His 'The New Culture Movement and the Nationalist Party' followed these earlier critical articles by focusing on the cultural question, taking as its theme Ye Chucang's evocation of the 'golden world made of virtue'.

Hu's article was an attack in the strongest possible terms: by terming the Nationalist government 'reactionary', Hu declared that its claim to represent the revolution was now false.[356] This was an explicitly political statement: Hu recalled his earlier articles by excoriating the Nanjing regime's repression of political freedoms. Yet political reaction had a cultural counterpart: Ye's remarks were for Hu one symptom of an abandonment of revolutionary progress characterised by continued use of the classical language and praise for 'traditional culture'. Hu's assessment thus shared a key feature of texts discussing traditionalism: cultural and political positions were intimately connected, with cultural 'reaction' a symptom of political 'reaction'. The importance of Hu's article, and its threat to the government, lay in this conflation of political and cultural manifestations of both 'reaction' and 'progress': advocacy of the 'New Culture' implied a progress manifested in liberalism, democratic politics and openness to the world, while Ye's celebration of 'old culture' was associated with political conservatism, authoritarianism and parochialism.

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[356] Hu Shi, 'Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang' [The New Culture Movement and the Guomindang], *Xinyue* 2.6–7 (10 September 1929), 5

Hu echoed the propaganda of both the Guomindang and the Communist Party by defining the 'reactionary' tendency he identified in the governing party against a progressive historical force, which formed the standard against which the party was judged and found wanting. This force was embodied in the 'New Culture Movement', which Hu retrospectively constructed as a unified movement of total cultural critique. As Hu put it its 'great contribution' lay in 'pointing out that the new civilisation of Europe is not only superior in terms of material civilisation… but that even their thought and learning, literature and art, customs and morality are all greatly superior'.[357] This realisation required action; Hu's writing here was rooted in the premise that the political disappointments of the early Republic had been caused by an attempt to establish modern, radically different political institutions on the still largely unchanged cultural foundations of the imperial system.[358] The solution was therefore total cultural transformation. In Hu's account the 'most important' manifestation of this was the introduction of vernacular language and literature, but it also required the overthrowing of Confucius, Mencius, and the classicist orthodoxy, and the building of a new culture taking 'science', 'democracy' and 'morality' as its core values.[359]

'Morality' therefore meant for Hu something very different from the party-state's 'inherent morality'. It was explicitly new, to replace the traditional virtues praised by Ye Chucang, which Hu Shi associated with 'the cannibalistic doctrine of rites [*lijiao*]' and 'memorial arches to chastity built of blood and tears', with a new 'public morality', which China had hitherto lacked and which guided the behaviour of modern citizens belonging to a national (and international) community.[360]

Given that Hu's article defined the 'New Culture Movement' as a totalistic rejection of the culture of the past, Ye Chucang's appeal to a lost 'golden world built of virtue' necessarily appeared in Hu's article as negating the movement. Moreover, Hu Shi noted that Ye's attitude was representative of the Guomindang and its government, and had been present in the party from the beginning. Recognising the vital role of Sun Yatsen's words in Nanjing political discourse, Hu quoted Sun's statements in praise of China's

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[357] Hu Shi, 'Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang', 9
[358] Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 223-24
[359] Hu Shi, 'Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang', 9
[360] Hu Shi, 'Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang', 2, 7

'inherent virtues' and past glories. By resisting the total acceptance of 'world civilisation', for Hu such ideas represented 'narrow nationalism'.[361] The Guomindang had briefly, during its engagement with the 'New Culture Movement', allied itself with global progress, but 'glorifying inherent culture and resisting foreign cultural forces' could only be anti-progressive.[362] For Hu, the more neutral 'tradition' and the clearly politically objectionable 'feudal' (a term commonly used in Guomindang discourse, for example in Chiang Kai-shek's 1925 speech cited earlier) were one and the same.

The Limits of Orthodoxy: Guomindang responses to criticism

Laying claim to the 'New Culture Movement' as a powerful symbol of enlightenment and modernisation, and putting forward a rival and equally exclusive image of progress against that of the party, attacks like Hu's placed constant pressure on the party-state to assert its own version of modernity. Responses in Guomindang newspapers and journals to Hu's high profile attack reveal the continued difficulty of reconciling notions of the recovery of culture and morality with progress.

Guomindang members certainly took Hu Shi's 1929 attacks seriously. Although Yang Xingfo, then secretary general of the Academia Sinica in Nanjing, declared in his response to 'The New Culture Movement and the Guomindang' that 'Mr Hu Shi hopes that the Guomindang will be angry when they read this essay, but having read it I can only sigh', other responses made this effort to downplay the article's significance less than convincing.[363] Hu's earlier critical articles had led to multiple calls for severe punishment from a number of party branches, including the Shanghai branch's statement that his were 'words to mislead and agitate the people's hearts' and 'theories that harm the party'. However, probably in part thanks to Hu's personal connections to prominent party members like Cai Yuanpei and Jiang Menglin, the result was merely a 'warning' from the Ministry of Education on the fourth of October 1929.[364] With suppression proving ineffective, enough articles were published refuting Hu's liberal arguments to edit

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[361] Hu Shi, 'Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang', 5
[362] Hu Shi, 'Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang', 6
[363] Quoted in Chen Guangyu, 'Du "Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang" hou da Hu Shi' [Reply to Hu Shi after Reading 'The New Culture Movement and the Nationalist Party' Part 1, *Juewu* 8 February 1930
[364] Mo Gaoyi, *Shusheng dashi: Hu Shi shimei yanjiu* [Ambassador of the Scholars: Research into Hu Shi's Diplomacy in America] (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2006), 47-48

them into a 178-page book.[365] Following the initial publication of Hu Shi's 'The New Culture Movement and the Guomindang', a short reply was given almost immediately with a speech by a party representative with the pen name Gu Lao, which was then republished for a much wider audience in *Awakening* (the supplement to the Shanghai *Republican Daily*) on the fourth of December 1929.[366] This was then followed up in the same journal in February 1930 with a lengthy refutation by party member Chen Guangyu, serialised over eight issues.

Chen's refutation is a particularly telling example of the difficulties for the now-governing party of integrating and defending traditionalism. Against Hu, Chen made his own claim that the Guomindang represented revolution and cultural novelty. At the same time, he argued for traditionalism, using the revolutionary traditionalist strategies of explicitly stressing open-minded balance between cultural extremes (in contrast to Hu's one-sided radicalism), and the utility of native culture. The latter, however, was emphasised in terms that cast doubt on the idea that Guomindang members truly believed their own claims. Moreover, Chen's response exposed differences of opinion within the government by effectively disavowing Ye Chucang's claims.

Chen mirrored Hu Shi by putting forward his own exclusive vision of 'advancement' (*jinhua*) centred on the nation, embodied by the Guomindang with Sun Yatsen as its visionary figurehead. Since Hu had criticised both, Chen judged him the true 'reactionary'. Echoing Sun Yatsen's writings, Chen described the restricted freedoms of 'political tutelage' as necessary: since in China the majority of people were 'unawakened', Hu Shi's proposals for personal freedom could only give rise to the 'reactionary' voices of the majority, obscuring the revolutionary message put forward by an enlightened minority who therefore needed to use 'the state power of the revolution to speed its advancement'.[367] Party-directed modernisation was urgent because of the threat of imperialism, which without national strength would make China's people 'forever the slaves of the white race'.[368] That Hu Shi had advocated world culture and disparaged nationalism without addressing this danger (which permeated the political discourse of

[365] Zhang Zhenzhi et al, eds., *Ping Hu Shi fan dangyi jinzhu* [Criticism of Hu Shi's Recent Works Against Party Doctrine] (Shanghai: Guanghua shuju, 1929)
[366] Gu Lao, 'Hu Boshi zuijin de hushuo' [The latest nonsense from Dr Hu Shi], *Juewu* 4 December 1929
[367] Chen Guangyu, 'Du "Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang" hou da Hu Shi' Part 4, *Juewu* 12 February 1930
[368] Chen Guangyu, 'Du "Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang" hou da Hu Shi' Part 2, *Juewu* 9 February 1930

the time) allowed him to be cast as a 'reactionary', with Hu's unqualified praise of the 'new civilisation' from the west and his overseas education raising the charge that he 'directly or indirectly abetted cultural invasion'.[369]

These accusations did not mean that Chen presented the 'New Culture Movement' as a whole as reactionary: instead, he made his own counter claim to it. Chen noted that Yang Xingfo's dismissive earlier response had failed to challenge Hu's claims about the Movement, instead merely asserting Guomindang connections to it. Chen's article on the other hand posed the question 'where does Mr Hu himself stand in the New Culture Movement?', questioning Hu's right to speak for it.[370] Where Hu Shi had judged the Guomindang to have been successful when it aligned itself with New Culture progressivism, Chen's article suggested the opposite: that the positive qualities of the New Culture Movement stemmed from its meeting the needs of the 'national movement'. While it still involved the introduction of 'new culture' and the doubting of 'tradition', this reading of the movement presented these as means to the overall goal of anti-imperialist nation-building. Thus in objecting to the slogan 'resist cultural invasion', it was Hu Shi who turned his back on the 'movement' and thus on 'advancement'. As Chen put it, the Guomindang accepted the necessity of new culture, describing Liang Qichao's 'public morality' as corresponding, item by item, to Sun Yatsen's proposals and claiming that the Guomindang 'not only holds the theory of new morality, but is itself a realiser of the new morality'.[371] The 'doubting of the past', too, was accepted as essential to progress.[372]

Chen Guangyu's vision of the national movement thereby incorporated both novelty and a critical attitude to the past, raising the question of how to defend traditionalist language like Ye Chucang's. The solution lay in revolutionary traditionalist balance. Chen stressed the total character of Hu Shi's attacks on 'the old culture', describing his statement that 'the basic significance of the New Culture Movement lies in admitting that China's old culture is unsuited to the modern environment, and promoting the complete acceptance of the new world civilisation' as his 'most honest confession'. As Chen put it, this totalism went beyond the laudable 'sceptical attitude' of the New Culture Movement:

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[369] Chen Guangyu, 'Du "Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang" hou da Hu Shi' Part 1
[370] Chen Guangyu, 'Du "Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang" hou da Hu Shi' Part 1
[371] Chen Guangyu, 'Du "Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang" hou da Hu Shi' Part 5, *Juewu* 14 February 1930
[372] Chen Guangyu, 'Du "Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang" hou da Hu Shi' Part 5

"'criticising... impeaching... opposing... and denying...'- these are entirely like the verdicts of a judge; how can they be called "doubting"?'[373] This, then, was a claim to a more balanced, open-minded judgement of the past, like Sun Yatsen's 1924 criticism of those 'intoxicated by the new culture'.[374] Hu's attack on the classical language was likewise portrayed as excessive: Chen agreed with him that the vernacular written language was a part of the modernising, progressive tide of history, but saw no need to ban the inevitably declining classical language, which appeared more as a minority personal style choice than a buttress for 'feudal forces' and an impediment to vernacular literacy. The classical language was also described as being of some use in the making of the modern vernacular, which in Chen's account was still on-going: its 'good elements' could still usefully be incorporated into modern language, and thus its government-enforced obsolescence appeared both unnecessary and premature.[375]

This balanced position allowed room for 'inherent morality' through the revolutionary traditionalist principles of selection and utility. Chen appealed to Sun's suggestion, quoted by Hu, that 'our inherent things, if they are good, of course should be preserved'.[376] If 'inherent virtues' met the goal of 'recovering the nation's position' through 'recovering the national spirit', they could be revived. Chen assumed that this revival was easier than importing useful foreign culture and creating hitherto non-existent 'new culture', although the latter was also necessary.[377] Thus the lost 'inherent virtues' championed by Sun, and celebrated in Ye's editorial, were useful to the nation. This refutation focused on a weak point of Hu's article, which had identified the culturally conservative impulses of 'narrow nationalism' as a source of popularity and thus revolutionary strength, especially in the face of foreign aggression, and yet while charging it with holding back progress, failed to explain how the universal resources of 'world civilisation' could have the same emotional appeal and thus command loyalties. Stripped of its negative conclusions, the emotional appeal of native culture was described as a powerful tool of nation building, able to 'inspire the patriotism of the nation'.[378] The people must love their country, and past glories would give them something to love.

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[373] Chen Guangyu, 'Du "Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang" hou da Hu Shi' Part 5
[374] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 243
[375] Chen Guangyu, 'Du "Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang" hou da Hu Shi' Part 4, *Juewu* 12 February 1930
[376] Sun Yatsen, 'Minzu zhuyi: diliu jiang', 243
[377] Chen Guangyu, 'Du "Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang" hou da Hu Shi' Part 2
[378] Chen Guangyu, 'Du "Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang" hou da Hu Shi' Part 2

Chen's article stressed utility to such an extent that it explicitly allowed for dishonest, inauthentic claims of commitment to China's culture. Hu had, by way of illustrating the reason-conquering emotional hold of nationalism, recounted a meeting with Indian students who, while impressed with his lecture critical of 'Eastern civilisation', lamented that 'if we Indian students criticise Eastern civilisation like this today, then tomorrow the British newspapers will say we have accepted British rule.'[379] Chen drew the logical parallel with China, giving advocacy of the country's 'old culture' an important role in safeguarding against imperialist claims:

> We believe that even if our civilisation is truly not as good as that of the west, we can still only understand and accept this in our hearts, and absorb [western culture] with absolute calm: it is not suitable to 'propose [this absorption] in public'. Sometimes we have no choice but to 'deliberately speak against our true thoughts', to all appearances 'speaking in defence of [our] old culture'. This is because if we do not do so, the invasion of the foreign powers will be given a strong rationale… they will be able to say 'China is a barbarous nation, unable to govern itself: even China's scholars have admitted as much. As God's chosen people, we white people must take up the burden of giving them happiness!'.[380]

This wording is highly suggestive, though couched safely in conditionals; national interest *would* justify intellectually dishonest praise of the pre-revolutionary culture. We cannot be certain that Chen intended to imply that all such praise was 'against our true thoughts', but the article was open to such an interpretation. In any case, to positively *attack* the native culture, as Hu had done, was clearly to be seen as irresponsible; praise for the past (whether honest or not) on the other hand could play a defensive ideological role. Thus the claim to national culture served another, implicit function: to attack rival voices like that of Hu Shi and the Communist Party. Opponents who claimed to be progressive by criticising both the party and 'old culture' could be denounced as in league with the imperialists ('red' or otherwise).

If traditionalist discourse served a purpose in the party-state as Guang envisaged it, however, it was not a necessary one: Chen in fact denied that it constituted an orthodoxy. Chen did not refer to Ye Chucang's image of pre-Qing China as a 'golden world built on

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[379] Hu Shi, 'Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang', 7
[380] Chen Guangyu, 'Du "Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang" hou da Hu Shi' Part 2

virtue' until the final part of his detailed response, even though it had ostensibly triggered Hu's article. Moreover, this reference was not to defend the statement but to present it as an individual opinion, which did not represent the attitude of the whole party. The article accused Hu, who had pointed out Ye's position as propaganda minister, of 'lacking democratic spirit': Hu had focused on Ye's title and not his role as merely one member of the Guomindang National Congress, the 'real place where thought is formed in the Guomindang'.[381] Wu Zhihui, another member of the National Congress whose iconoclastic remarks Hu had quoted, served to illustrate diversity within the party.[382] While clearly disingenuous in denying that a man in Ye's position, writing an official newspaper comment on National Day, had a particular claim to represent the party, the article's very reluctance to support Ye's claims in fact goes some way to proving its point: clearly not all party members would agree with Ye's extravagant praise, and it was not enforced as policy.

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, over the course of the Nanjing regime's establishment, the new government adopted the narrative of cultural and moral decline and recovery as a defining feature, to be included in its tutelary mission. Interpretations of this broad remit were diverse, with the generalised references made by Sun Yatsen serving as common ground for both Ye Chucang's 'golden world' and Chen Guangyu's much more cautious remarks. By canonising Sun Yatsen's words and following his example, however, representatives of the new party-state approved moral terminology associated with the imperial orthodoxy of the Qing Dynasty and constructed broadly positive interpretations of the culture of the past.

We should not assume based on the criticisms of Hu Shi and others that this language did not have popular appeal. Xue Dubi was far from alone in promoting popular morality using terms and quotations from classical and late imperial texts: as Jan Kiely shows, these books were in fact hugely popular in the 1920s, with 'an unprecedented expansion of the production and circulation of imperial-era morality books and related

[381] Chen Guangyu, 'Du "Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang" hou da Hu Shi' Part 8, *Juewu* 19 February 1930

[382] Chen Guangyu, 'Du "Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang" hou da Hu Shi' Part 8

new-style popular ethical guides'.[383] It would also be wrong to see such claims as necessarily irreconcilable with advocating the 'new'. The Shanghai-based journalist Zou Taofen, described by Rana Mitter as a populariser of 'the "New Culture"' in June 1927 wrote in *Life* (*Shenghuo*), the journal he edited, on the importance of 'recovering our nation spirit' and on 'recovering our inherent morality, knowledge and ability', using (unattributed) the exact terms Sun Yatsen had used.[384]

The problem came with the Guomindang's simultaneous, continued commitment to revolution, which (following from the party's 'New Culture' engagement) frequently included an explicit cultural radicalism. Here the very vagueness and differing range of Guomindang statements about 'inherent culture' proved a difficulty, as broad statements like Ye Chucang's could readily be read by critics like Hu Shi as endorsing the very 'feudal thinking' the party insisted it opposed.

This was no doubt a problem within a more constrained group, of intellectuals and revolutionaries. This group, however, was one which included Guomindang members (whether loyal to Chiang or otherwise), their Communist rivals, and other important figures. Consequently, party members in the late 1920s crafted a revolutionary traditionalist balance between bringing in new (and implicitly or explicitly foreign) learning and recovering the old (and Chinese). Grace Huang notes a January 1929 speech in which Chiang apparently overstepped the mark, at least in the opinion of the editor of the (subsequently published) daily record of his activities: the speech originally read 'Sun's knowledge is based on Western science and Chinese culture, whereas I think Chinese culture is more important than science'. The editor Yuan Huichang, working in the 1940s, crossed out the second part of the sentence, removing from the record not only the suggestion of difference between Sun and Chiang Kaishek, but also the notion that the latter was not perfectly positioned between two poles.[385] The controversy of traditionalism could not be easily erased.

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[383] Jan Kiely, 'Shanghai public moralist Nie Qijie and morality book publication projects in Republican China', *Twentieth Century China* 36.1 (January 2011), 4–22, 5

[384] Zou Taofen, 'Zenyang huifu minzu diwei' [How can we recover our national status?], *Shenghuo* 2.33 (19 June 1927). See Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution*, 56–57

[385] Grace Huang, 'Creating a Public Face for Posterity: The Making of Chiang Kai-shek's Shilüe Manuscripts', *Modern China* 36.6 (2010), 636

Conclusion to Part One

Hu Shi was right to trace language 'glorifying inherent culture' back across the history of the Guomindang. While most scholarship on the Guomindang's relationship to 'traditional' cultural elements has focused on the 1930s, the preceding chapters have shown that traditionalist discourse was a recurring feature of the Guomindang, and subsequently of the regime it established at Nanjing, throughout the 1920s.

The traditionalist claims that defined the Nanjing regime should not, however, be seen as a 'natural' or inevitable result of its commitment to nationalism. Hu Shi described them as such and contemporary views of the 'Janus face' of nationalism, looking both to a future in line with global modernity and a distinctive past, might suggest a similar view. However, I would argue that, while some form of engagement with ideas of the past was inevitable, this does not in itself account for the specific forms of traditionalism which emerged in the 1920s.

Rather, the forms that did emerge were both part of and, in their increasing prominence after 1927, outcomes of struggles within the party. The focus on 'inherent culture' and 'inherent morality' was a product of the canonisation of Sun Yatsen's words, but this canonisation was itself selective and achieved only through virulent debates against the Communists as part of the effort to define a regime opposed both to the CCP and those within the Guomindang who advocated class struggle.

Controversies thus consistently accompanied traditionalist claims. These controversies were fuelled by recurrent radical claims, which were also a typical feature of Guomindang political discourse and the wider textual sphere of cultural debates in which it operated. Notable in Guomindang discourse from the party's engagement with the 'New Culture Movement', these radical claims included not only selective attacks on cultural features of the past but also, in statements like Dai Jitao's 'there is no need to live on dead words', comprehensive criticisms of traditionalist practices themselves.[386]

Sun Yatsen's Three Principles lectures offered one solution by explicitly rejecting the radicalism of young people 'intoxicated with the New Culture', while making cultural

[386] Dai Jitao, 'Haishi yao jiefang'

features 'inherent' to China compatible with the 'global tide'. Hu Shi noted this apparent turn away from radicalism, stating that the party's engagement with the 'New Culture' was brief. Yet as we have seen in practice the legacy of radical criticism remained a strong element within Guomindang discourse, extending into the Nanjing regime. Dai Jitao and others followed Sun Yatsen in criticising the 'youth' who rejected their own culture, but (to a greater degree than Sun) also continued to make attacks on cultural conservatism as antithetical to the Guomindang's revolution.

It is this relationship to radical attacks which explains the distinct textual features that I have identified as 'revolutionary traditionalism': explicit selection and reinterpretation of cultural elements associated with the past, explicit arguments for the utility of these elements, and triangulation of Guomindang claims as a middle ground between excessively 'conservative' and 'radical' opposing views. These features marked Guomindang discourse from the 'New Culture Movement' engagement on. Thus, while a text like Dai Jitao's *Philosophical Foundations* has previously been seen as a straightforward 'return to tradition', I have instead argued that it made a complex reinvention of the legacy of the past.

It is unsurprising that scholars have hitherto focused more on the 1930s, given that traditionalist discourse was particularly evident as a feature of the Nanjing regime in this decade. The paradigmatic example, the 'New Life Movement' launched in 1934, shows a similar revolutionary traditionalist synthesis, as its very name implies: though for critics and commentators it was atavism in the service of political oppression (or vice versa), Chiang Kaishek's addresses setting out the Movement's purpose are marked by appeals to novelty. The premise of the movement matched both Chiang and Sun Yatsen's concern with the *Great Learning*: by showing self-discipline on the level of personal conduct, citizens would learn to care for others and thus to realise the revival of the Chinese nation.[387] Where Chiang called on past legacies, however, his words were characterised by revolutionary traditionalist themes: balance by appeal to historical progress, a conscious

[387] Dirlik: '[t]he two chief mottoes of the movement were "from the self to others" and "from the simple to the complex"; Arif Dirlik, 'The Ideological Foundations of the New Life Movement: A Study in Counterrevolution', *Journal of Asian Studies* 34.4 (August 1975), 955. Jennifer Oldstone-Moore, challenging the tendency to see the movement's rhetoric as 'a cynical overlay of traditional terms on what was really a totalitarian political movement', argues that it was 'firmly within the Confucian tradition using moral suasion, control of education and prescriptions for daily habits in its efforts to effect a top-down transformation of the people'; Jennifer Oldstone-Moore, 'The New Life Movement of Nationalist China: Confucianism, State Authority, and Moral Formation' (Doctoral thesis, University of Chicago, 2000), 3–4.

stress on the contemporary rational utility of cultural elements, and a distinction between the trans-historical 'spirit' of values and their application within the historically changing world of social relations. Chiang consciously reinterpreted 'propriety, righteousness, integrity, and a sense of shame' (*li, yi, lian, chi*), the core ethical values he sought to 'restore', stressing in much the same way as had Dai Jitao in 1919 that they were fundamental and unchanging norms whose mode of expression must nevertheless be utterly transformed according to the changing historical context.[388] As with Sun Yatsen's speeches, too, though Chiang's chosen values derived from the ancient *Guanzi* and as such were identified as part of the heritage of the nation, they were at the same time part of a universal modernity. As Chiang put it, moral practice of these virtues was a common sight on the streets of 'foreign countries'.[389] 'Recovery' of native features as Chiang presented it meant meeting the standards of the rest of the world rather than the retreat from it which Hu Shi called characteristic of the Guomindang's 'narrow nationalism'.

Yet, as the preceding chapters have also shown, these reinventions remained open to criticisms from radical perspectives as 'restoring antiquity'. The traditionalism put forward by Sun Yatsen, which was canonised as part of the official discourse of Nanjing, was a broad one that evoked the late imperial cultural legacy, in contrast to more specifically unorthodox figures and texts claimed by the National Essence scholars of the 1900s. Cultural features of the late empire were, for that very reason, widespread and powerful symbols of Chineseness; for the same reason, however, they were open to rival constructions which could cast doubt on and limit reinvention within Guomindang discourse. To explore this process of rival claims, the second section of this thesis looks at a centrally important example of the struggles over revolutionary traditionalism: the case of Confucius.

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[388] Chiang Kaishek, 'Xin shenghuo yundong gangyao' [Outline of the New Life Movement] in Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* 30, 154–70, 160

[389] Dirlik, 'The Ideological Foundations of the New Life Movement', 960. See 'Xin shenghuo yundong yaoyi' [Essentials of the New Life Movement]. In Luo Jialun ed., *Geming wenxian* [Documents on the revolution] Vol. 29 (Taipei: Zhongyang wenwu, 1963), 8.

Part Two: Negotiating Orthodoxy: the Nanjing Party-state, Revolutionary Traditionalism, and Confucius

Introduction

In 1934, the National Government announced that Confucius' birthday was to be celebrated annually as part of the state's calendar of ritual commemoration. As the anonymous critic with whose words this thesis began put it, this announcement showed the Guomindang's turn from 'the new' to 'the old': 'those who denigrated Confucius do their best to venerate him'.[390] Yet in many ways this was not a new development. Five years earlier Hu Shi had already noted another commemoration of Confucius as one sign of the party's turn away from the 'New Culture': 'the sacrifices to Confucius have ended, but just one telegram from two military men (Lu Diping and He Jian) is enough to make the National Government restore Confucius' commemoration day'.[391]

As these criticisms indicate, Confucius was a powerful and controversial symbol, and one through which the tensions of revolutionary traditionalism were vividly expressed. The second section of this thesis, split into four chapters, therefore shows how Confucius was integrated into Guomindang discourse and into the Nanjing state's policies on rituals and temple management.

The case of Confucius shows how symbols of the national culture were constructed and contested through a process of negotiation extending through and beyond Guomindang and government circles. As the analysis of Guomindang discourse in the preceding chapters has suggested, party members, journals and texts were not united: there could be no singular Guomindang vision of Confucius. But the constructions put forward by government ministries in texts and policies were also the result of interventions by those outside the party and the state. As Thomas Wilson suggests for the imperial era, 'state orthodoxies' cannot be unilaterally determined: 'even the most strong-willed sovereigns had to negotiate state ideology with court officials and to institutionalize it by means over which they had only partial control'.[392] Likewise, Guomindang members could not monopolise the meanings of the terms they employed.

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[390] Anonymous, 'You fei Kong dao zun Kong'
[391] Hu Shi, 'Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang', 5
[392] Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way*, 12

These members deployed traditionalist discourse because it had wider resonance in the society they were attempting to govern: the terms and references, which as we have seen were specifically evocative of orthodox learning in the late imperial era, were further spread widely in the early twentieth century through a boom in the publishing of popular morality texts.[393] It was for this reason that this language occurred to state actors (many of whom had learnt it in their own education) and was seen as having power in society.

Yet because of this resonance, far more groups than just the Guomindang used and responded to traditionalist language. With the figure of Confucius still holding great cultural importance after the fall of the Qing, various groups claimed their own connections to that figure and interacted with the state. Many of these groups identified themselves with the notion of a 'Confucian religion' (*Kongjiao*), and for this reason are labelled generally in the chapters that follow as 'Confucian' (a designation which, as noted in the introduction to this thesis, is less appropriate for earlier periods in Chinese history).[394] Confucian groups and individuals–including those within the newly expanded government as well outside it–petitioned the government to restore the rituals which, in the name of revolution, leading representatives of the government had ended. In the process, they appropriated the party-state's own traditionalist discourse. Where Guomindang members quoted the classics and praised Confucius, self-declared Confucians responded by quoting the Guomindang as a means to shape the images of Confucius presented by the Nanjing state.

These counter-appropriations moreover affected how official references to Confucius were received. They interpreted state policies and language in their own way and publicised these interpretations, linking the state to their own (often explicitly religious) agendas. These interventions could prove troubling for Nanjing's claim to represent a secular revolution. Confucian groups, and the rituals and temples they promoted and defended, were among the most common targets for culturally radical discourse, closely associated with the imperial regime (and with the Beiyang government that succeeded it). Representatives of the Nanjing state therefore needed to explain the role of traditionalist

[393] Kiely, 'Shanghai public moralist Nie Qijie and morality book publication projects in Republican China', 5

[394] I also use 'Confucian' to describe the rites directed personally towards Confucius and the temples which bore his name (i.e. *Kongmiao*)

language, divorcing it from 'reactionary' associations, and control powerful symbols like Confucius to serve the party-state's agenda: the versions of Confucius put forward in discourse, rituals and in the physical space of temples were deliberately distanced from these other claims. As criticisms of the party-state suggest, however, this distancing was not easy. Here we see the challenges of the revolutionary traditionalist synthesis of restoration and novelty: with the existence of alternative claims, the Nanjing state could not unilaterally determine the meaning of China's national culture.

5. Negotiating Orthodoxy I: Confucius and Revolutionary Discourse

This chapter introduces the discussion of Confucius by showing the existence of rival versions of Confucius in the 1920s, prior to the establishment of the Nanjing party-state. The revolutionary traditionalist discourse associated with Sun Yatsen incorporated Confucius as an important figure in shaping China's pre-imperial 'golden age' culture, and even as an inspiration for the party's own doctrines. Yet it did so in competition with other newly developing and circulating interpretations of Confucius. 'Confucian' groups, defined as such by their commitment to carrying out sacrificial rites with a long history in the imperial era, put forward representations of Confucius as an object of ritual worship, and the leaders in Beijing associated themselves with these claims and rituals. Consequently, Confucius and the newly emerging 'Confucianism' were particular targets against which the radicalism associated with the 'New Culture' was constructed. The Guomindang members, likewise opposed to Beijing and, as we have seen, associating themselves with ideas of a 'New Culture', shared this rejection of Confucian ritual and put it into practice during the Northern Expedition.

The case of Confucius thus powerfully illustrates the diversity of cultural views within Guomindang discourse and the selective approach characteristic of revolutionary traditionalism, as appeals to Confucius as 'founder of revolution' sat alongside denunciations of the rites and attacks on Confucian temples.

Confucius as Revolutionary

As we have seen, published texts by Sun Yatsen explicitly cited Confucius among other figures of the distant past. In the 1920s Sun often appealed to Confucius as a national symbol; as with Sun's 1924 invocation of 'inherent morality', these references typically ignored contemporary radical criticism of Confucius. For instance in a 1921 speech at the fifth education conference in Guangzhou he remarked that Confucius was China's 'greatest educator' and referred to Marx and Rousseau as 'sages' who were worshipped 'like Chinese people worship Confucius'. He clearly assumed that for his audience Confucius held an undisputed national importance.[395]

[395] Sun Yatsen,'Zai Guangdong sheng diwuci jiaoyu dahui bimushi de yanshuo' [Speech at the closing ceremony of the Fifth Guangdong Provincial Education Conference], *Sun Zhongshan quanji* 5, 563.

One source of this importance was in Confucius' historical contribution to the nation's culture. A 1923 speech to party members, subsequently printed in the *Guomindang Weekly* journal, described this contribution clearly:

> Everybody knows that China's most famous person is Confucius. When he travelled through the various states, what was he doing? He was focusing on propagandising for his own time the Way of Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, and the Duke of Zhou. When he edited the *Classic of Poetry* and wrote the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, what was he doing? He was focusing on propagandising for later ages the Way... [this] was transmitted to the entire country, so that up to the present day, we have culture. That China's old culture can today be neck-and-neck with Europe and America's new culture is entirely because of Confucius' efforts at propaganda over two thousand years ago.[396]

The reference to 'propagandising' here draws attention to another aspect of Sun's message: aside from his contribution to what was valuable in China's culture, Confucius was a model for revolutionaries to follow. Through his 'propaganda' activities, Confucius was a political activist and a suitable model for teachers, who were to dedicate themselves to propagating the Guomindang's teachings just as Confucius had put forward the 'political education' of 'regulating the household, governing the country, and bringing peace to the world'.[397]

This latter reference points to the still more central importance of Confucius in Sun's accounts of China's 'inherent culture': the Sage's contribution was not confined to China's historical past. As we have seen, Sun traced the party's own doctrines to the distant past; given the significance of Confucius for that past, this made Confucius an ideological forerunner and inspiration. The 1919 *Theories of Sun Yatsen*, for instance, in keeping with its description of an age of progress before China's long post-Zhou dynasty decline, drew on Confucius to provide support for Sun's argument that 'to know is difficult, to act is easy', using the *Analects* line "the people may be made to follow [the Way], but cannot be made to know it".[398]

Originally published in *Guangdong jiaoyu hui zazhi* 1.2 (August 1921)

[396] Sun Yatsen, 'Guomindang fendou zhi fa yi zhuzhong xuanchuan buyi zhuan zhuzhong junshi' [In its struggle the Guomindang should focus on propaganda, not only on the military], *Guofu quanji* Vol. 3, 393. Originally published in *Guomindang zhoukan* 8 (13 January 1924)

[397] Sun Yatsen,'Zai Guangdong sheng diwuci Jiaoyu Dahui bimushi de yanshuo', 563

[398] Sun Yatsen, *Sun Wen xueshuo*, 196

Sun also continued in the 1920s to use an argument already established in the 1900s that Confucius was the 'inventor of revolution'.[399] This claim depended on the term *geming* ('changing the Mandate [of Heaven]'), used from the late Qing to translate 'revolution'. Appearing in the commentaries to the *Classic of Changes* commonly ascribed to Confucius, *geming* described the righteous replacement of evil rulers by the kings Tang and Wu, who thereby founded the Shang and Zhou dynasties.[400] The Three Principles lectures built on this with the assertion that Confucius and his successor Mencius had 'promoted the people's rights', and that the former had praised Yao and Shun because they 'in fact' carried out the People's Rights.[401] Aside from these explicit references, Sun's listeners and readers would surely identify an even greater implicit significance: the Great Unity which was proclaimed to be the final global aim of Sun's national revolution, expressing the Three Principles through the words 'when the Great Way prevails all under heaven belongs to all', was itself commonly attributed to Confucius.

As we have seen, however, Sun Yatsen's references to culture were not necessarily representative of his party: Guomindang discourse was a diverse and contested field. Dai Jitao constructed a 'transmission of the Way' between Confucius and Sun Yatsen (echoing Sun's comments on Confucius' role in transmitting Chinese culture but focusing specifically on Sun's own doctrines as the inheritance). Yet his claim was highly controversial. Critics were able to attack Dai because Confucius had been the object of concerted attacks by representatives of the 'New Culture', including Guomindang members. These attacks were themselves directed at a range of groups and individuals for whom Confucius still held great significance, and who therefore put forward their own versions of the Sage.

Confucian Ritual and Religion in the Early Twentieth Century

Both attacks on and defences of Confucius in the early twentieth century focused on the issue of rites. Sacrifices to Confucius had played a central role in defining and maintaining orthodoxy throughout much of late imperial history. Although as Thomas

[399] See e.g. Ru shi zun Kong zhe, 'Kongzi wei geming de famingjia' [Confucius as the Inventor of Revolution], *Zhongxing ribao* 6 October 1909

[400] E.g. Sun Yatsen, 'Zhongguo geming shi', *Guofu quanji* Vol. 2, p.355. Daniel Leese discusses the conceptual change of *geming*, which was one of many words which acquired new meanings in Japan before 'returning' to China: see Leese, '"Revolution": Conceptualizing Political and Social Change in the Late Qing Dynasty', *Oriens Extremus* 51 (2012), 25–61

[401] Sun Yatsen, 'Minquan zhuyi: diyi jiang', 262

Wilson notes Confucius' ritual status and the posthumous titles awarded him changed over the centuries, beginning from the late sixth or early seventh century AD emperors regularly worshipped him as part of their ritual schedule, with sacrifices carried out in the Ming and Qing dynasties on the first *ding* days (according to the official sixty-day cycle) of the second and eighth lunar months.[402] This recognition of Confucius extended beyond the imperial centre, with local officials echoing the sacrifices at temples dedicated to Confucius across the empire. The state schools responsible for organising the examination system which supplied increasing numbers of candidates for the bureaucracy also sacrificed to Confucius twice a year from the Tang dynasty on, with additional sacrifices held before the metropolitan examinations from 717.[403] For successive generations of literati officials and would-be officials, then, imperially mandated rituals established the role of Confucius as creator or transmitter of the classics which supplied the basis of the empire's cultural and political order. As Ya-pei Kuo notes, aside from these official activities Confucius was further worshipped–albeit inconsistently and in varying ways–in the more private contexts of charity, community and home schools during the Qing dynasty.[404]

The Qing New Policies (*Xinzheng*) reforms of the 1900s saw the Sage receive an unprecedented privilege that tied him to ideas of the national community, making the issue of Confucian ritual still more vital for the Republic that followed. In November 1906 the Board of Learning proposed that Confucius be elevated in the ritual order from 'secondary sacrifice' to the highest level of Grand Sacrifice, a position hitherto reserved for sacrifices at the altars of Heaven, Earth, Soil and Grain, and imperial ancestors.[405] For the historian Richard Smith this was 'presumably a last-ditch effort to enhance the reputation of the Sage (and the Manchus)' following the dramatic 1905 reform that ended the long-established imperial examinations. By promising to transform both education across the empire and the composition of the Qing state, this reform threatened to destabilise the place of the Five Classics and Four Books at the heart of

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[402] Thomas Wilson, 'Ritualizing Confucius/Kongzi: the Family and State Cults of the Sage of Culture in Imperial China' in Wilson, ed., *On Sacred Grounds: Culture, Society, Politics, and the Formation of the Cult of Confucius* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 2002), 43–94, 72

[403] Wilson, 'Ritualizing Confucius/Kongzi', 76–77; Oliver Moore, 'The ceremony of gratitude' in Joseph P. McDermott, ed., *State and Court Ritual in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 203

[404] Ya-pei Kuo, '"The Emperor and the People in One Body" The Worship of Confucius and Ritual Planning in the Xinzheng Reforms, 1902—1911' *Modern China* 35.2 (2009), 130

[405] Kuo, 'The Emperor and the People in One Body', 136

orthodoxy.[406] Ya-pei Kuo, however, suggests a less defensive explanation for this ritual change: more than simply an elevation of Confucius' status, it combined with earlier changes to recast the orthodoxy. Official worship in schools changed to incorporate students as participants in the ritual, rather than merely as an audience for a 'primary worshipper', directly facing and prostrating themselves before Confucius' spirit tablet.[407] The timing of rituals, always crucial to their significance, also changed: where private schools had previously held their own rituals near to, but not on, the *ding* days on which the Emperor carried out his sacrifices, the 1904 regulations for schools across the empire specified that students were to worship on the same day as the Emperor.[408] Thus the Emperor's actions were replicated across the country; as Kuo puts it, this ritually represented the formulation of 'the Emperor and the people in one body', using Confucius as a focus for a newly communal national identity.

The end of the Qing had thus established a precedent for the ritual worship of Confucius, in new schools, as a symbol of the national community. As with previous forms of official worship, however, this practice was closely tied to the Emperor and to the local representatives of his government. The sudden fall of the dynasty and establishment of a Republic at the end of 1911 thus inevitably brought Confucius' role into doubt: with no Emperor, could the Sage be worshipped? The new Republican government in Beijing soon confronted the problem of Confucian ritual in the form of the 1912 spring sacrifices. A great deal of practical continuity between personnel and institutions of the Qing state and its Republican successor meant that many accustomed to holding the biannual ritual remained in power. The provisional Ministries of the Interior and Education decided to minimise disruption, declaring that because the rituals of the new Republic had 'not yet been promulgated' the sacrifices were to be held across China as before.[409] Only one specified amendment served to mark the transition from empire to Republic: the participants were to bow three times toward Confucius' spirit tablet, rather than fully prostrate themselves in a *kowtow*.

This decision postponed rather than prevented controversy, as groups emerged to mobilise support for Confucian ritual. The question of religion loomed large. Following

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406 Richard Smith, *Mapping China and Managing the World: Culture, Cartography and Cosmology in Late Imperial Times* (London: Routledge, 2013), 91
407 Kuo, 'The Emperor and the People in One Body', 143
408 Kuo, 'The Emperor and the People in One Body', 142–43
409 Han, *Ping Kong jinian*, 2–3

foreign models, the Republic was avowedly secular in character, proclaiming freedom of religion in its March 1912 provisional constitution and explicitly separating religion and state.[410] At the same time, however, arguments were put forward, most famously by Kang Youwei, for the formation of a 'state religion' or 'state teaching' (*guojiao*) called 'Confucianism' (*Kongjiao*), likewise modelled on foreign examples. This notion proved influential among those seeking a means for Confucius and the teachings and classics attributed to him to continue occupying a key place in the new Chinese nation.[411] Thus, with the sacred imperial lynchpin removed, the early Republican debates over Confucianism significantly revolved around its 'religious' character; sacrificial rituals, readily understood as a characteristic of the newly emerging category of religions, were a focus of debate.

The premise that the imperial ritual and text-based orthodoxy becoming known as 'Confucianism' could be understood as a religion also had negative consequences, however. It was on this basis that Cai Yuanpei, in his capacity as first Minister of Education in the new Republic, acted to ban the teaching of the classics in primary schools: a privileged place for the classics in the state education system amounted in his view to a violation of the freedom of religion. In the subsequent July 1912 Conference on Education in Beijing Cai further called for an end to the teaching of classics as a dedicated course in universities, arguing that they should be incorporated into such subjects as history and literature. At the same conference members of his ministry addressed the problem of rites on similar principles: while as Cai put it the original Confucius had been a rational sceptic, far from the prophetic figure Kang Youwei portrayed him as, the structure of imperial rites built up to honour him was fundamentally religious as well as serving the interests of autocratic emperors. Holding the spring and autumn rituals in state schools was thus incompatible with freedom of religion. Amid much discussion, the Conference split more or less evenly on the issue–a fact which illustrates not only continued sympathy for rituals in Confucius' honour, but also perhaps the controversy over whether 'Confucianism' could actually be counted a religion or whether its rites were secular commemorations. The final decision was

[410] Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 57

[411] Chen Hsi-yuan argues that the image of Kang Youwei as a proponent of 'Confucian religion' in the late 1890s is an inaccurate one, and that Kang promoted a this-worldly 'state teaching' rather than a religion; the meaning of the neologism 'religion' (*zongjiao*), and its differentiation from 'teaching' (*jiao*) was in flux. Nonetheless, his 1898 proposal for a 'state teaching' clearly took inspiration from Christian and Buddhist practices, incorporating national sacrifices and temples. See Chen, 'Confucianism Encounters Religion', 87–89

calculated to avoid public disturbance. Rather than publicly announcing the end of the spring and autumn rites, they would more surreptitiously be removed from the administrative regulations for public schools.[412] In keeping with Cai Yuanpei's stated opposition to 'Confucianism' as a state orthodoxy, rather than to the presumably original teachings of Confucius himself, the Ministry of Education also announced a replacement for the biannual rites in the form of a school holiday commemorating Confucius' birthday, to be held on October seventh 1912 (the twenty-seventh day of the eighth lunar month, commonly reckoned to be Confucius' birthday) and, by a simple transposition of calendars, on October the seventh in each following year.[413]

Despite these measures to avoid attention, this end of the sacrifices could not go without protests. Over the same period in which the Ministry of Education was debating the question of the rites, various groups formed with the aim of preserving the classics and rites as a major part of the new Republic. Not all of these groups and individuals adopted the 'state religion' formula–indeed, some protests against the Ministry's decisions were made precisely on the grounds that 'Confucianism' was not a religion but a secular body of moral teachings based on the classics and maintained through commemorative rites.[414] The largest and most publicised organisation, however, was named the Confucian Religion Association (*Kongjiao hui*). Through the proposals of its founder Chen Huanzhang, it incorporated elements that readily recalled world religions like Christianity: Chen called not only for the preservation of the existing ritual order but for greatly intensified national (and ultimately international, through the activities of Confucian missionaries) activity involving worship of Confucius every Sunday, combined rituals to worship God, Confucius, and family ancestors, and the use of a calendar dated from Confucius' birth.[415] The Confucian Religion Association formed in response to the Ministry's decisions, being officially founded on October seventh 1912, and it and other groups campaigned at local and national levels for the resumption of the rites.

These campaigns won a measure of support from the Beijing government: in September 1913 the Confucian Religion Association obtained permission to hold the autumn sacrifice to Confucius at the Imperial Academy in Beijing, with the head of the House of

412 Chen, 'Confucianism encounters religion', 110
413 Han, *Ping Kong jinian*, 4
414 Chen, 'Confucianism encounters religion', 118
415 Chen, 'Confucianism encounters religion', 133–34

Representatives and others present to represent Yuan Shikai's government.[416] Three months prior to this Yuan had issued a national order to 'revere the sage Confucius', which explained that opinions on the precise form of this reverence were still being solicited.[417] The birthday commemoration of the previous year was also adjusted to fall on the twenty-seventh day of the eighth lunar month every year, tying it more closely to imperial-era rites, and in January 1914 Yuan announced that the spring and autumn rituals were to be held with himself presiding, lending them the full prestige of the government.[418] This appeared, then, to realise the demands of the various 'Confucian' groups. Yet, as Chen Hsi-yuan argues, though the campaigns of the Confucian Religion Association have often been conflated with the revival of rites under the first President of the Republic Yuan Shikai, in practice Yuan's policies were significantly distanced from the aims of Kang and Chen Huanzhang. The Confucian rites and expressions of support for Confucian teachings by Yuan were part of a wider turn; he also sacrificed to Heaven (placing Confucius and Heaven on the same level of 'grand sacrifice', as the Qing had done in 1907), and followed this up at the end of 1915 with his abortive attempt to proclaim himself Emperor. At the same time, however, he specifically avoided the claim that these 'sacrificial ceremonies' could be considered religious. Chen interprets this claim both as an attempt to avoid controversy from Confucians who denied the Sage's religious character and from followers of other religions who might protest the special privileges accorded Confucius, and as a means to avoid granting power to Confucians in the form of a 'church' structure.[419]

Despite widespread denunciation of Yuan's effort to claim the title of Hongxian Emperor, his death in June 1916 did not mark the end of the Beijing government's recognition of Confucius through ritual. Under Yuan's successor Li Yuanhong an order in August 1916 confirmed that the autumn sacrifice would be held, with the *kowtow* reintroduced under Yuan again replaced with three bows.[420] From Li on the successive Presidents of the Republic of China continued to personally take part in the spring and autumn events and order their local representatives to do likewise, and to grant official

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[416] Han, *Ping Kong jinian*, 24

[417] 'Da zongtong fabu zunchong Kongsheng ling' [The President mandates reverence for Confucius], *Minguo ziliao* 3, 1–2

[418] Han, *Ping Kong jinian*, 25, 30

[419] Chen, 'Confucianism encounters religion', 167–72

[420] 'Gaiding si Kong lijie zhi tongdian' [Telegram on adjusting sacrifices to Confucius], *Shenbao*, 29 August 1916, 10

sanction to commemorations of Confucius' birthday following established practice.[421]

Revolutionary Opposition to the Rites

As an on-going feature of the Beijing government, the Confucian rituals presented a target against which Guomindang propaganda could position the party as revolutionary alternative. Sun's 1914 call to arms against Yuan Shikai took his apparent revival of the imperial ritual order as evidence of his desire to proclaim himself emperor and turn back the clock on the Republic: 'sacrificing to Heaven and to Confucius, and talking of taking the crown, his despotic ambitions are clear to all'.[422] Sun thus suggested there was no room for state sacrifices as part of a Republican order: they marked a return to the past. In this Sun's words tallied with the views of Cai Yuanpei, who had resigned his post in the Ministry of Education in July 1912.

The party's engagement with the 'New Culture' confirmed this opposition. Against the background of these on-going debates over the rites and their clear link both to political authorities in Beijing and 'conservative' forces such as the Confucian Religion Association and other religious groups, radical texts advocating the 'new' and attacking the 'old' often identified Confucius and the rites associated with him as a specific target.[423]

Ye Chucang's writings in the *Republican Daily* show how this more radical approach operated in Guomindang discourse. Two short articles on Confucius in 1919 and 1922 positioned the Guomindang against the Beiyang political authorities. Timed to protest sacrificial rituals to Confucius in these years, Ye's articles presented the Beijing leaders' cultural adherence to 'reverence for Confucius' (*zun Kong*) as evidence for their inherently anti-progressive autocratic rule, claiming that 'those who lead others to worship Confucius... overestimate their strength, seek to resist the tide of thought, and think of themselves as emperors making use of Confucius'.[424] In contrast to Cai Yuanpei's more

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[421] E.g. 'Zongtong si Kong zhi lijie' [The President's sacrificial ceremony to Confucius], *Shenbao*, 24 September 1917, 6; 'Mingling' [Orders], *Shenbao*, 1 September 1918, 2; 'Mingling' [Orders], *Shenbao*, 29 August 1921, 7; 'Mingling' [Orders], *Shenbao*, 10 September 1922, 4

[422] Sun Yatsen, 'Zhonghua Gemingjun Dayuanshuai Xi', 130

[423] See Rofel, *Other Modernities*, 24 and Mao, *Between Tradition and Change*, 115

[424] Ye Chucang, 'Chi jin zhi zun Kong zhe' [Denouncing Those Who Revere Confucius Today], *Minguo ribao* (14 November 1919), 2; Ye Chucang, 'Chirou liudu de Kongzi' [The Carnivorous, Poisonous Confucius], *Minguo ribao* (17 October 1922), 2

generous assessment of Confucius' own character, Ye's articles show that criticism of Confucius was not only limited to his political misuse by the imperial dynasties and by the Beiyang 'militarists'.[425] The November 1919 article 'Against the modern worshippers of Confucius' (*Chi jin zhi zun Kongzhe*) aligned Ye's view with New Culture writers like Chen Duxiu and Yi Baisha who explicitly criticised the man himself: 'to speak plainly and honestly... when people curse him wildly, placing the whole responsibility for Chinese society's lack of progress on his shoulders... it really can't be called unjust'.[426] By Ye's account Confucius was of value only to subsequent rulers, who 'most feared scholars with progressive thoughts', precisely because Confucius' subservient conservatism suppressed such progress; Confucius' own thought damned him to work against the rightful progression of history. With Confucius thus representing the thought of the past, Ye declared, 'now we have no need of him, and in the future we shall never need him'.[427] Sun Yatsen's positive appraisals were clearly by no means a definitive party line.

As shown in Chapter Three, Sun Yatsen's revolutionary traditionalist language was widely adopted within the Guomindang after his death. This did not, however, mean respect for rites and temples as manifestations of China's 'inherent culture'.

As the Revolutionary Army's Northern Expedition from Guangdong in 1926 expanded the territory under the Guomindang's control, the party made a name for itself as an enemy of Confucian rites. The Shanghai *Shenbao* newspaper reported in March 1927 that the party branch in Changsha had ordered an end to the spring and autumn sacrifices in Hunan province 'in the interests of smashing feudal superstition', with the wording of the order recalling both Cai Yuanpei's earlier arguments and Ye Chucang's more thorough attack on Confucius' writings:

> ...the spring and autumn sacrifices to Confucius are a remnant of the autocratic age's feudal thought... Confucius was a protector of monarchical authority and thus received praise from autocratic rulers who used him to restrain the people's minds and prolong their rule... now we are in the revolutionary age, and should smash feudal thought and build democratic politics; there is no longer any need to revere the leading representative of feudal politics...[428]

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[425] See Zheng Chuanxin, 'Cai Yuanpei pi Kong shiji kaolüe' [Investigation into Cai Yuanpei's Critiques of Confucius], *Yunyang shifan gaodeng zhuanke xuexiao xuebao* 23.1 (February 2003), 108–111

[426] Ye Chucang, 'Chi jin zhi zun Kong zhe'

[427] Ye Chucang, 'Chi jin zhi zun Kong zhe'

[428] 'Xiang sheng shixing fei Kong' [Hunan rejects Confucius] *Shenbao* 23 March 1927, 3

The *Taiwan People's Paper* (*Taiwan minbao*) newspaper reported on similar orders in Hubei, where the Communist-allied Wuhan government had been established in December 1926, and Jiangxi, using the news on the rites to highlight differences between the Beijing authorities and their opponents:

> On every matter the actions of the northern and southern governments are opposite... lately the north has been doing its utmost to revere Confucius, while the southern government has ended the sacrifices... as for which of these is meaningful and which meaningless, we leave it to the reader to decide.[429]

For this anonymous author, the abolition of sacrifices marked the revolutionary identity of the Guomindang. Another report, in the *Threads of Talk* (*Yusi*) journal, shows that this policy applied to commemoration on Confucius' birthday as well as to the spring and autumn events. This reported noted the retreat of Sun Chuanfang, military governor of Jiangsu and dominant leader in that province, Fujian, Anhui and Jiangxi, as the Revolutionary Army advanced. This retreat meant that 'Confucius' bad luck has come':

> In the five provinces of the southeast... there is no sign of sacrificial rites to Confucius. I think the north at least has not reached this point! Fortunately the holy ground of Qufu [Confucius' birthplace and centre of his ancestral cult] has never left [Shandong Military Governor] Zhang Zongchang's grip; this is perhaps some consolation for the followers of old [Qing] loyalists in the south. Because in the south no schools took a holiday on the twenty-third of August, and did not go to the Confucian temples to pay respects to the Sage, Confucius... couldn't fulfil his desire to eat a little of the grand offerings [i.e. bull, ram, and boar] and hear a snatch of 'How great is Confucius'... so the old loyalists lead their followers, put on their ritual clothes and go to the Confucian temples to weep, and the young loyalists distribute leaflets, saying that not sacrificing to Confucius means attacking Confucius, attacking Confucius means attacking the motherland or attacking one's father...[430]

From this writer's sardonic perspective the revolutionary Guomindang had brought misery to the old and young 'loyalists' who were the only ones still demanding Confucian rituals, while the 'bandit' targets of revolution in control of the north still hoped to one day be included as recipients of 'secondary sacrifices' for their services in 'protecting

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[429] 'Guomin Zhengfu feizhi si Kong' [The National Government ends sacrifices to Confucius], *Taiwan Minbao* 150 (27th March 1927), 4–5

[430] Luo Qing, 'Si Kong dianli' [Sacrifice ritual to Confucius], *Yusi* 153 (October 1927), 262

Confucius'.[431] Again, rejecting the notion of sacrifices stood as evidence of the developing Guomindang state's radical revolutionary credentials.

This conscious positioning against the rites extended to attacks against the sites at which they were held. Under the Northern Expedition, banning of the sacrifices was accompanied by soldier and student action against temple property, including Confucian temples. This action varied: Nedostup notes that '[d]uring the Northern Expedition, the fates of temples depended on the nature of the armies and commanders they encountered' and that 'in areas occupied by activist party branches, opponents of religion began to take aim at local religious institutions'.[432] As Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer note for action against temples in the 1900s, temples could often be desacralized and converted to the local government's own secular uses rather than destroyed outright.[433] Thus the Shanghai Christian *True Light* (*Zhenguang*) journal reported that '[i]n late March an order to end the sacrifices to Confucius was passed in Hunan. The property of the school temples is all to be used for citizens' education'.[434] With the end of sacrifices and the conversion of temple property, there was no need for those formerly employed to hold sacrificial duties: the *Shenbao* reported in June 1927 that 'sacrifice officials' had lost their positions in Jiangsu province.[435] A 1934 article in the independent *New Life Weekly* (*Xinsheng zhoukan*) journal recalling the events of the 1920s also noted widespread anti-temple activity:

> ...the 'May Fourth' movement lifted high the 'smash the Confucian shop' banner; in this moment the anti-Confucian movement reached its fiercest… [w]e still remember that wherever the Northern Expedition army reached it not only closed down the temples of the gods, it also destroyed all the Confucian temples, or converted them to mass education institutions. The anti-Confucianism at this time was naturally higher than that at the beginning of the Republic.[436]

As one proposal for using the temples shows, radical antagonism towards the Confucian rites could put the Sage and Sun Yatsen in direct ritual competition. The Guomindang's own ritual order focused to a great extent on commemorating Sun as revolutionary

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[431] Luo Qing, 'Si Kong dianli', 262
[432] Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 73
[433] Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 49
[434] 'Xiang Zhe liang sheng shixing fei Kong' [Hunan and Zhejiang reject Confucius] *Zhenguang* 26.4 (1927) p. 83
[435] 'Nanjing kuaixin' [Dispatches from Nanjing], *Shenbao*, 4 June 1927, 9–10
[436] Du Zhongyuan, 'Zenyang jide Kongzi?' [How to remember Confucius?], *Xinsheng zhoukan* 1.30 (1934)

figurehead. Thus, in a 1927 article in the *Southern Tide* (*Nanliu chao*) journal, party member Feng Shiying called for all the temples to Confucius to be converted into Sun Yatsen memorial halls.[437] Feng's argument was thoroughly radical in its language, declaring that 'all feudal thought must be expunged. Since Confucius' thought is feudal it naturally does not fit with the times…'[438] Without acknowledging the arguments seeking to make Confucius and the classical past in general compatible with revolution, including those of Sun himself in 1919, Feng denied that Confucius could be other than autocratic:

> Confucius' thought is in many, many areas in absolute conflict with the Director-General's principles… such as 'the people may be made to follow, but not to know'… [so that] they are always controlled by emperors… is this not completely opposed to our Director-General's principle of people's rights?[439]

In sharp contrast to Dai Jitao's association of Sun with Confucius, Feng placed the two figures in competition, with the representative of new China and the Guomindang the beneficiary.

Though the Guomindang had hitherto been characterised by dismissive or openly hostile attitudes toward Confucian ritual, Chiang Kaishek's turn against the Communists and establishment of a capital at Nanjing in April 1927 opened the possibility of a change. The *Taiwan minbao* report above identified the ending of the spring and autumn sacrifices with Wuhan, seat of the Communist-allied 'left Guomindang'. As we saw in chapter five, Chiang and his allies' move against the Communists and Wuhan was followed by rhetoric emphasising the traditionalist elements of Sun Yatsen's speeches, and in particular the notion of a distinctively Chinese morality, constructed against a foreign threat represented by the Communists.

Although in 1927 Chiang Kaishek identified himself with the 'slave morality' attacked by the Communists, suggesting a turn towards traditionalism, that year did not see a recognition from Nanjing of the pre-existing Confucian ritual order. A speech by Chiang to political workers in the Political Training Department and propaganda teams of his

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[437] Feng Shiying, 'Kongzi miao dang zuo Zongli jinian tang' [Confucius temples should become memorial halls to the Director-General], *Nanliu chao yuekan* 13 (1927), 22–23. This proposal was sufficiently prominent to be mentioned by a letter-writer in the English-language North China Herald bemoaning the tendency 'to worship [Sun] as a god': 'The Three Principles', *North China Herald* (8 October 1927). 'Director-General' was the title by which Sun Yatsen was often known.

[438] Feng Shiying, 'Kongzi miao dang zuo Zongli jinian tang', 22

[439] Feng Shiying, 'Kongzi miao dang zuo Zongli jinian tang', 22. As noted in chapter three, Sun had in 1919 cited precisely this line in support of his argument that the revolutionary vanguard must do the 'knowing' and guide the people in their 'action'.

armies in June 1927 indicated a more conciliatory approach, but was still cautious in its claims:

> There is one more thing we should understand: the northerners see the doctrine of rites [*lijiao*] as more important than the southerners, and thus our political workers should not mechanically produce the same kind of propaganda; when we reach a place, we must first investigate its local customs, the people's attitudes, history, and habits before deciding how to propagandise according to its peculiarities.
>
> In propaganda in the north opposing the doctrine of rites is unacceptable! Otherwise the common people will distrust us and start being hostile, creating counter-propaganda. We need only look at what happened when the Wuhan propagandists reached Henan for proof of my point... they carried on as they had in the south, not distinguishing between men and women, paying no attention to ethics or to morality, attacking all of the doctrine of rites without exception. When the northerners saw this not one of them was not amazed, and not one did not resent it... the ancients had a saying: "on entering a state ask what is taboo there", which we would do well to adopt as definitive for our propaganda.[440]

Chiang's argument was thus couched in strictly utilitarian terms. It credited the 'doctrine of rites' with no positive value or links to revolutionary doctrines, framing tolerance only as a matter of persuasive revolutionary strategy:

> Though we do not attach particular importance to the doctrine of rites, we need not necessarily oppose it.... In particular, Confucius should not be opposed; in future, soldiers from each army, no matter where they are, should avoid camping in Confucian temples. If by chance they must camp there, they must sweep them clean.[441]

Though, as we have seen, Chiang periodically identified himself with and advocated the ethical values and self-cultivation techniques of the classics, then, his speech avoided connecting these to the imperial orthodoxy and to the person of Confucius.

Thus the new Nanjing government issued no new order in 1927 on the status of the rites. In August 1927 the Fujian provincial government contacted Nanjing with a petition from Shi Pingfan, the head of the Fuzhou-based Enlightening Virtue Society (*Mingde she*),

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[440] Chiang Kaishek, 'Zhenggong renyuan de zeren' [The responsibility of political workers], in Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* Vol. 10, 266

[441] Chiang Kaishek, 'Zhenggong renyuan de zeren', 266

protesting that the spring sacrifice of that year had been 'suspended', and calling for a resumption given that

> ...the central government is putting all its efforts into the work of the Northern Expedition, seeking unification, and though the Republic is for the moment lacking clear regulations on each sacrificial rite, the teachings of Confucius and Mencius are truly sufficient to hold together the people's minds and firm up the country's base....[442]

Following the earlier party branch orders against the sacrifices, the Fujian provincial government had no new laws with which to decide the issue. It therefore contacted the central government, noting that determining rites was a national matter.[443] None were forthcoming, however: Shi Pingfan's optimistic effort to link Chiang's increasingly successful campaign to unify the country with a Confucius-oriented national culture appears to have had no impact. In September 1927 the *Shenbao* reported that there was to be no official celebration of Confucius' birthday now that Shanghai was under Guomindang control, unlike the previous year.[444] At the end of 1927 it appeared that under the Nanjing government, just as under Wuhan, Confucian rites had no official support.

The advent of the Nanjing Guomindang government also saw no immediate change in policy toward temples. Despite Chiang's instructions, it appears that the use of temples continued: in July 1927 the *Shenbao* reported that a National Revolutionary Army recruiting office in the Shanghai area would move into the local Confucius temple.[445] A further report from Fenghua in Zhejiang, Chiang Kaishek's place of birth, confirmed that Confucius temples could still be targets for revolutionary activity in the form of ritual competition between Sun Yatsen and Confucius. According to the report 'the people of the town worship Mr Sun Yatsen', and a large number of people there had called for removing Confucius' spirit tablet from the Confucius temple and replacing it with an image of Sun, before parading the spirit tablet with banners announcing his crime of 'establishing the doctrine of rites which entraps our people'. They were halted,

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[442] 'Fujian sheng Yang Shuzhuang zhuan Shi Pingfan deng cheng qing zhongyang tongling gesheng ji Kong daidian' [Yang Shuzhuang transmits request from Shi Pingfan et al to order each province to sacrifice to Confucius], *Minguo ziliao* 5.1, 515

[443] 'Fujian sheng Yang Shuzhuang zhuan Shi Pingfan', *Minguo ziliao* 5.1, 515

[444] 'Jinri Kongzi danchen' [Confucius' birthday today], *Shenbao* 22 September 1927

[445] 'Zongbu buchong disi tuan zai Lu zhaomu xinbing' [The headquarters supplements the fourth regiment by recruiting new troops in Shanghai], *Shenbao* 12 July 1927

however, by an old man who argued that there was no essential incompatibility between Sun and Confucius' political views: such treatment would both unjustly attack Confucius and ignore Sun's intentions. The tablet was thus retained 'for the time being', and the people of the town discussed raising funds for a dedicated 'shrine' to Sun.[446]

With no government directive from Nanjing on the use of the temples, however, the notion of ritually replacing Confucius with Sun still resonated. On January 26 1928 the Central Executive Committee in the capital considered a proposal from two party members in Wenling, also in Zhejiang, to convert Confucius temples across the nation into Sun Yatsen Memorial Halls: as in Fenghua, the decision over how precisely to manage the temples was deferred, but the Committee ruled out drastic measures by stating that there was no need to use the temples.[447] Despite the lack of a comprehensive order, the impulse to supplant Confucius with Sun apparently remained: in Jiangyin, Jiangsu province, the 1928 ceremony commemorating Sun's death was held in the local Confucius temple.[448]

Conclusion

The use of Confucius bears witness to a diversity of cultural approaches in Guomindang discourse, from Ye Chucang's condemnation, to Sun Yatsen's vision of Confucius as an important part of China's valuable cultural heritage, to Dai Jitao's singular focus on him as Sun's predecessor. Yet, as this chapter has shown, these alternatives co-existed with wider constructions of the Sage beyond the Guomindang, including calls for Confucian ritual (whether understood religiously or otherwise), deployments by the imperial and post-imperial authorities in Beijing, and a range of appraisals including radical attacks.

It is these alternative visions that help explain the balancing act we have seen to be a characteristic feature of revolutionary traditionalism, as party members engaged with alternative meanings. Sun Yatsen's vision of a global 'Great Unity' had much in common with Kang Youwei's, and like Kang Sun associated his claims with Confucius. The notion

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[446] 'Jiang zongsiling guxiang jinshi ji' [Recent events in the hometown of Commander-in-Chief Chiang], *Shenbao* 1 August 1927, 16

[447] 'Zhongyang zhihui kaihui ji' [The opening of the Central Executive Committee], *Shenbao* 27 January 1928, 4

[448] 'Gedi minzhong zhuinian Zongli' [The people mourn the Director-General across the country], *Shenbao* 13 March 1928, 4

of 'Confucian religion' Kang inspired, however, was anathema for Guomindang writers linking their cause to the 'New Culture'. Ritual appeals to Confucius in the early twentieth century were reinventions in their own right, of course, often radical in relation to late imperial practice. In Guomindang and other radical discourse, even after the rise of revolutionary traditionalism, they stood for adherence to the 'feudal' past.

But in spite of efforts to separate the revolutionary Confucius from the recipient of ritual sacrifice, texts associated with the Guomindang would inevitably be read and understood within the context of wider debates: readers were free to connect Sun Yatsen's praise for Confucius with Confucian religion, or to see radical criticism of the rites as a total rejection of Confucius. The chapter that follows discusses the consequences of these connections in the context of the Nanjing party-state.

6. Negotiating Orthodoxy II: Confucian Rites in 1928

For those who associated the Guomindang with attacks on rites and temples, the events of 1928 represented a dramatic reversal. In February the Nanjing government's Ministry of Education confirmed the party's hostility to Confucian ritual by officially declaring the end of the millennia-old spring and autumn sacrifices to Confucius. Over the following months, however, the government announced the ritual recognition of Confucius' birthday in schools and ordered local governments to protect temples dedicated to the Sage. The anonymous critic of the government quoted in the introduction to this thesis saw the turn 'from attacking Confucius to revering him' as taking place in the 1930s, and analyses of the Guomindang's links to 'tradition' have generally followed suit.[449] 1928, however, must be counted as a significant moment of change.

For Li Guannan, one of the few to have studied the events of 1928 in detail, there was little surprising about this development: rather than a dramatic 'turn', it was part of 'the Nanjing government's consistent search for a reconstructed Chinese morality', in which the government 'was powered by the rationalist vision of cultural nationalism to continue to worship Confucius as a deputy of Chinese civilization' and thus 'depoliticized Confucianism and transformed it into a component of the Chinese cultural heritage'.[450] This is a valuable insight: as we will see, the policy changes were promulgated using the familiar language of revolutionary traditionalism, stressing Confucius' utility for the revolutionary project. Yet I contend that Li goes too far in stressing unity and consistency; missing from this account are not only tensions among party members over approaches towards Confucius, but also pressures from external sources.

As the previous chapter showed, with Confucius established as a central symbol of the nation at the end of the Qing, powerful groups promoted their own images of the Sage, focusing on the sacrificial rites as well as the texts associated with him. Following the establishment of a new government in Nanjing and the February decision against the spring and autumn sacrifices, the Guomindang under Chiang Kaishek became the target of petitions from these groups and individuals. These petitions publicly appropriated the

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[449] Anonymous, 'You fei Kong dao zun Kong'. See the discussion of views of the Guomindang's 1930s 'turn' in the introduction to this thesis.

[450] Li Guannan, 'Culture, Revolution, and Modernity: the Guomindang's Ideology and Enterprise of Reviving China, 1927-1937' (Doctoral thesis, University of Oregon, 2009), 418–19, 400, 403

government's own language of 'inherent culture and morality' and asserted that Confucian ritual was central to these cultural claims. Petitioners were moreover empowered by the involvement of powerful figures who had been brought into the Nanjing state as it expanded. Thus this chapter sees the events of 1928 as a process of negotiation between different interest groups that defined the Nanjing government's cultural stance at a formative stage, and established Confucius' place within it. Reinvented rituals and temples provided a sphere in which the interests of the state and these groups intersected to produce a newly national image of Confucius.

The result was not a harmonious unity, however. The commemoration inaugurated in October 1928 was explicitly a secular ritual in honour of Confucius' birth, rather than a reversal of the University Council's earlier decision to end the rites. This points to fundamental tensions in the alternative visions of Confucius: far from being 'depoliticized', the Sage remained contested. While the state's recognition of Confucius' birthday might have appeared in October 1928 to mark the incorporation of 'Confucian' concerns into the Nanjing state's vision for the nation, the results for many of the Confucians proved less than satisfactory: their visions of ritual order could not be neatly reconciled with the government's, involving as it did a delicate balance between traditionalism and radicalism.

Ending the Rites

As we have noted, the year 1928 saw the ratification of the Nanjing state's pre-eminence, the formal beginning of the period of 'political tutelage', and the official adoption of revolutionary traditionalism. This did not, however, mean that the hostility to Confucian rites that had characterised the National Revolutionary Army's advance in the Northern Expedition also stopped.

Ritual was crucial for the Nanjing government, but its emphasis was on celebrating the new. Henrietta Harrison's work has shown that state ritual served to define the national community in China; as in other revolutionary contexts such as those in France, the new state deployed and publicised rituals which 'created communities, but... also created hierarchies of power between those communities' and thus served to form a 'national

identity' by defining the participants as citizens within the Republic.[451] The calendar of national holidays issued from Nanjing in 1929 contained no fewer than twenty-eight memorial days, commemorating the founding of the Republic as well as more party-specific days such as Sun Yatsen's dates of birth and death and the anniversaries of uprisings: through this ritual calendar the Guomindang inscribed modern Chinese history with the party's rise.[452] Recalling as it did recent events, much of this ritual order was explicitly novel in its approach, using the solar calendar as opposed to the lunar one used for long-established popular occasions like Chinese New Year, and incorporating martial dress and music, salutes, bows, and processions modelled on European examples. As Rebecca Nedostup in particular has shown, this comprehensive new ritual order was accompanied, especially between 1927 and 1937, by thoroughgoing campaigns against 'superstition', in which popular practices like the lunar new year were banned and sacrificial ceremonies, fortune-telling and other ritual activities in temples across the nation were condemned as having no part in the Guomindang's republic.[453] These campaigns were the most forceful expression of the party-state's radical positioning, constructing popular rituals as outmoded 'feudal' leftovers on the ruins of which the nation must be built.

With regard to Confucian rites, the newly powerful government in Nanjing initially followed the example of Wuhan, which as noted in the previous chapter had ended the rites in 1927. In February 1928 the University Council made an unprecedentedly wide-ranging rejection of Confucian ritual by issuing a national order officially 'bringing to an end' the spring and autumn rites across Guomindang-controlled territory. The primary actor in this was Cai Yuanpei, who had returned to China from Europe in 1926. As a longstanding member of Sun Yatsen's Revolutionary Alliance and subsequently the Guomindang, supporter of Chiang's move against the Communists, and an experienced figure in the field of education, Cai headed the Nanjing government's University Council, which was established in July 1927 as the new government's highest body for the administration of education.[454]

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[451] Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen*, 3. For the work on symbol and ritual in the French Revolution which inspired much subsequent work see Hunt, *Politics, culture, and class in the French Revolution* 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), and Ozouf, *Festivals and the French revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991)

[452] Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen*, 155

[453] Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, esp. pp. 15–18

[454] Linden, Allen B. 'Politics and Education in Nationalist China' *Journal of Asian Studies*, 27.4 (1968), 768

Cai's order, issued through the University Council, came in response to a 17 February request from the Anhui Education Bureau as to whether the spring sacrifice to Confucius was to be held that year.[455] The wording explaining the decision followed earlier critiques of the ritual as the manipulative invention of emperors:

> through history the autocratic monarchs bestowed on him the title of model teacher and sacrificed to him with bull, ram, and boar, using him to ensnare scholars. This is truly utterly contradictory to the principle of free thought and our party's principles.[456]

As in earlier discussions of the rites in the 1910s, Confucius' personal qualities were separated from the ritual-based use the emperors had made of him: Cai's statement identified him as 'a commoner who taught; his moral qualities and learning were naturally esteemed in later generations'. This praise, however, was more limited than that of Sun Yatsen, who identified Confucius as making a definitive contribution to Chinese culture, and to some extent also echoed Ye Chucang's earlier attacks. Cai's order suggested that it was not only the rituals that were incompatible with the republic, but also aspects of Confucius' teachings themselves: Confucius was valuable to the emperors 'because of his point about revering the king and showing loyalty to the lord'.[457]

Responses: the 1928 campaign for state Confucianism

Publicised throughout the nation, the February 1928 University Council order gave rise to significant resistance from the many groups committed to the ritual commemoration of the Sage. As China's de facto government, the Nanjing regime was the target of petitions. While these reflected earlier debates about the role of religion and morality in the state, petitioners also specifically adopted the traditionalist moral discourse put forward by Nanjing to make their cases, most notably in constructing the rites as a weapon against Communism.

For the Surabaya Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Java, what it called the 'prohibition' of the rites was contrary to freedom of belief.[458] An article in the *Central Daily* (*Zhongyang*

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[455] Gao Pingshu, *Cai Yuanpei nianpu changpian* [Chronology of Cai Yuanpei] Vol. 1 (Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996) p. 162
[456] Gao Pingshu, *Cai Yuanpei nianpu changpian* Vol. 1, 162
[457] Gao Pingshu, *Cai Yuanpei nianpu changpian* Vol. 1, 162
[458] 'Zhonghua zong shanghui fandui feizhi si Kong dian', *Minguo ziliao* 5.1, 521

ribao) newspaper publicly dismissed this claim by stating that the University Council's order was about 'ending' (*feizhi*) rather than 'prohibiting' (*jinzhi*) the rites. Thus what ended was only state participation: 'there is naturally no need to prohibit private worship, and stopping [state] sacrifices to Confucius does not infringe on freedom of belief'.[459]

Judging by the immediate response to the order, this interpretation seemed to be widely held. Stephen Carroll notes that in Suzhou '[d]espite the change in policy, the Spring and Autumn Confucian Sacrifices continued to be celebrated–albeit in straitened circumstances', with local elites holding reduced rituals in 1928 without the presence of serving government officials.[460] The *Shenbao* newspaper reported that the 1928 spring rituals were held in Shanghai:

> ...the official departments followed the order and did not hold [a ceremony], but like-minded gentry and scholars... gathered at the Confucian temple to hold the sacrifice. Though the ox and ram were not offered, meat, fish, bamboo and wood receptacles, vegetables and wine were all presented as before. The ritual format was somewhat simple, with the eldest person Yao Wennan [a renowned Shanghai educator and writer] as chief libationer...[461]

Yet the confusion between stopping state involvement and prohibiting private rites, together with the reduced form of the private rites, pointed to a fundamental issue for Confucians. State involvement and support had been crucial to the rituals' meaning both under the Qing and under the Republican government that took its place in Beijing. It was also for this reason that the Confucian Religion Association and other groups had sought explicit state support rather than merely the right to carry out rites privately. These groups therefore continued to press for government recognition.

As the reports of less extravagant rites suggest, the question of state involvement had a material dimension. The spring and autumn rituals, as part of the apparatus of imperial rule, had been funded by the state through local levies. The official end of these sacrifices raised the question of what to do with the resources that such levies produced;

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[459] 'Daxue Yuan tongling feizhi si Kong zhi fanxiang' [Response to the University Council's ending of the sacrifices to Confucius] *Zhongyang ribao*, 29 April 1928

[460] Stephen Carroll, *Between Heaven and Modernity: Reconstructing Suzhou, 1895-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 147–48

[461] 'Shen xue jie shangding si Kong lijie' [Gentry and scholars hold spring sacrifice to Confucius], *Shenbao* 29 February 1928, 15. The *Shenbao* also reported on private sacrifices in Suzhou, again with the ritual 'like before' except for lacking the animal sacrifices: 'Suzhou', *Shenbao* 28 February 1928, 10

this question appears to have been decided on a local level. Local Education Departments in two counties in Shandong, Xiajin and Tai'an, decided after discussion to allocate the resources formerly used for the sacrifices to fund the education of poor students.[462] Making its declaration to this effect in October 1928, the Xiajin Education Department further considered changing the name of the levy in order to 'prevent the masses still thinking of sacrifices to Confucius'.[463] This allocation of funds would seem natural given that Confucius had been identified, by Cai Yuanpei along with many others, primarily as an educator. A *Shenbao* report from Songjiang county, near Shanghai, reveals that ritual competition between Confucius and Sun remained: the Guomindang party branch there argued that finances originally for the spring and autumn sacrifices should be allocated to fund activities commemorating the anniversary of Sun Yatsen's birth and death.[464]

While material needs might prompt petitioners to seek state support, their beliefs also made the rites a national issue. The sacrifices were concerned with bringing order to the country or world as a whole as well as to individuals and their families, and so could not easily be transplanted to an entirely private sphere of activity. The arguments of those who petitioned the government shared general assumptions about the efficacy of the rituals in the teaching of proper thought and action, and thereby bringing order to the community. Petitioners connected this long-established understanding of the importance of ritual performance with the national community and with arguments for Confucius as the centre of China's specific historically developed culture.

In so arguing they took advantage of the government's existing traditionalist discourse. With Confucius commonly recognised as creator or transmitter of China's distinctive ethical learning, Xue Dubi's positioning of these values as a key part of the party-state's mission allowed critics to incorporate the party-state's own recent statements into their claims. Cai Yuanpei's claim that Confucius' thought contradicted 'party doctrine' was thus vulnerable.

Another petition from Surabaya, from the head of the Confucian temple there,

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462 Tai'an shi jiaoyu ju jiaoyuzhi bianzuan bangongshi, ed., *Tai'an diqu jiaoyuzhi ziliao di san ji* [Third compilation of materials for Tai'an education gazetteer] (Tai'an shi jiaoyu ju jiaoyu zhi bianzuan bangongshi, 1988), 344–45

463 Meng Shaogui, ed., *Xiajin xianzhi*, (Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 2001), 661

464 'Songjiang', *Shenbao*, 8 March 1928, 10

highlighted the preservation of moral values. The petition proclaimed the historical importance of Confucius as a figure respected by all 'from the Emperor to the common people', adding that, though in 1911 China's political form had changed, Yuan Shikai had still shown the utmost ritual respect to Confucius as 'timely sage' (*sheng zhi shizhe*) and as keeping the citizens of the new Republic on 'the correct path'.[465] Invoking Yuan Shikai as a model was unlikely to persuade members of the University Council: Yuan was demonised, by Guomindang members and many others, as betrayer of the revolution. It was his enthusiasm in particular that had done much to damage the campaign for a Confucian Religion by providing ammunition for radical critics to tie 'Confucianism' to autocracy and imperial restoration.

The petition, however, also incorporated the Guomindang's own moral claims, when it declared that 'what is called old morality is entirely contained within the Four Books and Five Classics'. In this account, the fact that the government's Central Political Council had promoted 'old morality' only a month after the University Council's order expressed the former's displeasure with the latter's actions, since the very basis of the 'morality' the government publicly celebrated was to be found in Confucius' writings, actions, and the texts edited by him, which together constituted the canon.[466]

Petitioners were also able to use specific statements by Sun Yatsen and others directly connecting Confucius to the ideas of revolution, 'people's rights', and 'people's livelihood'. A March 24th petition from the eastern Sichuan branch of the Classicist Society (*Rujiao hui*), for example, used the Guomindang's traditionalist language to argue not only for the resumption of official spring and autumn sacrifices but also an expansion of the ritual order, recalling earlier demands for Confucianism to be China's 'state religion'. Under this plan both officials and students were to sacrifice at the temples in spring and autumn, and the temples should be opened throughout the year 'allowing all believers to come and pay their respects each day'; additionally, the names of 'former worthies, local worthies, and renowned officials' should be added to those honoured in

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[465] Cheng Yu, ed., *Lidai zun Kong ji yu Kongjiao wailun* [Record of revering Confucius through the ages and outsiders' commentary on Confucianism] (15th edition, Dongfang dujing hui, 1938), 41. The characterisation of Confucius as 'timely sage', originally from Mencius, could be understood as meaning a Sage acting according to the needs of the time, and thus justify the applicability of the teachings attributed to Confucius to different ages, making him a part of modern China. See e.g. John Berthrong, 'Riding the third wave: Tu Weiming's Confucian axiology', *Dao* 8 (2008), 434

[466] Cheng Yu, ed., *Lidai zun Kong ji*, 42

the temples.[467] Where the Confucian temple head in Surabaya had incautiously praised Yuan Shikai, the Sichuan petition was more careful to associate its vision of a revived and active Confucianism with the new order under the Guomindang and to echo party discourse in bemoaning the failings of the early Republic. It argued that the sacrifices since 1911 had been 'empty ceremonies', and that the removal of the Four Books and Five Classics from school curricula had left the country's youth with 'no centre' when faced with the 'military chaos' left by the failed Beijing government.[468] Confucius by contrast stood as a predecessor to the Guomindang: Sun's Three Principles of the People 'often quote Confucius' words'. Confucius' chaotic world moreover resembled the situation facing China in the early twentieth century, his 'reverence for the Zhou monarchs', aimed at uniting China against foreign aggression, was in practice the same as the Guomindang task of promoting nationalism and resisting imperialism.[469] Both Confucius and Mencius, according to the Sichuan petition, promoted the people's rights.

Interventions came too from within the new regime, with the state and army's rapid expansion in the course of the Northern Expedition. As we have seen, regional military leaders sided with Chiang Kaishek as his forces advanced, and consequently existing administrative staff and institutions were brought over to the Guomindang wholesale. These new entrants included figures committed to Confucian ritual.

One of these figures was Sun Shaoyuan, a member of the Yunnan provincial assembly and former member of the national assembly in Beijing, who publicly called for a resumption of the sacrifices by sending a 'letter of protest' around the country. Sun, who had argued for a Confucian Religion in the previous decade, was uncompromising in his critique of Cai Yuanpei and the University Council:

> In the first year of the Republic, our country's intellectual sphere was still calm and untroubled. Seven years later a storm stirred, the origin of which all commentators have traced to Beijing University... now, having become the University Council, and having gained the power to issue orders, its first move is to do what the Communist Party has

[467] 'Sichuan sheng dongchuan dao rujiao fenhui yaoqiu dujing chongsheng fandui feizhi chunqiu si Kong dian' [East Sichuan classicist society requests classics-reading and revering the sage, opposes ending spring and autumn sacrifices to Confucius], *Minguo ziliao* 5.1, 521

[468] 'Sichuan Dongchuan dao rujiao fenhui yaoqiu dujing chongsheng fandui feizhi chunqiu si Kong dian', 519–20

[469] 'Sichuan Dongchuan dao rujiao fenhui yaoqiu dujing chongsheng fandui feizhi chunqiu si Kong dian', 519–20

wished to do but has not and dispose of Confucius...[470]

Though seemingly drawing on his own earlier opposition to the student activism and cultural radicalism in Beijing, and ignoring the Guomindang's own involvement with the 'storm' the movement had generated in Shanghai, Sun was nevertheless careful to connect Sun Yatsen and Confucius by referring to the 'all under heaven belongs to all' passage of the Book of Rites that the former had advocated.[471] Since Confucius' and Sun Yatsen's thoughts were linked, Sun Shaoyuan argued, Cai's decision amounted to 'directly attacking Confucius, and indirectly doubting [Sun Yatsen], and turning his back on his party's principles'.[472]

Sun Shaoyuan's letter also took advantage of Guomindang traditionalist discourse by making use of the Communist threat against which the Nanjing regime defined itself. For Sun Shaoyuan the trend in thought, 'over-focused on the [present] era', had 'produced no results' except that 'the Communist Party caught the wind and set sail, making rapid progress, almost bringing chaos to the whole of China'.[473] His comment that the Communists had not dared to end the sacrifices–though inaccurate, given developments under the Communist-allied Wuhan government–thus challenged the Nanjing government to side against Communism, presenting a binary choice between the rites, Sun Yatsen and social stability on one side and 'disposing of Confucius', Cai Yuanpei, the New Culture Movement and Communism on the other.

This binary description of cultural warfare, in which any undermining of Confucius would help the Communists, served an important role in Sun Shaoyuan's argument: it offered an explanation of why merely celebrating Confucius for founding morality, defining a distinctive Chinese culture, and inspiring Sun Yatsen was insufficient, and why the rites were necessary. In this respect, Sun Shaoyuan also tried to refute the response by the Universal Council to the Surabaya Confucian Temple's petition, in which the Council had distinguished between 'Confucian sacrifices' (*si Kong*) and 'Confucian learning' (*Kongxue*). People were free to study the latter and find those parts 'not contradicting modern thought'; the response had singled out 'revering the monarch' as objectionable,

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[470] Cheng Xingguo, *Wannian Cai Yuanpei* [Cai Yuanpei's later years] (Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2011), 150

[471] Cheng Xinguo, *Wannian Cai Yuanpei*, 150

[472] Huang Jie, 'Huang Jie han Sun Guangting' [Huang Jie's letter to Sun Shaoyuan], *Yusi* 5.1 (11 March 1929), 50

[473] Cheng Xinguo, *Wannian Cai Yuanpei*, 150

but otherwise allowed Confucius' thought a continued role. The sacrifices to Confucius, on the other hand, were an imperial practice which the militarists continued for their own purposes and hence–as the original order had stated–contradictory to 'the trend in world thought and our party's principles'.[474] By invoking the Communist threat Sun Shaoyuan's protest letter denied the existence of a middle ground in which Confucius could be recognised apart from his rituals.

A telegram from Lan Wenbin, division commander of the seventh division of the twenty-first Revolutionary Army, similarly promoted Confucius as essential to the anti-Communist fight. Lan echoed other arguments made since the 1900s, including those of Sun Yatsen, in stressing Confucius' compatibility with revolutionary thought, noting the advocacy of 'revolution' in the Spring and Autumn Annals, the 'distinction between Chinese and barbarians', and Confucius' 'hinting at the people's rights' when unable to find a worthy ruler. In connecting Confucius' thought to the Guomindang's agenda, Lan went further than Dai Jitao: 'Confucius is not only not at all incompatible with modern thought: in fact he was our party's first-awakened, founding it and setting its highest principles'.[475]

If Confucius, in Lan's as in other arguments, defined the national morality, the Communists attacked it, 'destroying trust and righteousness, discarding ethical human relations, and killing integrity and the sense of shame; all old morality has almost completely been extinguished'.[476] Confucius provided the solution to this desperate situation: 'we should revere him, admire him, make clear his Way and expound his ideas, make manifest what is subtle and expound what is mysterious... if we promote disposing of Confucius, heterodoxy will flourish and the trust and righteousness, ethical relations, integrity, sense of shame and all other morality that Confucius esteemed will follow him into destruction!' In failing to do this, the University Council's move appeared as an act of capitulation.[477] Again, this sense of urgency depended upon a zero-sum understanding of cultural and political warfare: removing the rites could only strengthen the Communists, the true enemies of popular morality.

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[474] Cheng Yu, ed., *Lidai zun Kong ji*, 43

[475] 'Lan Wenbin, Rao Guohua deng yaoqiu Guomin zhengfu tongdian quanguo quxiao daxue yuan feizhi si Kong ling de kuaiyou daidian' [Lan Wenbin, Rao Gaohua et al's express telegram requesting that the National Government annul the University Council's order ending sacrifices to Confucius], *Minguo ziliao* 5.1, 517

[476] 'Lan Wenbin, Rao Guohua deng yaoqiu Guomin zhengfu', 516

[477] 'Lan Wenbin, Rao Guohua deng yaoqiu Guomin zhengfu', 517

Dedicated Confucian groups and various state actors alike thus adopted the Guomindang's language, constructing Confucian ritual as compatible with the revolutionary principles proclaimed by the Guomindang and as a bulwark against Communism, the latter being identified as a threat to the moral order.

The central government was not persuaded to reconsider the problem of rites, however, until the intervention of more powerful figures within the Nanjing state: the military leaders Li Zongren, Lu Diping, and He Jian. Li, one of the 'Guangxi clique' that dominated that province, had supported Chiang by commanding one of the seven armies that made up the Guomindang's National Revolutionary Army in the Northern Expedition. With his own formidable military resources, Li was incorporated into the Nanjing order in December 1928 as head of the Wuhan Branch Political Council, one of four relatively autonomous institutions which allowed the military leaders who had supported Chiang to retain their power.[478] Lu, the governor of Hunan province, had commanded the second National Revolutionary Army in the Northern Expedition; He Jian was his subordinate in Hunan, fellow commander, and former acting governor of Anhui.

The intervention of all three appears to have been inspired by Wang Zhiping, a member of the Hunan gentry who had in May 1928 been one of the many who petitioned Cai Yuanpei to re-establish the sacrifices. Li put forward his proposal at the fifth plenum of the Guomindang's second Central Executive Committee, held in June 1928, extensively quoting Wang's argument that Confucius had been the originator of 'revolution' against unjust rulers, had displayed his lack of 'reverence for the sovereign' by not serving the nominally ruling Zhou house of his age, and had been the 'first awakened' person to advocate 'the world belonging to all', and adding that Dai Jitao had demonstrated the connection between Confucius and Sun.[479]

However, Li's argument was adapted to revolutionary traditionalist discourse to a greater extent than others analysed in this chapter, since he accepted the Guomindang's criticism

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[478] Pak-wah Leung, *Leaders of Modern China: a Biographical Dictionary* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 95–97; Van de Ven, *War and Nationalism in China 1925–1945*, 133

[479] Li Zongren, 'Li Zongren zhi ti'an zhuzhang' [Assistance from Li Zongren's proposal], *Shijie shuguang zhi Zhonghua wenhua* 1, 68–70

of the rites. Rather than a recreation of the 'old sacrificial ritual', which was 'truly a... feudal remnant', Li proposed that Confucius be commemorated in the same (modern) way as Sun Yatsen.[480]

This was not the case for the further telegram from Lu and He, which succeeded in bringing about a change in policy. This telegram reached Nanjing on the eighth of August 1928 and shared much with the petitions from less distinguished sources. Lu had received petitions of his own from Wang Zhiping and his fellow Hunan gentry Chen Zhaojue, calling for the government to 'establish ritual sacrifices to Confucius'. His response, however, was not simply to ignore these or to forward them to the central government as they were, but to add his own endorsement and send telegrams to Chiang Kaishek, President of the Republic Tan Yankai, and Li Zongren. The telegram opened with a familiar description of morality as central to the nation and particularly to the maintenance of order within it. According to Lu, Confucius' teachings were crucial to that morality and Sun Yatsen had recognised this fact:

> China is governed by morality, trust, and righteousness, and has prospered by esteeming the Confucian Way, with sacrifices to Confucius continuing for thousands of years. When the late Director-General was alive he showed the utmost concern and respect, which can often be seen in the works he left behind. If our people believe in the Director-General, they should follow his thoughts; how could they ignore the basic spirit which has maintained our country for thousands of years? The most important reason that Hunan has seen repeated misfortunes and has not yet descended into utter chaos is because virtue and righteousness are still sufficient to govern people's minds.[481]

As with Lan Wenbin's argument, the perceived threat to this order came not in the form of the 'New Culture Movement' or post-1911 developments in general, but in the specific form of the Communist Party. This attack came through physical violence and political campaigns, but also through education and culture: 'in recent years the bandit Communist Party... has stolen into the field of education... poisoned and bewitched the youth... and used reforming politics as a pretext to wreck culture'.[482] The Communists were characterised by their utter lack of the moral values that held society together, causing people to be 'corrupt and without shame, greedy and without benevolence, cruel

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[480] Li Zongren, 'Li Zongren zhi ti'an zhuzhang', 70

[481] 'Kongzi sidian an' [Confucius sacrifices], *Guoshiguan* [Academia Historica] archives, Taipei, Guomin zhengfu, 001–05161–0001, 6

[482] 'Kongzi sidian an', *Guoshiguan* archives, Guomin zhengfu, 001–05161–0001, 6

and without family-feeling, harming those of the same kind, resulting in holding wives in common and making enemies of their fathers, starting fires and killing...'[483] In describing the moral threat posed by the Communists, Lu and He's telegram stressed their own role in fighting it by referring to the '*Mari* movement' of May 1927 in which He and others in Hunan, still loyal to Communist-allied Wuhan, turned on the Communists in the province.[484] Their telegram further referenced their own continued role in 'cleansing the countryside' and thus their particular knowledge of the Communist threat, since Hunan was one of the places in which this threat remained high.

While stressing the Communist danger and Confucius' role against it, however, the telegram contained little that made a specific case for the rites themselves. It was more cautious than, for instance, Sun Shaoyuan's letter, in that its call for rites did not address the University Council's February order at all and thus did not directly criticise the central government. Consequently, however, it did not address Cai Yuanpei's central point that the spring and autumn sacrifices were a product of autocratic imperial history rather than of Confucius himself; the reference to Confucian sacrifices continuing 'for thousands of years' suggested a positive rather than a negative assessment of the imperial legacy. The telegram stated that 'the flourishing or decline of the Confucian Way is truly crucial to the survival or extinction of our nation', but did not make an argument for why the rites were an essential part of this. Instead it simply stated that, since Confucius and Sun Yatsen shared the promotion of this moral Way, '[the state] should clearly establish sacrificial rites to Confucius to make the whole country understand that the Director-General's theories have a source, so that the principles thrive and are not intermixed with beastly ideas'.[485] Li Zongren added to this high-level pressure on the central government with a public reply noting that 'your points on resuming the sacrificial rites and rectifying education are all urgent tasks for saving this age, and if the central government wishes to redeem the ways of the world and the people's hearts, it will surely be pleased to accept them'.[486]

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[483] 'Kongzi sidian an', *Guoshiguan* archives, Guomin zhengfu, 001–05161–0001, 7. This language represents an earlier example of the rhetoric Margaret Clinton examines in which Communists were declared inhuman and beastlike for their alleged failure to follow moral norms; Clinton, 'Fascism, Cultural Revolution, and National Sovereignty in 1930s China', 177–85

[484] 'Kongzi sidian an', *Guoshiguan* archives, Guomin zhengfu, 001–05161–0001, 7. The name '*Mari*' (Horse day) referred to the telegram code used for the 21st of May, the day the attack was launched.

[485] 'Kongzi sidian an', *Guoshiguan* archives, Guomin zhengfu, 001–05161–0001, 7–8.

[486] 'Lu Diping deng qing huifu si Kong dianli' [Lu Diping et al request the restoration of the sacrificial rituals to Confucius], *Hongdao* 41 (2 September 1928) 2

Compromise and Control: Responses from Nanjing

Faced with petitions over the course of 1928, the central government acted first to protect temples to Confucius and then, in response to the petitions of Lu Diping and He Jian, to institute an officially-approved Confucian ritual. While these were in part conciliatory gestures, however, they also confirmed the revolutionary traditionalist vision of Confucius as separate from that of many of the petitioners. Nanjing's lawmakers continued to avoid approving the ritual sacrifices for which groups and individuals called.

Li Guannan writes that '[o]nly in 1935, almost seven years after the abolition of the state sacrifices to Confucius, did the inauguration of the National Revival Movement bring forward the issue of protecting the ill-fated Confucius Temples'.[487] However, the first specific order on protecting the temples came on the twenty-fifth of May 1928, in a Ministry of the Interior order 'of the utmost importance'.[488] Xue Dubi, as Minister of the Interior, ordered that Confucius temples around the country be preserved, and in the process appeared to draw a line under attacks on and use of these temples during the Northern Expedition:

> Recently, because of the end of the sacrifices to Confucius, there has in every province been a tendency toward negligence in the protection of Confucius temples, with the result that we hear of destruction of temple buildings and encroachment on temple property. This situation would seem likely to cause social unrest and give rise to protests from the literati...[489]

Xue's order thus in part made a utilitarian argument. Like Chiang Kaishek's ostensibly strategic rejection of attacks on the doctrine of rites Xue stressed that the large groups still attached to Confucius should not be unnecessarily antagonised; protests and requests for the sacrificial rites to be restored indicated the possibility of 'unrest'.

At the same time, however, the order made a positive argument for Confucius: echoing Cai Yuanpei's claim that the end of the sacrifices was an attack only on the imperial institutions that had made use of Confucius. It declared that the University Council's

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[487] Li, 'Culture, Revolution, and Modernity`, 438

[488] 'Guomin zhengfu neizheng bu ling' [Order from the National Government Ministry of the Interior], *Neizheng gongbao* 1.2 (May 1928), 26

[489] 'Guomin zhengfu neizheng bu ling', 26

move was 'not at all an attack on his character, learning, or position in culture and history'.[490]

In the process, however, Xue's order incorporated a strong critique of Confucian rites, and thus of the very 'literati' it apparently sought to appease: 'ending the sacrifices to Confucius was for [the purpose of] getting rid of superstitious rites and idol-worship'. As Rebecca Nedostup has shown, 'superstition' under the Nanjing government served to label activities as valid targets for government proscription.[491] Though the Central Daily News had denied that the end of the sacrifices constituted a ban and was simply a withdrawal of state involvement, then, the wording of the Ministry order identified the rites as opposed to the modern nation the party-state envisaged, and appeared to place them in the category of practices that should be actively opposed.

Yet, going beyond the University Council's statement, Xue's order nonetheless made an argument for continued institutional recognition of Confucius. Though the precise ritual form might be condemned, Xue argued that 'we can in practice give rise to a spiritual reverence' for Confucius–a reverence deserved for his 'position in the culture and history' of China.[492] It was this 'spiritual reverence' which supplied the official logic for preserving the temples from destruction.

Here Xue showed a willingness to deploy Confucius, appropriately separated from the imperial rites, as a symbol of the 'inherent culture' and morality that his Ministry had identified in April as China's 'special spirit'.[493] Yet it was deemed insufficient for the temples to stand preserved as a mere visible, physical reminder of this historical role. In addition to 'appropriately preserv[ing] the Confucius temples in each place to ease the people's minds and give them something to respect', the order therefore specified that local governments should 'appropriately use' the sites 'to run libraries, sports grounds, and common people's schools for the purposes of training talent, so that the Confucius temples may be preserved forever'. While giving the buildings specific functions within the modern nation, and thus a practical reason for their preservation with the end of government-supported rites, this approach also, as the order put it, 'resonate[d] with

[490] 'Guomin zhengfu neizheng bu ling', 26
[491] Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 8–11
[492] 'Guomin zhengfu neizheng bu ling', 26
[493] 'Xingzheng yuan zhuan neizhengbu guanyu fayang Zhongguo wenhua zhongxin yi dian guo ji cheng yu Guomin zhengfu pi', 12

Confucius' aim to teach people'. The order thus recalled the historical role of the temples as part of the government schools which trained literati through the imperial examination system, and was consonant with the positive view Cai Yuanpei had presented of Confucius as a 'commoner who taught'.[494]

This combination of 'spiritual reverence' for Confucius with suspicion of the sacrificial rites also characterised the government's response to petitions. Although the telegram which succeeded in effecting a policy change was that of He Jian and Lu Diping, the decision reached corresponded to Li Zongren's earlier balanced proposal, more attuned to radical attacks on the rites, rather than the full-scale reinstatement Lu and He called for. With its high-level origins, on its reception by the Nanjing government the telegram was passed to the Ministry of the Interior and the University Council for discussion, and these bodies consequently contacted the National Government to indicate that they accepted the principle of commemorating Confucius. At the same time, however, they added that since the University Council had already done away with the official spring and autumn rights, it was 'not convenient to restore them'. The result was a compromise that recalled that of the Ministry of Education, also led by Cai Yuanpei, at the beginning of the Republic: the solution to the rites problem and the answer to Lu and He's request (along with many others) was that Confucius' birthday could be celebrated as a school holiday.[495]

On receiving this proposal, the ninety-eighth National Government meeting agreed with it on October 2 1928 and commanded the Ministry of the Interior and the University Council to organise it. This meeting added in its resolution that there was 'no need to determine a ritual format' for the day.[496] Though the decision appeared to identify Confucius as worthy of reverence, then, the government's concern with how this reverence was to be shown–a crucial issue for those campaigning for resumption or expansion of the rites–was limited. The Ministry of the Interior issued the order to local governments just three days before the commemoration day with no specifics on the ritual format, noting only that commemoration should include 'speeches on Confucius' words and actions'. The Ministry of Education (formed in October to replace the University Council) did not issue a corresponding order to schools until November, after

[494] 'Guomin zhengfu neizheng bu ling', 26
[495] 'Kongzi sidian an', *Guoshiguan* archives, Guomin zhengfu, 001–05161–0001, 19–22
[496] 'Kongzi sidian an', *Guoshiguan* archives, Guomin zhengfu, 001–05161–0001, 23–25

Confucius' birthday: schools were to stop classes for two hours on Confucius' lunar birthday to hold similar speeches.[497]

Incomplete success: celebrations, continued negotiation, and contestation

The state's recognition of Confucius provoked celebration among those who had campaigned. Just as they had used journals to publicise their campaigns, the Confucians also constructed public responses. Yet in comparison to the demands of those who had petitioned, the birthday commemoration that resulted was presented only as a partial success, and did not mark the end of their efforts to influence Nanjing.

Initial celebration in October 1928, when the government order was issued and publicised, was marked by a happy coincidence noted by *Shenbao* writer Cheng Zhanlu: the date identified as Confucius' birthday was, as under the Beijing government, the twenty-seventh day of the eighth lunar month, and in 1928 this day happened to be the tenth of October. Confucius thus shared his first Guomindang-recognised birthday with National Day, which celebrated the founding of the Republic and was one of the most significant holidays in the Nanjing government's calendar. As Cheng put it, the coincidence of dates stood as a symbol of the unity of Confucius with the newly-founded Nanjing government in a general 'atmosphere of renewal'.

Cheng's article presented the party-state as more authentically Confucian than the Beijing government and regional military leaders it had supplanted: though the 'militarists' had 'respected old Mr Confucius on the surface', supporting spring and autumn Grand Sacrifices, their association with him could only be false because they sought 'the world for themselves' (*tianxia wei si*) and so struggled amongst themselves for power. Sun Yatsen, on the other hand, had promoted Confucius' ideal of 'the world belonging to all' (*tianxia wei gong*) and the result was an absolute and unproblematic unity in which 'to sing the national anthem is to recite Confucius' sagely lesson' and 'to carry out the Director-General's last testament is to realise Confucius' ideas'. In the new China under Nanjing's rule, 'all within the four seas is united, and the Way of the Sage is as flourishing and clear as the blue sky and white sun'.[498]

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[497] 'Henan jiaoyu ting tongling di babasan hao' [Order 883 from the Henan Education Department], *Henan jiaoyu* 23 (1929), 35–36

[498] Cheng Zhanlu, 'Guoqing yu tianxia wei gong', *Shenbao* 10 October 1928, 17

Advocates of Confucian ritual enthusiastically acted out this identification of Confucius with the Nanjing state. Although the initial proposal from the Ministries of Education and the Interior specified a school holiday, the lack of details in the government's announcement, publicised in newspapers, appeared to sanction commemorative practice in temples. A *Shenbao* article reported that on the tenth of October in Songjiang 'personages from all circles went to the town Confucius temple to hold a ceremony'.[499] The most remarked-on commemorative activity was in Hunan, where the successful telegram calling for state recognition of Confucius had originated: the *Chinese Educational Review* (*Jiaoyu zazhi*) titled its report 'The grandest Confucius memorial ceremony since the revolution'.[500] According to the *Shenbao* report Lu Diping and He Jian deputed representatives to prepare for the ceremony with 'gentry of the school temple' (*xuegong*, which served as both Confucian temple and the school which had prepared local candidates for the imperial state examinations), with the provincial government providing funding. At around 4am on the tenth of October all provincial government members gathered together with officers and students from the education section of the second and thirty-fifth armies. The ritual format appeared to match that called for by the central government's vague order, following 'the normal format for holding meetings': Lu and He 'read out the Director-General's last testament and held a silence of three minutes, then gave three bows toward an image of Confucius'. Both gave speeches to mark the occasion, as did Wang Zhiping.[501]

Confucians worked to publicise the connections between Confucius and the government. The reports in the *Shenbao* and the *Chinese Educational Review* quoted a pamphlet distributed by Lu and He which, like the format of the ceremony itself, stressed the connection between Confucius and Sun Yatsen by claiming that 'the essential meaning promoted in the Three Principles of the People is based entirely on the Four Books and Six Classics'.[502] The eight characters of Sun's 'inherent morality' and the chain from 'righting the heart' to 'bringing peace to the world' in the *Great Learning* revealed Sun's 'extreme veneration for Confucius'; as with Chen Zhanlu's *Shenbao* article, this era of Confucius-inspired moral Guomindang rule stood in contrast to the bloody power

[499] 'Songjiang', *Shenbao* 12 October 1928, 10
[500] 'Geming hou Kongdan jinian zhi kongqian shengdian' [The grandest Confucius memorial ceremony since the revolution], *Jiaoyu zazhi* 20.11, 1–2
[501] 'Geming hou Kongdan jinian zhi kongqian shengdian', 1–2
[502] The 'Six Classics' refers to the Five Classics plus the *Book of Music* (*Yueji*), presumed missing.

struggles of the 'militarists'. The pamphlet concluded by noting approvingly that, while the government leaders held their ceremony in Changsha, 'groups among the masses' held 'private sacrifices' across Hunan, coinciding with Lu and He's proposal and thus proving that the government's union with Confucius enjoyed wide popular support.[503]

Confucian ritual following the government's announcement, in Hunan and elsewhere, thus appeared to help legitimate the Nanjing state among those who had campaigned for the sacrifices to be restored. The activities of the latter, in turn, were legitimated by the official birthday commemoration. However, in practice the announcement did not remove cultural antagonism between these groups and the Guomindang. The enthusiasm of Lu Diping, He Jian, Chen Zhanlu and others notwithstanding, the ritual meeting of Confucius with the Guomindang was a troubled one.

Though the coinciding of Confucius' lunar birthday with the National Day was a good omen for Chen Zhanlu, the result from a ritual standpoint was not necessarily positive. The *Shenbao* report from Songjiang suggested that the ritual competition noted earlier between the party and Confucius had remained, with the result that the commemoration of Confucius in the temple was abbreviated: '...because it was the same day as the National Day, and at 9am [those present] needed to take part in the National Day commemoration ceremony, the Confucius commemoration was held earlier at 8am with thirty or more people attending, and the ritual format was very simple'.[504]

Given the widespread ceremonies it had legitimised, the government needed to establish that the new memorial day did not equal support for sacrificial rites: when the head of the Confucian Religion Association branch in Pucheng, Fujian petitioned the government for the 'established cost for sacrificing to Confucius' in November 1928, the Ministry of the Interior replied that Confucius' birthday had become a commemoration day, with speeches on Confucius (rather than sacrifices), and thus there was 'no need for further discussion'.[505]

Consequently, although Confucian campaigners publicly welcomed the government's

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503 'Geming hou Kongdan jinian zhi kongqian shengdian', 2
504 'Songjiang', *Shenbao*, 12 October 1928, 10
505 'Guomin zhengfu neizheng bu pi' [Instructions from the National Government Ministry of the Interior], *Neizheng Gongbao* 1.8 (November 1928), 6

decision, they also presented it as incomplete. Though the ceremony in Changsha linked the Guomindang government with Confucius, Lu Diping and He Jian's pamphlet continued to press their case, noting that 'the spring and autumn practices still await restoration'.[506] Moreover, and unlike He and Lu's original telegram to the central government, the arguments for 'revering Confucius' put forward in the pamphlet and republished in *Shenbao* and the *Chinese Educational Review* implied strong criticism of the University Council's earlier decision, noting that

> Now the country is united, the period of political tutelage has started, we at last have hope of putting aside weapons and letting the people rest, and forever pacifying internal chaos... if we destroy morality and do away with the sacrifices to Confucius, learning from the tyrannous example of the Qin dynasty and following the cruelty of Soviet Russia, we will see great chaos rapidly arrive and our race face extinction...[507]

This pamphlet thus did not simply describe an easy compatibility between the Guomindang government and Confucius: it was the task of the campaigners to push the government away from a disastrous course, and this job remained unfinished. The Ministry of the Interior had issued an order to protect Confucian temples because, according to the pamphlet, the Ministry 'saw the turmoil in society, and feared the accusations of the literati'. The credit for this decision and the birthday commemoration thus appeared to go to those literati who called for change–including Li Zongren in Wuhan, and Lu Diping and He Jian themselves–rather than to the central government which was pushed to act. The pamphlet further claimed a mandate for this action in that 'of our nation of four hundred million, around ninety-nine percent do not agree with the end of the Confucian sacrifices'.[508] At the ceremony which ostensibly united Confucius with the Nanjing government, then, the Hunan leaders sent out a challenging message that that government had failed to represent the people and–as long as the sacrifices remained unrestored–would continue to do so.

More explicit in his criticisms was Wang Zhiping, who had initially petitioned Lu and He and who had given a speech at the Changsha commemoration. Wang celebrated the government's decision by editing 'Chinese Culture: the World's Dawning Light' (*Shijie shuguang zhi Zhonghua wenhua*), intended to be the first issue of a journal, which compiled

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506 'Geming hou Kongdan jinian zhi kongqian shengdian', 2
507 'Geming hou Kongdan jinian zhi kongqian shengdian', 2
508 'Geming hou Kongdan jinian zhi kongqian shengdian', 2

texts petitioning for the sacrifices to be restored and commenting on the issue.[509] Following the text distributed at the commemoration, Wang identified his own and others' actions as a 'revitalisation movement'. He thus showed a command of the language of revolutionary traditionalism, combining Dai Jitao's emphasis on 'revitalisation' with the new political tool of the 'movement' and appealing to Sun Yatsen's revolutionary principles.[510] Wang, Lu, He and others thus were the protagonists with the backing of the nation as a whole; the birthday decision could thus be read as legitimating Confucian groups and their cause.

Identifying his 'movement' as protagonist also involved finding a villain in Cai Yuanpei, who, as in earlier petitions, took the blame for ending the sacrifices. While Wang's journal marked a further step in the unfinished campaign to have these reinstated, it also presented it as a celebration of victory over Cai and his University Council. In October the latter had been disbanded and replaced by a Ministry of Education under Jiang Menglin; Wang included proposals to this effect submitted to the fifth plenum of the second Guomindang Central Executive Committee in August 1928, including one by Li Zongren, under the title 'Side Attack from Supporting Forces' (*Fentu xiji zhi zhugong jun*).[511] The publication also included, in its section on the results of the campaign, newspaper reports on the end of the University Council and the resignation of Cai Yuanpei using the titles 'The University Council that Destroyed China's Inherent Culture is Disbanded' (*Huiqi Zhongguo guyou wenhua zhi daxue yuan quxiao*) and 'The University Council Head who Called for the Destruction of China's Inherent Culture Resigns' (*Zhuzhang huiqi Zhongguo guyou wenhua zhi daxue yuanzhang ci*).[512] Wang thereby appeared to present the disbandment itself as a product of his 'movement'.[513]

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[509] *Shijie shuguang zhi Zhonghua wenhua* 1 (October 1928). A second issue did not follow until 1930.

[510] 'Ben kan qishi', *Shijie shuguang zhi Zhonghua wenhua* 1 (October 1928), 1. The journal's editors associated it with Sun by beginning with extracts from Sun Yatsen's lectures on nationalism celebrating 'inherent morality' and the section of the people's rights lectures tracing native precedents (*Shijie shuguang zhi Zhonghua wenhua* 1 (October 1928) pp. 2–5)

[511] 'Fentu xiji zhi zhugong jun' [Side attack from supporting forces], *Shijie shuguang zhi Zhonghua wenhua* 1 (October 1928), 79–94

[512] 'Huiqi Zhongguo guyou wenhua zhi daxue yuan quxiao' [The University Council that destroyed China's inherent culture is disbanded] and 'Zhuzhang huiqi Zhongguo guyou wenhua zhi daxue yuanzhang ci', ['The University Council head who called for the Destruction of China's Inherent Culture Resigns] Shijie shuguang zhi Zhonghua wenhua 1 (October 1928), 96–98

[513] Studies of the Council and the Ministry of Education instead find the explanation in power struggles within the Nanjing state: the University Council, which claimed institutional independence, experienced opposition from its founding in 1927 as Cai sought to put university heads in charge of education; Linden, 'Politics and Education in Nationalist China: the Case of the University Council', 774–75. The proposals included in Wang's journal refer to the administrative benefits of a Ministry of Education, with Li Zongren arguing that the University Council's remit to 'research learning' conflicted with the

Continued tensions were also evident in the ostensibly celebratory articles in the journal of the Sichuan Great Completion Society (*Dacheng hui*). Like Chen Zhanlu's article in the *Shenbao*, the writers stressed the coincidence with the national day as a 'good omen' showing how their vision of a Confucian religion meshed with the Nanjing government's new China: 'Confucius is China's only bringer of fortune, and the Republic is China's only protector'. At the same time, however, it showed that the petitioners had been right:

> How strange! This year the proposal to get rid of sacrifices to Confucius had just been introduced... the whole country had just forgotten Confucius, when Confucius' birthday coincided with National Day. This could not be men's doing; it must be Heaven...[514]

Heaven's will, however, went far beyond the recognition of Confucius' birthday: the society continued to call for a full Confucian religion. Though this was a step far beyond what the party-state was willing to concede, the author at least still advocated the Republic and the National Day itself, concluding with 'long live the Republic!' Another article in the same journal was more problematic in its relation with the Nanjing government, by calling into question its claims to have resolved China's problems:

> To celebrate [National Day] is to celebrate our country becoming daily more orderly. But our country does not... by contrast, it daily becomes more chaotic. Chaos is nothing to celebrate, and the meaning of celebration is therefore empty.[515]

In this account true celebration was contingent on recognising and revering Confucius as Heaven intended. Still more challenging to the state was a writer called Li Delong, who opened his article by declaring

> I don't know what there is to celebrate. People explain that we are celebrating our people's escape from three hundred years of tyranny

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promotion of general, particularly primary, education. There was no mention of the Confucius issue, although he did close by calling for a focus on 'morality': 'in recent years morality has sunk... youth and students have been intoxicated by the Communist Party... in future we should further require the Ministry of Education to carefully plan to reverse this decline...'. 'Li Zongren sheli jiaoyubu yi qi puji jiaoyu zhi ti'an' [Li Zongren proposes founding a Ministry of Education to spread education], *Shijie shuguang zhi Zhonghua wenhua* 1 (October 1928), 79–81

514 Guo Yanqian, 'Xian shi shengri ji guoqing ye' [The former sage's birthday is national day], *Dacheng hui conglu* 23 (Autumn 1928), 4

515 Xu Jiong, 'Xian shi shengri nai guoqing ye' [The former sage's birthday is national day] *Dacheng hui conglu*, 7

by foreigners and thousands of years of restriction by autocracy...[516]

Li continued by criticising this view, noting that the contemporary age of 'chaos' could not compare either to the 'autocratic' Han Wendi, Han Jingdi and Han Zhangdi, Tang Taizong, and Tang Xuanzong or to the 'alien autocracy' of the much more recent Kangxi, Yongzheng, Qianlong, and Jiaqing Emperors, each of whom was identified with periods of peace and prosperity. In Li's account the success of these ages was accomplished by following Confucius' teachings, and disaster followed by abandoning them. Thus Li challenged the very political basis of the Republic; the moral teachings of Confucius, expressed through 'filial piety, brotherly love, loyalty, trust, propriety, righteousness, integrity, and a sense of shame' (the eight-character formula which Yuan Shikai had promoted, rather than the similar one put forward by Sun Yatsen), stood as more significant than the political revolution on which the Guomindang's legitimacy depended. Where revolutionaries like Dai Jitao had used the Golden Age trope to claim Confucius while denouncing imperial orthodoxy, Li's interpretation made no such differentiation.

Accordingly campaigns to reinstate official recognition of the spring and autumn sacrifices did not stop.[517] The coming of the spring sacrifice date again provoked requests to the central government, with Gansu 'sacrificial official' Dan Fengming–who had evidently been able to retain his post at the civil temple despite the end of the rites–sending a query only to be told that, since the government had already established a birthday commemoration, the spring and autumn rites were over.[518] The continued raising of the rites issue also marked areas where Nanjing's control was reduced. At the end of 1928 the Education Department of the Guangdong Provincial Government officially discussed Sun Shaoyuan's letter of protest, apparently ignoring the fact that the central government had already issued a directive on Confucius' birthday. As a result of this discussion Huang Jie, head of the Department of Education and former Southern Society poet, wrote a letter of support to Sun Shaoyuan which was published in the Guangzhou Republican Daily newspaper and republished in March 1929 in the *Threads of*

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[516] Li Delong, 'Xian shi shengri ji guoqing ye' [The former sage's birthday is national day] *Dacheng hui conglu*, 6

[517] E.g. 'Kongzi sidian an', *Guoshiguan* archives, Guomin zhengfu, 001–05161–0001, 33–34, 35–36

[518] 'Gansu sheng zhengfu zhiling: Ling sheng wenmiao fengsiguan Dan Fengming' [Order of the Gansu provincial government: to provincial Confucius temple sacrifice official Dan Fengming], *Gansu sheng gongbao* 83 (9 March 1929), 64–65

Talk journal.[519] Like Hunan, Guangzhou was under the political influence of the so-called Guangxi Clique dominated by Li Zongren, and Huang Jie's public response echoed Li's own contribution to the rites campaign.

Conclusion

Li Guannan is right to stress that the vision of Confucius put forward by the Nanjing state was as a 'component of Chinese cultural heritage', explicitly distanced from the sacrificial rites instituted by China's imperial dynasties and from the religious claims of post-imperial 'Confucian' groups. Yet, as this chapter has shown, policies on Confucius were developed in response to petitions and understood in the context of alternative claims. As a result, 'Confucianism' was anything but 'depoliticised' or 'secularized'.

A November 1928 petition from Zhang Shengzhi, a sacrifice official in Jixi, Anhui province, shows how the discursive meshing of Sun Yatsen with Confucius brought in unwelcome ritual associations. Zhang appeared unaware of the birthday order, declaring that 'there has not been an order' following Lu Diping and He Jian's petition. He matched earlier petitions in stressing the direct connection between Confucius and the revolutionary party, using the argument that 'Confucius was truly the founder of revolution' for his approval of the fall of the Xia and the Shang. Again like earlier petitions, Zhang directly associated Sun with Confucius with quotations the former had approved of and used: 'when the Great Way prevails all under heaven belongs to all', 'reserving 'inherent morality' as a means to the 'Great Unity', and the chain from 'investigating things' to 'bringing peace to the world'. [520] Yet Zhang understood this relationship between Sun and Confucius in a way that privileged a ritual order very different from that of the Guomindang:

> ...why did [Cai Yuanpei]... not propose sacrificing to Sun Yatsen as a subsidiary sacrifice to Confucius? This would be right. If we look at today's reverence for [Sun], hanging an image and bowing, it is called respect, but it is meaningless and inappropriate. Some profiteers even draw his image on their products as a trademark; this is truly blasphemous.[521]

[519] Huang Jie, 'Huang Jie han Sun Guangting'
[520] 'Kongzi sidian an', *Guoshiguan* archives, Guomin zhengfu, 001–05161–0001, 33–34
[521] 'Kongzi sidian an', *Guoshiguan* archives, Guomin zhengfu, 001–05161–0001, 33–34

Zhang added that Sun could either be sacrificed to in the Confucius temples, or have his own accompanying shrine like the martial heroes Guan Yu and Yue Fei. Proper 'respect' thus could only be shown through a temple-based sacrificial ritual framework into which Sun Yatsen could be incorporated, and which specifically ruled out the modern forms of commemoration the Nanjing government actively promoted. When Guomindang members appropriated Confucius, it seemed the self-proclaimed adherents of Confucius could make counter-claims on the Guomindang.

The difficulties of such associations are also evident in Hu Shi's radical criticism of the Nanjing regime. When Hu condemned the Guomindang regime as 'reactionary', he cited the case of the rites: '[s]acrifices to Confucius have been stopped, but one telegram from military figures (Lu Diping and He Jian) can make the government immediately restore the Confucius memorial day'.[522] Although the Nanjing state took measures to avoid its actions being seen as a 'restoration' of the imperial rites, in the context of the campaign to bring back the rites and the celebratory rituals held in Confucian temples, this distinction was easily elided.

Responses to Hu Shi indicate that the ritual recognition of Confucius remained difficult to reconcile with the revolutionary party. Chen Guangyu's refutation in the *Republican Daily News* avoided the issue of the ceremony entirely, while Gu Lao's earlier speech did so obliquely, by saying dismissively that Hu's 'biggest grounds [for declaring the party 'reactionary'] are to say that there is [a tendency toward] restoration of antiquity in Guangdong and Hunan, and that important figures in the party use classical language in their telegrams'.[523] The implication was that these were small issues, as is confirmed at the end of this short speech: 'where there are occasionally some [matters] that suggest [efforts to] restore antiquity, we cannot place the blame solely on [our] one party'.[524] Gu Lao thus sought to disassociate ritual activities in Changsha from the party as a whole: their ritual practices and moral claims might deserve criticism, but they could be distanced from the revolutionary Guomindang. The construction of 'Chinese cultural heritage' and Confucius' place within it remained a diverse and contested process.

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[522] Hu Shi, 'Xin wenhua yundong yu Guomindang', 5

[523] Gu Lao, 'Hu Boshi zuijin de hushuo'

[524] Gu Lao, 'Hu Boshi zuijin de hushuo'

7. Negotiating Orthodoxy III: Contesting the Confucian Way

In the late 1920s the relationship between Confucius and Guomindang doctrines was a contested one, as the ambiguities and controversies over Confucius evident in 1928 shaped the Nanjing regime's discourse. Controversy focused on Dai Jitao's 'transmission of the Way' account of the direct link between Confucius and Sun Yatsen, which became a target for opponents of the Nanjing regime and led to contention even within it. Existing scholarship has passed over these controversies: Jin Guantao writes that 'the KMT rapidly and broadly accepted Dai's interpretation', while studies of Dai Jitao state that 'the party ideologists of the Nanking government borrowed heavily from [Dai's] themes' and identify these themes as 'a major thematic strand in Kuomintang ideological work'.[525]

In this chapter I show by contrast that party members wrestled over the 'transmission of the Way'. This was despite the fact that, as shown in Chapter Four, in 1928 revolutionary traditionalist language became a defining feature of the new Nanjing state as its members claimed national power and differentiated themselves from their Communist and other rivals. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Five important precedents for this revolutionary traditionalism (not least in the words of Sun Yatsen) had incorporated Confucius as a representative of national culture, a model for revolutionary action, and an inspiration for party doctrines.

Yet even as the party-state issued orders to protect temples to Confucius and to commemorate his birth, public discourse remained divided. As we have seen, those calling for Confucian rites appropriated the party-state's traditionalist language to argue for the rites as consonant with (and essential for the success of) the Guomindang's nation-building mission. In reaction to these campaigns and more generally because of the association of Confucius with imperial-era rites and campaigns for 'Confucian religion', radical opposition to Confucian rites represented a strong current within party discourse, and even journals and other publications under Nanjing's auspices included a wide range of representations of Confucius, including strongly negative ones. The case

[525] Jin, Guantao, 'Socialism and tradition: The formation and development of modern Chinese political culture', *The Journal of Contemporary China* 2.3 (1993), 3-17, 12; Mast and Saywell, 'Revolution out of tradition', 97; Michael Lestz, 'The meaning of revival: the Kuomintang "New Right" and party building in Republican China, 1925–1936' (Doctoral thesis, Yale University, 1982), 99

of Confucius thus shows the tensions that the multiple meanings of 'traditional' symbols, claimed and represented by different groups, could create.

These disputes were resolved only to some extent in 1931, when Chiang Kaishek intervened to publicly approve Dai Jitao's interpretation. For Chiang's critics, his use of the 'transmission' marks a counter-revolutionary 'Confucianisation of the Three Principles of the People' in which he abandoned the modern world to restore 'feudal ethics'.[526] Yet the 'transmission' put forward by Chiang was a revolutionary traditionalist synthesis, marked by the preceding struggles over the integration of references to the past with the revolutionary mission. Where members of the Nanjing regime celebrated Confucius, they attempted at the same time to control him.

Attacking the Way

Hu Shi, as we have seen, described the 1928 commemoration of Confucius as a symptom of the government's turn to 'reaction'. In this he was far from alone. The increasing deployment of the language of moral revival within the Nanjing party-state in 1927 and 1928 allowed opponents outside the party, as well as anti-Chiang factions within it, to adopt the culturally radical legacy associated with the 'New Culture' against the Nanjing government. In this process Dai Jitao's 'transmission of the Way' formula, according to which Sun Yatsen had inherited his thinking directly from Confucius, formed an important target.

This was partly due to Dai's prominence: as a longstanding colleague of Chiang Kaishek, a senior party member who had served as Sun Yatsen's secretary, and an early advocate of separating from the Communist Party, Dai Jitao was a major figure in the central government in Nanjing. He also served on the Central Executive Committee and was made head of the Examination Yuan in October 1928.[527] As discussed in Chapter Four, his 1925 writings had been among the most prominent and, thanks particularly to the opposition of Communists, notorious interpretations of the party's principles. Moreover they had anticipated developments in Nanjing state discourse by making traditionalist arguments central to the anti-Communist struggle.

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[526] Bai Chun, 'Jiang Jieshe ruhua sanmin zhuyi zhi pingxi' [Analysis of Chiang Kaishe's Confucianisation of the Three Principles of the People], *Nanjing zhengzhi xueyuan xuebao* 19.1 (2003), 76–79

[527] Fan Xiaofang, Bao Dongpo and Li Jianli, *Dai Jitao zhuan*, 138, 143–44

Consequently, prior to the official measures recognising Confucius in 1928, critics were already using Dai's 'transmission' as a weapon against Nanjing. This is clear from an article in the Awakened Lion Weekly (*Xingshi zhoubao*), a journal representing the Chinese Youth Party (*Zhongguo qingnian dang*), which positioned itself against communism, imperialism and the Guomindang.[528] The article directly invoked the 'New Culture' legacy of writers like Chen Duxiu with a far-reaching attack on 'idol worship': 'since the May Fourth movement, the trend for the liberation of thought has been launched; if the Confucian shop remains to be struck down, and the idol of Confucius to be swept away, how much more Sun Yat-sen?'[529]

If the Guomindang's elevation of Sun suggested it was mired in the past, Dai Jitao's appeal to Confucius served as a still more clear example in the above article:

> Those in the Guomindang with some awareness... have realised that the Three Principles of the People cannot hold the people's minds in check and meet the needs of the current situation, so they seek a new way... however… having left the trap of the Three Principles they have leapt into the trap of traditional, old thinking… Dai Jitao for instance goes so far as to say Sun Yat-sen directly inherited the Way from Confucius…[530]

In doing so, and in putting forward 'benevolence, righteousness, loyalty, and reciprocity' as 'the essence of the Three Principles', Dai was in this view failing to use 'scientific principles'. In this respect Dai's views represented the wider Nanjing regime: the 'traditional' terminology of 'China's old morality', as put forward in Guomindang discourse, was deemed here to be totally inapplicable in twentieth century China.

Similar arguments against linking the Three Principles to Confucius were also made by those openly opposed to Chiang Kaishek from within the only tenuously unified party. In 1928 Chiang's major opponents within the party were the members of the broad 'leftist' group that would become known as the 'reorganisation faction' (*Gaizu pai*). They backed

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[528] For the Chinese Youth Party see Edmund Fung, 'The Alternative of Loyal Opposition: The Chinese Youth Party and Chinese Democracy, 1937- 1949', *Modern China* 17.2 (April 1991), 260–89

[529] Hui Zhi, 'Guomindang de xin shengming' [The Guomindang's new life], *Xingshi zhoubao* (4 February 1928), 1–3, 2

[530] Hui Zhi, 'Guomindang de *Xin shengming*', 3

the exiled Wang Jingwei as the true inheritor of Sun Yat-sen's revolution and called for reform of party and government to accord with the reorganisation of 1924.[531] A crucial part of their oppositional campaign, inevitably, was to dispute the ideological claims made by those who supported Chiang Kaishek, denying the interpretations of the Three Principles of the People that helped legitimate his claim to party and national leadership.

Faction member Shi Cuntong's article 'How Can We Protect the Three Principles of the People?' ('Ruhe baozhang Sanmin zhuyi?), published in the group's journal *Revolutionary Critic* (*Geming pinglun*), was one such delegitimising effort. Shi described the existence of a 'faction' within the Guomindang characterised by its adherence to the notion of the transmission of the Way: 'some think the Three Principles have inherited this transmission of the Way, some that… the foundations of the Three Principles lie in some philosophy, and some think their foundations lie in some kind of ethics or morality'.[532] This was not solely an attack on Dai: Shi's article also mentioned other approaches, such as Hu Hanmin's claim that the Three Principles were 'interlinked', and the concept of a 'revolution of all the people' put forward by the Nanjing-supporting anarchists Li Shizeng and Wu Zhihui.'[533] Indeed, the apparent diversity of views itself served as a criticism, evincing confusion and differences of opinion where the revolutionary party should be united. Yet the primary target of the attack was Dai's version of the Three Principles, as indicated by the references to the transmission of the Way, ethics, and 'foundations'.

Again, Dai Jitao stood accused here of failing to understand the forward movement of history. The 'transmission of the Way' was a trans-historical claim: according to Shi his opponents viewed the Three Principles of the People as an 'eternally unchanging truth, without time and place, mystical and abstract'. 'Mysticism' and 'idealism' served anti-

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[531] See Wang Ke-wen, 'The Left Guomindang in Opposition, 1927–1931', *Chinese Studies in History* 20.2 (Winter 1986-87), 3–43

[532] Shi Cuntong, 'Ruhe baozhang sanmin zhuyi?' [How can we protect the Three Principles of the People?], in Cai Shongshi , ed., *Zhongguo xiandai sixiangshi ziliao jianbian* [Concise collection of materials on modern Chinese intellectual history] 3 (Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1982), 279–83, 281. Originally published in *Geming pinglun* 11 (1928).

[533] Shi Cuntong, 'Ruhe baozhang Sanmin zhuyi?', 281. For anarchism in the Guomindang see Dirlik, 'The revolution that never was: anarchism in the Guomindang', *Modern China* 15.4 (October 1989), 419–62. The 'revolution of all the people', by rejecting class struggle, provided a point of unity with Dai Jitao's 'national revolution'; Dirlik notes that this notion 'would ultimately undercut anarchism itself' (p. 446) by making the Guomindang state the representative of the entire population and thus authorising its moves to suppress independent revolutionary action.

revolutionary interests by denying class struggle.[534] By contrast, Shi put forward an interpretation of the Three Principles grounded in a 'materialist' and 'scientific' understanding of the 'demands of the masses'.[535] Understood in their proper historical time and place, the Principles called for focus on the 'interests of the oppressed masses, mainly peasants and workers'.[536]

Rejecting the link between the Three Principles and Confucius, this vision of history naturally had no room for 'reverence' for the latter. Already in August 1928, before the government's decision on the rites, Li Zongren's advocacy of commemorating Confucius identified him as an 'enemy of the party' for a writer for the Shandong *Republican News Supplement* (*Guomin xinwen fukan*) with the pen-name Xiao Ming. This journal's advocacy of 'recovering the spirit of the reorganisation period', and attacks on the Western Hills Faction, Li Zongren's 'Guangxi clique', and anarchists in the party, together with its opposition to the Nanjing party centre's suppression of 'mass movements', mark it as a forerunner of the reorganisation faction.[537]

Xiao Ming's article claimed the radical legacy associated with the 'New Culture Movement'. It attacked Confucius himself as well as his imperial legacy, recalling Ye Chucang's writings seven years earlier in *Awakening*: 'other than giving him some space for academic research, in this age of national revolution we have absolutely no connection to Confucius… we cannot let his absurd teachings linger on… [he] was a protector of religious and monarchical authority, promoted the existence of classes, and did his utmost to oppress the masses'.[538] Confucius appeared in this article as an opponent of 'science and democracy', the talismanic watchwords of the 'New Culture Movement'.[539] As with the critiques associated with that movement, this argument gave the teachings and ritual practices of 'Confucianism' a central but fundamentally anti-progressive role in national history: in the imperial era the 'ruling class' and 'Confucius' followers' collaborated together, 'building Confucius temples in each province and town', suppressing rival teachings, and ordering spring and autumn sacrifices across the

[534] Shi Cuntong, 'Ruhe baozhang Sanmin zhuyi?', 281
[535] Shi Cuntong, 'Ruhe baozhang Sanmin zhuyi?', 280–81.
[536] Shi Cuntong, 'Ruhe baozhang Sanmin zhuyi?', 281.
[537] Xiao Ming, 'Women duiyu wuci zhongyang quanhui de yaoqiu' [Our demands for the fifth plenum of the Central Executive Committee], *Guomin xinwen fukan* 1 (5 August 1928), 1–3.s
[538] Xiao Ming, 'Dadao zizhang fengjian shili de si Kong de tiyi' [Strike down the feudal forces' proposal to sacrifice to Confucius], *Guomin xinwen fukan* 7 (17 August 1928) 2–3
[539] Xiao Ming, 'Dadao zizhang fengjian shili de si Kong de tiyi', 2

country.[540] These teachings, maintained and exclusively propagated by these institutions, thus shaped the 'feudal thinking' which the revolution still needed to wipe out.

This argument thus ruled out any institutional commemoration of Confucius in the Republic of China: Xiao Ming made no mention of the fact, noted in the previous chapter, that Li Zongren had called specifically for a birthday commemoration rather than 'sacrifices', using the latter word to describe Li's petition. It also denied any claims for Confucius' contribution to the revolution. Xiao Ming ignored Sun Yatsen's praise for Confucius, declaring the latter's teachings 'absolutely opposed to the Three Principles of the People'.[541] Thus Li Zongren's proposal was 'reactionary'. 'No matter how he produces tenuous and partial so-called reasons', the article declared, 'at heart this [proposal] opposes the position of the national revolution. Now in Hunan and Hubei regulations reducing tenant farmers' rents by a quarter have been annulled, and Commander-in-Chief Bai [Chongxi, an ally of Li's] has asked for mass movements to stop in each province...' this, with Li's request, meant 'separating from the masses, discarding the masses, and clamping down on the masses', and thus formed steps along 'the road to counter-revolution'.[542] Commemoration of Confucius was here interpreted as a sign that Nanjing was abandoning revolution.

Debating the Way

Criticism of links to Confucius was not limited to Guomindang factions openly opposed to Nanjing. Despite official promotion of moral revival and recognition of Confucius from the Ministry of the Interior, the Sage was a point of controversy amid the on-going struggle to define the new government's doctrines. Writers within the party avoided endorsing Dai Jitao's formula, which, as radical criticisms demonstrated, could easily be portrayed as anti-progressive and which brought in unwelcome religious and ritual associations. Yet writers loyal to Nanjing needed to deal with Sun Yatsen's own traditionalist claims and highlighting of Confucius, as well as the 1928 policies on temples and commemoration. The solution lay in the strategies of revolutionary traditionalism, stressing the utility of appeals to the past while insisting on the priority of the present within a progressive historical narrative.

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[540] Xiao Ming, 'Dadao zizhang fengjian shili de si Kong de tiyi', 2
[541] Xiao Ming, 'Dadao zizhang fengjian shili de si Kong de tiyi', 3
[542] Xiao Ming, 'Dadao zizhang fengjian shili de si Kong de tiyi', 3

As we have seen, reorganisation faction member Shi Cuntong had named Hu Hanmin along with Dai as an 'idealist' appealing to a trans-historical 'Way'.[543] However, in 1927 Hu, the longstanding colleague of Sun Yatsen who had joined Chiang's alliance against the Communists and was rewarded with the post of chairman of the Central Political Council in Nanjing, put forward his own version of the Three Principles of the People that was positioned in direct opposition to Dai's connection between Confucius and Sun.

In this year the contest over the Three Principles and thus the party's policies remained unsettled, and Hu was among those putting forward a would-be authoritative vision. Where Dai had employed 'the people's livelihood' as the singular essential principle behind Sun's thought, Hu described the three principles as interlocking and interdependent: none occupied a privileged or prior position. Only when taken together could they resolve the equally interlocking threats of 'militarism, bureaucratism, and capitalism' which together constituted imperialism.[544]

In making this argument Hu's articles, serialised in the *Central Bi-monthly* (*Zhongyang banyue kan*) published by the Nanjing regime's Central Propaganda Department, implied a criticism of Dai Jitao's representation of Sun's intellectual inheritance. On the question of a 'philosophical basis' or origin of Sun's thought, Hu stressed Sun's eclecticism and individual genius in simultaneously solving the issues that troubled the modern world: it was 'the crystallisation of the past few hundred years of [global] revolution' and would 'break through the bonds of history'.[545]

In September 1927, however, Hu put forward a more direct criticism of Dai in a letter also published in the *Central Bi-monthly*. Hu's letter, written to fellow party member Chen Rongguang, commented on the latter's own recent article explicating Sun's thought:

> You say 'Though the lectures on Nationalism have an hint of "the six classics are all commentaries on me", in the main they are based on the spirit of the classicists [*rujia*]'. I, on the other hand, think that though Sun makes use of the classicists, the spirit remains that of "the six

[543] Zhao, Suisheng. *Power by Design: Constitution-Making in Nationalist China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), 70.
[544] Hu Hanmin, 'Sanmin zhuyi de lianhuan xing' [The interlocking nature of the Three Principles of the People], *Zhongyang banyue kan* 1.7–1.12 (1927).
[545] Hu Hanmin, 'Sanmin zhuyi de lianhuan xing' (Part 2), *Zhongyang banyue kan* 8 (1927), 2.

> classics are all commentaries on me"; this is where I have declined to agree with Dai Jitao. To go by means of Sun into the classics is not only unsuitable: it is simply unnecessary. Mr Sun in fact made use of the school of the classics and Mohism, and [yet] remained of the twentieth century.... Members of he Confucian school [*Kongmen*] do not exaggerate when they call Confucius more sagely than Yao and Shun; we should not be shy in declaring Mr Sun more sagely than Confucius and Mozi.[546]

Hu's response thus quoted Song Dynasty scholar Lu Jiuyuan to stress the revolutionary traditionalist argument Sun himself had made in his 1919 *Theories of Sun Yatsen*: his was a modern use of the 'ancients', freely making use of and not being constrained by the thought of a past era.[547] Thus the classics were 'commentaries on' Sun's thought, rather than vice versa. Dai Jitao's formula, it seemed, created a danger that readers would go backwards from the study of Sun's works to their presumed source, when in fact Sun had drawn what he needed from the classics and surpassed them; Hu's argument thus recalled that of Luo Dunwei (see Chapter Three), who had written that Sun had scaled a 'higher peak' than Confucius. Hu further emphasised the historical separation of the ancient past from the present, criticising Chen's claim that Confucius' students had formed a 'party', and thus presumably a precedent for modern revolutionary action, as 'somewhat tenuous': 'what we today call a party naturally did not exist in the Spring and Autumn period'.[548]

Chen responded by distancing himself from Dai Jitao's 'transmission) and instead drew on the interpretation favoured by Hu, that Sun's thought was characterised by its unique eclecticism:

> I originally thought [Sun] brought together ancient and modern, Chinese and foreign into a great perfection, not that, as Dai Jitao claims, he was limited to transmitting the Way of one school; thus Sun said only that he followed the national character in revering Confucius in his speeches on nationalism, and used the spirit of the classicists (that is, the spirit of guiding actions according to circumstances)...[549]

Hu's letter and Chen's response thus stressed Sun's priority over Confucius.

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[546] Hu Hanmin, 'Zhongshan xian yu ru Mo' [Sun Yatsen was more worthy than classicists and Mohists], *Zhongyang banyue kan*, 5–6 (September 1927), 1

[547] Lu Jiuyuan quotation from Lu Jiuyuan, *Xiangshan yulu* (Records of Lu Jiuyuan) (Jinan, Shandong youyi chuban, 2000), 24

[548] Hu, 'Zhongshan xian yu ru Mo', 1

[549] Hu Hanmin, 'Zhongshan xian yu ru Mo', 2

As we have seen, petitions calling for sacrifices stressed the links between Guomindang revolutionary traditionalism and Confucius. Yet party media did not welcome these claims, even with the announcement of the limited birthday commemoration measure in October 1928 and Xue Dubi's earlier order to preserve the temples. Instead, party members positioned themselves not only against the sacrificial rites, but also the teachings attributed to Confucius, and the sacrificial rites in particular, as an imperial legacy holding China back and to be separated from party doctrines.

This was in spite of Chiang Kaishek's personal inclinations, as suggested by an April 1928 visit to Confucius' ancestral temple at Qufu. As shown in Chapter Five, although Chiang had identified himself with the ethical values and self-cultivation techniques of the classics, his June 1927 speech calling on propagandists not to denigrate the 'doctrine of rites' was still equivocal on the value of Confucius.

The following year, however, just after the national government had declared on April 20 that the tutelary state's mission was to help the people recover their 'inherent culture' and 'morality', Chiang explicitly identified Confucius as predecessor to Sun Yatsen's revolutionary efforts. He travelled to pay his respects at Qufu from his temporary campaigning base at nearby Yanzhou. There he composed an announcement posted at the temple which, like Sun's earlier speeches and writings proclaiming Confucius to be the 'inventor of revolution', stands out in its apparently unproblematic celebration of the then-divisive figure.[550]

Confucius stood in this account as a unifying national figure, purged of all controversy: 'our country's people revere him with all sincerity, and all earnestly and gladly accept him'. Chiang's vision here was, in sharp contrast to the revolutionary traditionalist emphasis on historical progress, a timeless one in which 'there is no difference between ancient and modern'. Chiang formally praised Confucius in classical terms as the 'teacher of benevolence and righteousness through the ages, illuminator of ethics and renewer of the people, eternal standard for ethical relations'.[551] The text moreover identified Chiang's

[550] E.g. Sun Yatsen, 'Zhongguo geming shi', 355

[551] Chiang Kaishek, 'Jiang Jieshi zun Kong baogao' [Chiang Kaishek's announcement of reverence for Confucius], in Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo Zhonghua minguo shi yanjiushi and Shandong sheng Qufu wenwu guanli weiyuanhui,, eds., *Kongfu dang'an xuanbian* [Selections from the Confucius Mansion archives] 1 (Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 39–40. The text of this written notice,

role with that of Zeng Guofan and others before him, putting down rebellion for the good of the country: 'I, as Commander in Chief, will comfort the people and punish the rebels, obeying Heaven and responding to the people'.[552]

At the same time, Chiang's statement firmly linked Confucius to party doctrines. The announcement stressed the connection between Sun Yatsen and Confucius by citing the elements which the former had found most valuable and 'cleaved close to': the movement from the 'investigation of things' to 'ruling the country and bringing peace to the world', and the *Book of Rites* passage which (re-interpreted to refer to the future 'grand unity') explained that 'when the Great Way is carried out the world will belong to all'.[553] Moreover Chiang directly echoed Dai Jitao when making his 'silent wish' when bowing three times to the image of Confucius: 'the former Director-General learnt from the orthodox [*zhengtong*] thought of the Sage Confucius, developing and realising it to save China... and to save the world... I humbly take up the task of the former teacher'. Chiang further paid respects to the nine-year old designated direct descendant of Confucius, Kong Decheng, and 'truly hoped that he could indeed spread the Sage's morality'.[554]

Given this role as inspiration, Confucius was also vital for the party-state's contemporary mission. Chiang, still engaged in the Northern Expedition and facing the military threat of the Communists, was explicit on this political relevance: 'the national government has proclaimed that it will follow the bequeathed teachings [of Sun], and the Ministry of the Interior has ordered the protection of Confucian temples. [This is because] [i]f we seek the complete uprooting of Communism, without respectfully obeying the Director-General's call to promote 'inherent morality, intelligence and ability' we will not be able to end heterodox talk and set the people's minds at rest'.[555] Chiang's words clearly tied the 'inherent morality' the party promoted to the figure of Confucius, and further connected both to the party's own anti-Communist agenda.

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document number 8971 in the Kong Family Mansion archives in Qufu, is taken from a copy posted in June 1928 at the Confucius temple in Xuzhou, Jiangsu province.

[552] Chiang Kaishek, 'Jiang Jieshi zun Kong baogao', 40

[553] 'Jiang Jieshi zun Kong baogao', 40. For original text see Sun Xidan, *Liji jijie*, 583

[554] *Jiang Zongzheng zongtong dang'an: shilüe gaoben* [Archives of President Chiang Kaishek: Draft Historical Record] Vol. 3 (Xindian: *Guoshiguan*, 2003), 176–77. Hereafter *Shilüe gaoben*. For a discussion of this source see Huang, 'Creating a Public Face for Posterity: the Making of Chiang Kai-shek's Shilüe Manuscripts'.

[555] Chiang Kaishek, 'Jiang Jieshi zun Kong baogao', 40

Although it suggests a personal commitment to Dai Jitao's view, Chiang's notice had only a limited impact, since it seems to have been put up only at the temple complex in Qufu and in a temple at Xuzhou and not immediately publicised more widely. A 1930 letter from Qufu in the Beijing journal *New Earth Monthly* (*Xindi yuekan*), critical of the central government, quoted Chiang's announcement in full while attacking the Kong family's collection of customary taxes and suppression of student protest, but stated that it had hitherto gone unpublished.[556]

However, a report on the event in Shanghai's *Shenbao* newspaper noted that 'Commander-in-Chief Chiang has great reverence for Confucius and Mencius' and mentioned that he bowed three times to the images in both temples.[557] Although it did not refer to Chiang's address or the connection between Sun Yatsen and Confucius, the *Shenbao* thus confirmed the official approval of Confucius already suggested by Xue Dubi's order to preserve the temples.

Nevertheless, Chiang's visit did not prevent critical representations of Confucius among the diverse range of opinions in party media. In criticising campaigns for Confucian ritual, articles in more mainstream party media separated party doctrines from Confucius. For example, at the beginning of 1929 a writer named Zhao Huaizhen, writing in the *Awakening* supplement of the *Republican Daily News*, strongly criticised both Yunnan provincial council member Sun Shaoyuan's campaign for a restoration of the rites and Guangdong Department of Education head Huang Jie's letter of approval.[558]

In contrast to Xiao Ming's earlier article attacking Nanjing, Zhao referred to Sun Yatsen's own approving words. According to Zhao, however, Sun had only occasionally cited texts associated with Confucius, and this did not mean that 'no part of [the texts] can be criticised'. Though this suggested positive as well as negative features in these texts, Zhao's own perspective was entirely negative. He explicitly attacked those who claimed that 'if there were no Confucius, there could be no Director-General' by quoting the *Analects*' 'the superior man is sociable, but not a partisan': the term *dang*, which was repurposed for modern political parties, had historically been a derogatory term

[556] 'Qufu tongxin' [Correspondence from Qufu], *Xindi yuekan* 1.6 (1930), 250–54
[557] 'Beifa ji' [Record of the Northern Expedition], *Shenbao*, 1 May 1928, 8
[558] Zhao Huaizhen, 'Zun Kong lunzhe keyi xiu yi' [Proponents of revering Confucius can stop now], *Juewu* 16 January 1929

describing a group working together to seek its own interests to the detriment of the ruler and the state as a whole.[559] Confucius thus appeared fundamentally opposed to modern parties. Zhao further suggested that any recognition of Confucius' teachings as 'eternal sagely principles' meant rejecting the Three Principles entirely and seeking to use the Analects to 'bring peace and tranquillity to the world'.

For Zhao, connecting Confucius with Sun thus amounted to 'twisting party doctrine', and it was 'not excessive' to call it 'counter-revolutionary'.[560] Yet unlike Xiao Ming, Zhao obviously had to deal with existing central government recognition of Confucius at the end of 1928. For Zhao as a Guomindang supporter, the answer lay in the principle of utility: the inclusion of Confucius as worthy of preservation in the *Standards* marked 'a compromise on ideals for the sake of unity'; as Xue Dubi had suggested in his order to preserve the temples, the aim was to avoid discord.[561]

Other critical voices allowed for an association with Confucius only within a strictly limited language of national culture. An article in the *Jiangsu Party Voice* (*Jiangsu dangsheng*) journal, published in Nanjing by the provincial propaganda bureau, opposed a call by banking entrepreneur, Minister of Industry and Trade, and proclaimed descendant of Confucius Kong Xiangxi to 'protect the Confucius forest and temple' at Qufu. The article criticised not protection itself, but the reasoning supplied: 'it's acceptable to say this is based on the Director-General's lesson to preserve inherent morality and carry forward the national spirit, but if we say that "at this time of reform, people's minds are unstable... there is no guarantee that the youth, with their poor knowledge, will not be misled by the Communist Party followers' heretical talk of smashing the doctrine of rites..." and declare that the temple should be protected to 'set right the people's hearts', why not have Minister Kong [Xiangxi]... promote Confucian Religion... and no longer struggle to realise the Three Principles...'[562] The language of the petitions, it appeared, posed a threat to the revolutionary traditionalist terms appropriate to the Guomindang.

Even within media directly affiliated to Chiang Kaishek, Dai Jitao's Confucius-centred

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[559] See Timothy Brook, 'Auto-organization in Chinese Society' in Brook, Timothy, and B. Michael Frolic. *Civil Society in China* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 29–30. *Analects* source: Zhu Xi, *Si shu zhangju jizhu*, 166

[560] Zhao Huaizhen, 'Zun Kong lunzhe keyi xiu yi'

[561] Zhao Huaizhen, 'Zun Kong lunzhe keyi xiu yi'

[562] Ge, 'Baohu Kongzi linmiao' [Protecting the Confucius forest and temple], *Jiangsu dangsheng* 6 (2 September 1928), 19

vision of the Three Principles was not dominant in the closing years of the 1920s. This is clear from the journal *New Life* (*Xin shengming*), first published in January 1928 by Chiang's supporters in Shanghai. This group included Dai himself, along with Shao Lizi, Chen Guofu, Chen Bulei, and Zhou Fohai. As He Yuan puts it, the journal 'from its inception carried Chiang Kaishek's political wishes'.[563] It was initiated on his orders late in 1927 during his brief period of self-imposed political exile, and its preface laid out its aim:

> The Three Principles of the People were crystallised by the Director-General from decades of experience and combining theories ancient and modern, Chinese and foreign; they are the greatest treasure of the Chinese nation. Where our youth have lost their direction, it is because they do not understand this great treasure's utility and value. We seek to explain the theory and practice of the Three Principles of the People according to progressive science and China's needs; only then can we lead these lost youth to the true path and save them from falling into rash actions.[564]

The journal could thus serve to legitimate the party-state Chiang had set up in Nanjing, staking Chiang's claim to leadership of the national revolution.

Despite serving a clear political purpose, as He Yuan suggests the *New Life* journal was not in practice unified. He shows a shift over time as Chiang returned from his exile and re-established dominance over the reunified Guomindang; with many of the high-ranking founding figures serving in Nanjing, the journal was free to move towards more theoretical and academic concerns that could even find room for Marxist-inspired views including the class-based analysis that characterised 'leftists' like those in the reorganisation faction.[565] Even from the beginning, however, in *New Life* party doctrine was a subject for debate rather than univocal didacticism.

Dai Jitao's work was evidently inspirational for a number of the participants in these debates. In contrast to Hu Hanmin's 'interlinked' version of the Three Principles, Zhou Fohai followed Dai in affirming the 'people's livelihood' as the pre-eminent or foundational principle.[566] Mei Siping, who taught in the Central Party School and was

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[563] He Yuan, *Xin shengming yanjiu* [Research on *New Life*] (Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2011), 2
[564] Chen Bulei, '*Xin shengming* fakan ci' [Inaugural words for *New Life*], *Xin shengming* 1.1 (January 1928)
[565] He Yuan, *Xin shengming yanjiu*, 2
[566] Zhou Fohai, 'Sanmin Zhuyi de Benti' [The essence of the Three Principles of the People], *Xin shengming* 1.11 (November 1928), 2

thus linked to its dean Chen Guofu, likewise approvingly cited Dai's presentation of Sun's thought as 'the philosophy of the people's livelihood', and directly criticised Hu Hanmin's alternative interpretation.[567] Mei argued for the centrality of the 'people's livelihood view of history', which, like Dai's, stood in explicit contrast to the historical materialism on which both Communists and Re-organisation faction members drew for their attacks on the Nanjing government.

In his apparently unfinished article, Mei Siping moreover affirmed the notion that Sun had inherited his thought from a 'great, two thousand-year tradition' passed down by Confucius.[568] Like Dai, Mei was explicitly concerned with reconciling this 'tradition' with radicalism: Mei noted attacks on Dai, who 'did not clearly express this system [behind the Three Principles], and so gave rise to a great deal of misunderstandings among the youth'. Dai's emphasis on 'humaneness and love' as the philosophical foundation of Sun's teachings had failed because of the associations of these terms in post-'New Culture' China: 'when the youth hear the words "traditional thought", they immediately think of things like partial loyalty, filial piety, integrity, and righteousness'. These negative associations were, as ever, a product of 'two thousand years of autocracy''s twisting of the original teachings. Unlike Dai and Sun, however, Mei's solution did not lie in explicating the true original meaning of these now maligned values and reapplying them to the modern world.[569]

Mei instead found in the 'Confucian' tradition a metaphysical basis for the party's doctrines, from which the 'people's livelihood view of history' and 'political and ethical philosophy' which Dai had identified followed in succession. Like that of Nanjing's rivals, this basis was 'materialism'. Mei put forward a reinterpretation of lines from the *Classic of Changes* and the *Great Learning*, finding in them a description of evolution and the 'struggle for existence' which ultimately formed a 'life-based worldview'.[570]

When it came to explaining the meaning of this worldview, Mei united his vision of Confucianism with 'modern science' and 'social research'. The former had shown that the 'struggle for existence' was not necessarily one of 'mutual killing' and could involve

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[567] Mei Siping, 'Minsheng shiguan gailun' [Survey of the People's Livelihood view of history], *Xin shengming* 1.5 (May 1928), 1. For Mei Siping see He, *Xin shengming Yanjiu*, 30–33.
[568] Mei Siping, 'Minsheng shiguan gailun', 1
[569] Mei Siping, 'Minsheng shiguan gailun', 2
[570] Mei Siping, 'Minsheng shiguan gailun', 5.

mutual dependence.[571] The latter demonstrated how the 'life-based worldview' applied to human society. Marxism had mistakenly placed individual economic production before society, whereas more recent work had according to Mei shown the human family to be a natural unit at the basis of society and thus prior to the means of production, confirming the teaching of the *Doctrine of the Mean*: 'the Way of the gentleman begins with the wife and the husband'.[572] Though Mei's article was unfinished, it thus seemed to provide a basis for Dai's arguments: if 'society' existed prior to economic relations, its development might be understood cooperatively rather than through class antagonism, and thus 'humaneness' rather than self-interest could motivate social action.

Mei's elaborate effort could not prevent criticism of the 'transmission'. In the *New Life* effort to elaborate on and legitimate the Three Principles, other writers, rather than attempting to reconfigure the 'transmission' with the demands of modern ideology, attacked it directly. Their point of criticism was not so much the focus on morality which Mei recognised as potentially 'idealist', but the very notion that the distant past could be connected to the present.

Three articles in *New Life* carried this criticism forward by drawing attention to the importance of changing historical context. Like Shi Cuntong's critique, these attacked the 'transmission' claim for its trans-historical nature, which appeared to violate notions of the historical development of society and, as a consequence, the development of thought.

Thus a writer named Shi Jun argued that Sun's thought was fundamentally modern and a product of his environment. In so doing his article echoed Shi Cuntong, noting that some 'judge [Sun's] thought to be some kind of crystallisation of culture, or say he inherited some kind of transmission of the Way; this is nothing more than the psychology of feudal hero worship'.[573] Moreover the article followed previous radical critics in explaining why people had made Sun an 'inheritor of tradition' in political terms, raising the spectre of the 'restoration of antiquity': 'if it is not that they do not understand the connection between thought and environment, then it is because they

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[571] Mei Siping, 'Minsheng shiguan gailun', 7.

[572] Mei Siping, 'Minsheng shiguan gailun', 8–9. Quotation from the *Doctrine of the Mean*: Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, 23

[573] Shi Jun, 'Zongli sixiang yu shidai huanjing' [The Director-General's thought and his era], *Xin shengming* 2.6 (June 1929), 4

twist the true meaning of his thought, to make it a tool for reaction and restoration'.[574] Both Dai Jitao and Mei Siping's positions, it appeared in this article, were politically dangerous through either ignorance or design.

A more detailed refutation of the 'transmission' on historicist grounds came from the historian Tao Xisheng, whose writing for *New Life* indicates the journal's eclecticism: having aligned himself with the Guomindang as late as 1927, by teaching at the Wuhan branch of the party's Central Political and Military Academy, he subsequently joined the Reorganisation faction and thus has been seen as a 'leftist'.[575] Known for his contributions to social history, Tao's analysis of Confucius in *New Life* was fundamentally class-based: 'Confucius was not a scholar of the common people, he was a member of the gentry during the collapse of the feudal system.'[576] As such, Confucius and his teachings were bound to the social order of their time. As a consequence arguments seeking to explain and legitimate the Three Principles were incompatible with Confucius' thought even if they reinterpreted this thought for the new historical context:

> Some want to adapt Confucius to the Three Principles; this is impossible. Looking at the Principle of People's Livelihood, we cannot solve the land problem without reforming the landlord system. On the other hand without the landlord system there is neither Confucius nor his learning.[577]

Instead, for Tao Xisheng combining the two meant 'Confucianising the Three Principles', which he found problematic. Tao treated this problem with greater historical thoroughness than either the proponents or detractors of the 'transmission of the Way', putting forward an account of the seven ways in which 'Confucianising' could theoretically be done by treating 'Confucianism' (*Kongzi xue*) itself as a mutable phenomenon. His article presented these various texts and forms of Confucianism strictly within historical social context.[578]

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[574] Shi Jun, ' Zongli sixiang yu shidai huanjing ', 4

[575] For a brief biography of Tao see He, *Xin shengming yanjiu*, 24–30. In an indication of the fluid character of relationships and political orientations in the Guomindang, however, Dai also later became Chiang Kaishek's personal secretary and is generally believed to have ghost-written *China's Destiny* [*Zhongguo zhi mingyun*], a book published in Chiang's name in 1943. See e.g. Fung, *The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity*, 117

[576] Fang Yue (pen name of Tao Xisheng), 'Kongzi xueshuo zhi fazhan' [The development of Confucian ideas], *Xin shengming* 2.9 (September 1929), 3

[577] Fang Yue, 'Kongzi xueshuo zhi fazhan', 14

[578] Fang Yue, 'Kongzi xueshuo zhi fazhan', 14

None of these versions, however, could accord with Sun's Principles in the eyes of Tao Xisheng. The final, most recent option for 'Confucianising' the Three Principles was explaining them according to the 'emotional impulses of the gentry in the course of their destruction'. Tao thus interpreted contemporary appeals to Confucius as a product of despair. Confucianism of any kind was irrevocably bound up with its class origins: it initially succeeded because it was 'more advanced than the feudal nobility, and suited the development of the newly emergent gentry', but in the modern era it had been superseded by capitalist law-governed countries. Thus any form of Confucianism was inherently incompatible: 'Confucianising the Three Principles not only destroys the Three Principles, it also violates the essence of Confucius and his teachings'.[579]

A further criticism of the transmission of the Way, by Zhou Fohai, indicates how little-established it was as the party line. Tao Xisheng was after all a relative outsider who was evidently influenced by Marxist thought, while Zhou was not only an established member of the party but an associate of Dai Jitao himself. Though Zhou was a member of the Chinese Communist Party on its founding in 1921, he subsequently worked with Dai in Guangzhou and left the Communists, following Dai by criticising them and working with the anti-Communist Western Hills faction of the Guomindang in Shanghai. His name is thus often linked with Dai's, and when he produced his own interpretation of the Three Principles of the People in 1925, Dai wrote a preface to the second edition praising his efforts. At the same time, however, Dai noted that Zhou's work lacked an explanation of 'the foundation of [Sun's] thought, his position in the history of Chinese thought, and the relation of his thought to China's inherent thought', and recommended his own pamphlet for this additional explanation.[580]

When in 1929 Zhou produced his account of 'The Director-General's Position in Chinese History', however, he wrote directly against Dai's version:

> ...others say the Director-General was great because of his humaneness, and so some say that he was a Sage who inherited the transmission of the Way from Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, the Duke of Zhou, and Confucius. This is obviously false. Although [Sun] was devoted to love [*bo'ai*], he was different from [the figures in the 'transmission']. They stood high above the masses, and their humaneness was no more than bestowing their favour... they were

[579] Fang Yue, 'Kongzi xueshuo zhi fazhan', 14
[580] Zhou Fohai, 'Zhongshan xiansheng sixiang gaiguan', 2–3

> fundamentally separated from the masses. The Director-General, on the other hand, was himself one of the common people... he put himself among them and led them to fight for their own liberation. Thus [he] was not a 'virtuous sovereign or wise lord', nor was he what was in the feudal age called a sage or a worthy; he was a modern revolutionary leader'.[581]

Sun thus stood as 'the only great figure' in China's history: the legacy of the past was one of autocracy from which Sun alone had broken free. Zhou further quoted Sun's lectures on the Principle of the People's Rights, in which the latter stated that after learning of their rights the people would no longer be satisfied with the mythical rulers Yao and Shun and instead see them as 'autocratic'.[582]

Confirming and controlling Confucius as part of national culture

While writers in party media continued to debate the role of Confucius, at the end of 1928 a document issued by the Ministry of the Interior, the *Standards for Preserving or Abolishing Temples* (*Shenci cunfei biaozhun*), confirmed that he was worthy of reverence in the Nanjing regime and that his teachings were linked to that regime's doctrines. Yet, reflecting the contested representations of Confucius, the nature of this link was left open to interpretation, and was still far removed from Dai Jitao's much more explicit connection. Moreover, the *Standards* clearly represented an attempt to control Confucius, separating his role as a national symbol from the controversial rites.

The *Standards*' reference to Confucius followed from Xue Dubi's May 1928 order to protect the temples, which stressed Confucius' 'position in culture and history' and suggested that the buildings could give rise to 'respect' and 'spiritual reverence', as well as integrating them into the nation's education system. This order, and the brief subsequent order to commemorate Confucius' birthday, left the Sage's precise 'position in culture and history' undefined, creating scope for religious meanings, sacrificial rituals, and invocations of the imperial era to be associated with the temples and commemorations.

The Ministry of the Interior thus attempted to resolve this symbolic indeterminacy, as part of a broader project to regulate the temples and shrines that still filled China. The

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[581] Zhou Fohai, 'Zongli zai Zhongguo lishi shang de diwei' [The Director-General's place in Chinese history], *Xin shengming* 2.6 (June 1929), 4–5

[582] Zhou Fohai, 'Zongli zai Zhongguo lishi shang de diwei', 5

Standards for Preserving or Abolishing Temples, as the name implies, identified temples by the deities or teachings to which they were dedicated as either desirable or undesirable. Given that a huge range of figures across the span of recorded history were the objects of veneration in the temples, and the importance of temples and temple-based ritual in the lives of communities across the former empire, this was inevitably also a project of defining official national culture, identifying what in the legacy of empire remained worthy of veneration and for what reasons.

In keeping with the earlier order, temples dedicated to Confucius were listed among those to be saved. The *Standards*' argument fitted Confucius and others into a new historical narrative recalling the nationalist historiography promoted from around the turn of the century by Liang Qichao and others, which focused on the progress of the national community through time.[583] Confucius was one of the 'former worthies' who 'made a great contribution to the development of the nation', 'made scholarly discoveries and benefited the people' and 'defended their country, society and people against disaster and depredation, promoting what was advantageous and driving out what was harmful'. If the logic of 'development' was a recent innovation, however, the argument of the *Standards* was also traditionalist in its use of the moral language of the past, describing the worthies as 'loyal, principled, filial, and righteous, suitable as models for humanity'.[584] In this Confucius won a place alongside the mythical first rulers of China Fuxi, Shennong, and the Yellow Emperor, as well as the latter's wife Lei Zu (founder of sericulture), his scribe Cang Jie (founder of written characters), the bringer of cereal cultivation Houji, and the ruler the Great Yu, controller of the floods.

This identification of those who had made cultural contributions was thus far broader than Dai Jitao's exclusive 'transmission of the Way', and moreover did not include the same figures. Unlike Dai's version of the transmission, moreover, the *Standards* did not cut off after Confucius: his successor Mencius apparently deserved national respect, as did Guan Yu and Yue Fei, military heroes from the second and twelfth centuries respectively, and the inventor and craftsman Lu Ban, believed to have lived in the fifth century BC. The generalised narrative of national development thus incorporated a wide range of figures already confirmed within the late imperial orthodoxy.

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583 Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 33

584 'Shenci cunfei biaozhun' [Standards for Preserving or Abolishing Temples], *Suiyuan zhengfu gongbao* 3 (1929), 86

The specific reasoning for Confucius' achievements likewise accorded with late imperial convention by attributing the canon of six classics to him, noting that he 'edited the *Classic of Poetry* and the *Book of Documents*, amended the *Book of Rites* and the *Book of Music*, praised the *Classic of Changes*, wrote the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and ultimately 'gathered into one the ancient political learning of our country'.[585] In the process it avoided both Kang Youwei's radical late Qing claim that Confucius had personally authored all of the New Text classics which formed the basis of Kang's understanding of Confucianism, and contemporary historian Gu Jiegang's 'doubting of antiquity', which presented not only the classics, but also the 'golden age' era of sagely rulers they described, as largely fictional.[586] The central government thus appeared to accept the argument that Confucius had inherited the learning of an ancient golden age and with that had to a great extent established China's historical culture. The *Standards* therefore presented nothing but admiration for Confucius, his predecessors, and Mencius' achievements in this establishment: there was no room here for a radical critique of the legacy of the classics or of Confucius' teachings.

Yet Confucius was not only a defining figure for the nation's historical culture; the *Standards* further tied him to the party-state through references to Sun Yatsen's words. The text singled out Confucius' 'advocacy of "the world belonging to all" and the global Great Unity' as 'particularly deserving of the esteem of subsequent generations'.[587] The *Standards* incorporated Mencius in a way that linked him to the Republic more generally, rather than Sun: he deserved reverence for 'elaborating the doctrine that human nature is good' and his teaching 'that [one should] view the monarch lightly and value the common people', which 'truly accords with the spirit of modern democracy'.[588] Both figures' value, then, lay not only in historical contributions but also very much in their relevance to the modern nation.

As with the earlier order on Confucius temples, the *Standards*' reasoning for preservation was 'to record respect'; the government, however, clearly sought to control how respect was to be shown. The *Standards* absolutely ruled out sacrificial ritual practices (to

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585 'Shenci cunfei biaozhun', 87
586 See Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China's new history*, 192–95, 203–04
587 'Shenci cunfei biaozhun', 87
588 'Shenci cunfei biaozhun', 87

Confucius and to the other approved representatives of Chinese culture) by stressing that 'in revering the former worthies the emphasis is on their character, and promoting their learning and achievements; all former burning of incense and prostration, paper money, sacrifice of meat and alcohol and other old ritual acts should be abolished...'[589] In exact contrast to claims like that of Anhui sacrifice official Zheng Shengzhi, the mere physical existence of the temple appeared sufficient: ritual practice itself was officially no better than the 'superstitious' worship of those gods which did not meet the Standards' criteria for acceptability. The figure of Confucius was thus defined as a secular one. Where writers in Guomindang media identified Confucius as a figure of the past, making no contribution to and indeed threatening modern China, the *Standards* connected him to the party by stripping him of alternative associations.

Establishing and reinventing the Way

When Chiang Kaishek promoted Dai Jitao's 'transmission of the Way' in January 1931 and after, it constituted an intervention in on-going debates in party media and a step beyond previous efforts to link Confucius and the party-state. Chiang's talks gave Dai Jitao's formula and thus his representation of Confucius a central role in party discourse, describing Sun's thought as 'entirely the orthodox thought of China'.[590] For critics this meant that Chiang thereby 'Confucianised' the Three Principles of the People. Yet at the same time Chiang's speeches also reflected the on-going struggles over the right interpretation of the figure of Confucius. Chiang's speeches constructed a new image of the Confucian tradition through the techniques of revolutionary traditionalism, separating the Sage from his cultic associations and asserting the authority of the party-state to interpret his teachings.

Chiang's points came in the form of didactic speeches, given to military officers, cadres-in-training, and staff of the Ministry of Education in Nanjing, which (like Sun Yatsen's speeches before him) were also published for a wider audience in the official media of the party state.[591] This publication reflected their importance: they were, as he put it, an

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589 'Shenci cunfei biaozhun', 98

590 *Shilüe gaoben* Vol. 8 (Xindian: *Guoshiguan*, 2004), 451–52

591 E.g. Chiang Kaishek, 'Sanmin zhuyi shi Zhonghua minzu ji qian nian lai de jiejing' [The Three Principles of the People are the Crystallisation of Thousands of Years of the Chinese Nation], *Zhongyang zhoubao* 138 (1931), 45–48

effort to 'unite thought' within the party.[592] The year 1930 had seen the devastating Central Plains War, in which the regional military leaders Feng Yuxiang, Yan Xishan, and the Guangxi clique of Bai Chongxi and Li Zongren allied with Wang Jingwei's supporters in the Guomindang to openly oppose the Nanjing regime. Though Chiang Kaishek, together with the military leader of Manchuria Zhang Xueliang, defeated his opponents, victory was won only after five months of fighting and the loss of some 300,000 lives.[593] With these disasters, together with the continued threat posed by the Communists, the claims of Nanjing to legitimacy as the national government evidently remained tenuous.

Political opponents had their own rival interpretations of party doctrine. Aside from Wang Jingwei's 'Reorganisation faction' allies, from late 1930 Hu Hanmin, who as we have seen promoted his own version of the Three Principles that was explicitly positioned against Dai Jitao's 'transmission', was opposing Chiang for the latter's proposal to implement a provisional constitution. In February 1931 Chiang placed him under house arrest. Thus Chiang's references to the 'transmission' were part of an effort to explicate his view of the party's principles to meet the threats of imperialism and communism and properly unify the country under his leadership.

Chiang's vision of unified party doctrines drew explicitly on Dai's singular 'transmission of the Way'. 'When you are studying the Director-General's learning and thought', Chiang instructed officers, 'you must first read the *Philosophical Foundations of the Three Principles of the People*'; only then could they proceed to Sun's own works (the most important of which had been identified by Dai) and properly apprehend his 'thought and principles'.[594] Thus Chiang's speeches gave his answer to the theoretical issues debated in *New Life*: the Principle of People's Livelihood was the most important and fundamental of the three, the 'people's livelihood view of history' served as a universal explanatory principle for historical progress and revolution without recourse to Marxist class struggle, and Sun's ideas drew fundamentally on moral learning which had been transmitted by the ancient sages and disrupted after the death of Confucius. Chiang further connected himself directly to the 'transmission' narrative in another January 1931 speech, to staff of the Ministry of Education. He verified Dai's claim that Sun had described the native origin of his ideas to a Communist representative, while stressing his own proximity to

[592] *Shilüe gaoben* Vol. 9 (Xindian: *Guoshiguan*, 2004), 374
[593] Hans van de Ven, *War and Nationalism in China, 1925–1945* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 138–39
[594] *Shilüe gaoben* Vol. 9, 381

Sun: 'I was present in Guilin at that time', Chiang declared, and that [member of the] Russian Communist Party was not in fact a Russian but Swiss'.[595]

Though endorsing Dai Jitao's writings, Chiang's later speeches revealed a distinct version of the classical inheritance. Like Sun Yatsen's earlier, more generalised statements, these affirmed a much wider range of Chinese history than the pre-imperial 'golden age' Dai had focused on. The title given to a May 1932 speech in the Central Military Academy, 'An Account of My Experiences in Researching Revolutionary Philosophy' (*Zishu yanjiu geming zhexue jingguo de jieduan*) marked it as a further assertion of Chiang's interpretive authority. According to this speech revolution depended on officers and students adopting a 'philosophy of action'.[596] This philosophy found its source in the Ming dynasty thinker Wang Yangming (1472–1529), from a town close to Chiang's own birthplace in Zhejiang province: Chiang's 'philosophy of action' sought to unite Wang's 'knowledge and action are one' (*zhi xing he yi*) and 'extend the innate knowledge of the good' (*zhi liangzhi*, which Chiang interpreted as 'put into action the innate knowledge of the good') with Sun's 'to know is difficult, to act is easy' (*zhi nan xing yi*).[597] This change likely reflected Chiang's own upbringing and early education, but it also drew on his experiences studying in Japan. As Oleg Benesch notes, Wang Yangming's writings were promoted there as opposed to the previous Tokugawa orthodoxy (which drew on the dominant School of the Way tradition of Zhu Xi) and were associated with the *bushido* military ideology which impressed Chiang and others.[598]

Consequently, where Dai Jitao's 'transmission' had rejected the entire imperial legacy, since Confucius' true wisdom was recovered only by Sun, the 'Way' as Chiang described it was 'revitalised' by Wang Yangming, and 'compiled into a great perfection' by Sun.[599] This expansion of the 'transmission' explains the changes noted by Taiwan-based scholar Li Ao. As Li shows, where in 1931 Chiang followed Dai Jitao in referring to the Way being 'severed' after Confucius, in 1933 when recounting the story in which Sun claimed to have inherited his thought from the ancient past, he omitted this term and instead

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[595] Chiang Kaishek, 'Zhongguo Jiaoyu de sixiang wenti', 452.

[596] Chiang Kaishek, 'Zishu yanjiu geming zhexue jingguo de jieduan' [An Account of My Experiences in Researching Revolutionary Philosophy], in Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* Vol. 10, 542, 541. This speech was subsequently published in multiple journals, e.g. *Qianfeng* 22 (1935)

[597] Wang Yangming, *Wang Yangming xiansheng jiyao* [Collected Essentials of Wang Yangming] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), 33

[598] Oleg Benesch, 'Wang Yangming and Bushido: Japanese Nativization and its Influences in Modern China', *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 36.3 (2009), 439–54, 451–52

[599] Chiang Kaishek, 'Zishu yanjiu geming zhexue jingguo de jieduan', 537

referred to its being 'passed down' from the sages and Confucius, and by his 1939 text 'The System of the Three Principles of the People and the Programme for their Realisation' the reference had changed to a transmission 'continued without cease'.[600] The revolutionary traditionalist separation of an ancient legacy 'recovered' for the contemporary age after centuries of decline was thus progressively de-emphasised.

Thus Chiang Kaishek's speeches in the 1930s tied his vision of the Guomindang's project to a traditionalism centred on teachings passed down from Confucius. They might thus seem to legitimize calls for sacrifices to Confucius and to 'Confucianise the Three Principles', as Tao Xisheng had put it. Yet at the same time the speeches acknowledged radical criticisms as well as conservative, non-revolutionary rival claims to Confucius. In this context, Chiang offered a version of the teachings reinterpreted through the techniques of revolutionary traditionalism.

Although Chiang promoted an 'orthodox transmission' from Confucius, like those of Sun Yatsen and Dai Jitao before him his actual interpretation of that orthodoxy was a highly and explicitly selective one. He qualified his praise of past exemplars, noting that 'there was a lot of corruption in ancient politics, and we of course have to reject that' and that 'a great deal of their thought cannot be used'.[601]

What could be used were moral values which could inspire revolutionary action. Where Mei Siping's representation of Confucius' teachings had found in them the origin of materialism, Chiang instead found in them support for a vision of revolution as a moral project, to be achieved when those in the party and army (and eventually, through tutelage, the people) properly understood and acted on the ethical precepts established in the past and revived by Sun. 'The Three Principles of the People', Chiang declared, 'emerged from the morality of humaneness and righteousness".[602] Thus the most pressing problem in realising the revolution was for revolutionaries to understand this moral basis and apply it in their own lives: following Dai Jitao's adaptation of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, they must first be 'sincere' (*cheng*) in their thoughts, 'choosing the good and holding firm to it', before attaining the 'three universal values' (*tianxia zhi da de*) of

[600] Li Ao, 'Sun Yatsen, Jiang Jieshi, yu Daotong' [Sun Yatsen, Chiang Kaishek, and the transmission of the Way] in Li, *Jiang Jieshi Yanjiu* [Research on Chiang Kaishek] (Beijing: Zhongguo youyi chuban gongsi, 2006), 373–75
[601] *Shiliie gaoben* Vol. 9, 341, 391
[602] *Shiliie gaoben* Vol. 9, 401

'humaneness, bravery, and wisdom' (*ren, yong, zhi*), which when applied would allow for the realisation of the three 'universal Ways' (*tianxia zhi da dao*), which were Sun's three principles.[603] Moral conduct in Chiang's speeches thus meant participation in the Nanjing state's project.

The 'orthodoxy' had a further value, explicitly stated in keeping with Chiang's revolutionary traditionalist predecessors: it could bolster unity and national 'self-confidence'. As Chiang put it, the people's minds were disunited because they did not believe in 'China's inherent morality and culture'.[604] Like Sun's before him, his vision was constructed against self-consciously radical pursuit of the new and attacks on the old: '[p]eople today are unsatisfied with anything in China. They see talk of things like filial piety, brotherhood, loyalty, and trust as corrupt old thought, and think of Yao, Shun... [and the other transmitters of the Way] as figures of the past that our revolution should not deign to speak of'.[605] The revolution had not yet succeeded, according to Chiang's speech to his officers, because the youth were 'romantic' and would not allow themselves to be restrained, and because they saw foreign things as better than Chinese.[606]

The rejection of what was native moreover brought with it Communism, against which native culture in turn served as a weapon:

> When Communism first entered China, all of China's culture and morality suffered its attacks; at that time the Director-General therefore clearly said he had inherited his thought from China's inherent morality and culture. Here we see... [Sun] taking up China's culture, and the strength of the Chinese citizens' self-confidence, to do battle with the world's evil trends and evil thoughts.[607]

'Confidence' here, then, meant recognising the achievements of the ancient sages and Confucius. Cultural radicalism was not only harmful to national unity: Chiang went so far as to ask his audience 'if a person does not know his or her own country's history, cannot preserve his or her parents' and ancestors' history, can he or she be called a person?' Those who did not 'cherish inherent morality', Chiang declared, could not be called

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603 *Shilüe gaoben* Vol. 9, 386
604 *Shilüe gaoben* Vol. 9, 392–3
605 *Shilüe gaoben* Vol. 9, 391
606 *Shilüe gaoben* Vol. 9, 392
607 Chiang Kaishek, 'Zhongguo jiaoyu de sixiang wenti' [Problems of thinking in Chinese education], in Qin Xiaoyi, *Xian zongtong Jiang* Vol. 10, 449–53, 451

citizens of China: they were slaves of the foreign powers.[608]

At the same time, the particular national heritage of the Way meshed with the universal, global demands of the age. Echoing Dai Jitao, the result of 'self-confidence' and the mark of a successful nation would be the ability to 'create culture' for a modern world. Chiang also mentioned Dai's distinction between what ancient and timeless morality provided, the 'potential action', and the 'action to be carried out' of Sun's Three Principles, which was adapted to contemporary global circumstances. As in Sun and Dai's writings, in Chiang's speeches China's moral knowledge gave it the mission of advancing the world toward the global Great Unity. To this effect Chiang recounted his own experience of learning from Sun: he had asked the Director-General for the phrase 'the weak are meat for the strong to eat, the superior succeed and the inferior fail' in Sun's calligraphy, but Sun had replaced this example of Social Darwinist 'philosophy worshipped by the modern west' with the eternal wisdom of the *Book of Rites*: 'when the Great Way prevails all under heaven belongs to all'.[609]

Yet in this process other countries also provided positive models for China. Chiang further worked through his combination of the trans-historical Way with the demands of the modern era in 1932, again as Sun had, by finding the values China needed to recover and put into practice realised in more successful international competitors. Thus his speech citing Wang Yangming opened with a description of Japan's military success against China: the former's power in the modern era was 'not because it was strengthened by European science, but... by Chinese philosophy', from which the 'classicist Way' (*rudao*) of Wang Yangming had contributed the most.[610]

Although as we have seen Chiang criticised those who rejected China's 'inherent morality and culture', his speeches also pre-emptively addressed radical criticisms of the kind we have seen voiced in Guomindang discourse as well as outside it. While constructing the Confucian legacy as fundamentally moral in character, Chiang anticipated the objection noted by Mei Siping, that the 'transmission of the Way' was 'idealist'. 'Those materialists,' Chiang noted, 'will likely think that I am an idealist, overlooking the material'. Against this accusation he appealed to Sun, who had recognised the 'subtle relation between

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608 *Shilüe gaoben* Vol. 9, 393
609 Chiang Kaishek, 'Zishu yanjiu geming zhexue jingguo de jieduan', 543
610 Chiang Kaishek, 'Zishu yanjiu geming zhexue jingguo de jieduan', 535

mind and matter' and so avoided the trap of both 'mechanical materialism' and 'idealism'; in this Sun had inherited the classical 'Doctrine of the Mean'.[611] Yet, while triangulating a position between materialism and idealism, Chiang insisted on Sun's uncompromising activist revolutionary credentials: 'though in his philosophy he focused on the Way of China's *Doctrine of the Mean*, his proposals and methods for doing things were extreme, not at all equivocal'.[612]

By selectively constructing a past 'orthodoxy' and connecting it to Sun Yatsen, Chiang asserted Guomindang authority over interpretations. This was key both to answering the criticism of turning from the present to the past and to denying the rival claims of groups such as those petitioning for Confucian ritual. Reflecting Hu Hanmin's criticism that Dai Jitao gave priority to the classics over Sun's words, according to Chiang 'to speak of China's politics, we have no need to search far; it's enough simply to read the works the Director-General wrote'.[613] Even as the education system incorporated the notion of the 'transmission of the Way', Chiang explained to members of the Ministry of Education that Sun's words were vital to resisting conservative interpretations:

> If we use the Director-General's most central and vital thought for our education system, China's education will certainly develop at great speed, and we can moreover wipe out that kind of stubborn thinking that only talks of revering Confucius, and does not know what his principles were, and only talks of old morality without having any idea of what is good about it.[614]

The Three Principles were derived from classical morality, then, but also provided the only authoritative and up to date interpretation of that morality. The 'transmission' showed that commitment to revolution meant acting out of 'humaneness and love', but for the definition of these terms there was no need to turn to the *Analects* or Mencius: '[w]hat is humaneness? It is the Three Principles of the People'."[615]

Conclusion

At the beginning of the Nanjing Decade, the new state had a nominal orthodoxy in the

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[611] Chiang Kaishek, 'Zishu yanjiu geming zhexue jingguo de jieduan', 539
[612] Chiang Kaishek, 'Zishu yanjiu geming zhexue jingguo de jieduan', 543
[613] *Shilüe gaoben* Vol. 9, 342
[614] Chiang Kaishek, 'Zhongguo Jiaoyu de sixiang wenti', 452
[615] *Shilüe gaoben* Vol. 9, 401

form of Sun Yatsen's Three Principles of the People, and one which incorporated traditionalist references to China's 'inherent culture' and 'inherent morality'. Yet, as the case of Confucius shows, the meanings of this orthodoxy were vigorously contested. In 1928 the Ministry of the Interior recognised Confucius as a figure contributing to the cultural elements it celebrated, but radically critical strains remained within the discourse of the party-state from the Guomindang's earlier engagement with the 'New Culture Movement'. This meant both that opponents could use these claims to attack the state, and that even among allies there was no consensus, particularly with regard to the influence of teachings attributed to Confucius on the party's own doctrines.

Chiang Kaishek's interventions in 1931 and 1932 therefore went some way to establishing a transmission from Confucius as the source of party doctrines. As the following chapter will show, the 1930s saw unprecedented commitment from the Nanjing state to commemorating Confucius, while the influence of the arguments put forward by Dai and Chiang can clearly be seen in texts like the 'Vitalism' lectures of Chen Lifu, the head of the party's Central Organisation Department.[616]

Critics since the 1920s have drawn directly on the positive and negative claims made during this period: Tao Xisheng's 'Confucianisation of the Three Principles of the People' is still used as a pejorative, as a symptom of the party's turn under Chiang Kaishek from revolutionary activism to authoritarian suppression, while Qin Yingjun's negative judgement of Chiang as having an 'unbroken connection with China's traditional culture' clearly follows Chiang's own statements on the 'transmission of the Way'.[617] As this chapter has shown, however, the shift was a more complex one than such characterisations allow.

Firstly, it was not a sudden or unprecedented change: in his endorsement of the 'transmission of the Way' Chiang was expanding on themes we have traced throughout the 1920s. Chiang differed from Sun largely in focusing on a specific, singular tradition, and in heading a regime with substantial authority across China. Chiang's constructions of the Way also followed predecessors in their revolutionary traditionalist approach,

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[616] See Terry Bodenhorn, 'Chen Lifu's *Vitalism*: a Guomindang Vision of Modernity circa 1934' in Terry Bodenhorn, ed., *Defining Modernity: Guomindang Rhetorics of a New China, 1920-1970* (Michigan, University of Michigan, 2002), 91–117

[617] See e.g. Jin, Guantao, 'Socialism and tradition', 12, Qin Yingjun, 'Jiang Jieshi yu Zhongguo chuantong wenhua', 59

stressing its utility in securing national unity, interpreting it as a moral spur to revolutionary action, and insisting on Sun Yatsen's doctrines as the only lens through which to correctly interpret the tradition. Rather than 'Confucianising' the Three Principles, Chiang constructed a 'Confucianism' adapted to them. At the same time, however, he also put forward his own distinctive construction of the Principles.

Yet there is something to the charge of 'Confucianisation'. For Tao Xisheng 'Confucianism', despite its historical mutations, could not ultimately be separated from the 'class interests' of its times and made to serve other purposes. The range of alternative constructions and uses of classical texts we see in China and elsewhere suggests this is too restrictive a view. But the very existence of multiple alternative constructions in the early twentieth century meant that, although Guomindang members could reinvent Confucius, they could not dictate how their reinventions were interpreted. No matter how Chiang's speeches might select and redefine the tradition, and pre-empt criticism with the techniques of revolutionary traditionalism, others could put their own interpretations on the terms, texts, and people he referred to. These included contemporary and subsequent radical critics as well as those who 'revered Confucius' without subscribing to Chiang's interpretations or to the Guomindang project. His speeches, following the words of Sun Yatsen and the Ministry of the Interior's proclamations, further tied the texts promoted as part of the late imperial orthodoxy to the Nanjing regime. They moreover did so more specifically than Sun Yatsen's more generalised 'inherent morality', although Sun had in practice cited the same texts. Furthermore, Chiang's speeches came to differ from Dai Jitao's *Philosophical Foundations* by erasing the 'golden age' narrative which distanced the Guomindang's construction of those texts from the late imperial era. Chiang's words thus made it harder to dismiss 'reverence for Confucius' as a minor or localised concern, and enabled Confucians to further associate their cause with the government.

More than this, as we have seen Chiang's speeches described this textual tradition as essential to being Chinese. As Margaret Clinton suggests in regard to the discourse of the later New Life Movement, this approach denied alternative Chinese identities (whether drawing on other long-established cultural resources, such as those of the other 'nationalities' which the Nanjing state recognised, or on radical alternatives) in favour of

affirming the definitive texts of the late imperial orthodoxy.[618]

At the same time, however, although Chiang's status no doubt promoted the 'transmission' from Confucius to Sun and his party to an unprecedented degree, it was not the only option for interpreting Confucius or party doctrines. While Chen Lifu's 'Vitalism' lectures shared much with Dai Jitao and Chiang Kaishek's interpretations, they also follow Mei Siping in constructing an elaborate metaphysical underpinning for Sun's thought and in the process constituted a distinctive new version of the party's doctrines.[619] Although Chiang's and Dai's interpretations were obviously popular, Zhou Fohai's text on the Three Principles, which made no mention of the 'transmission', joined them as one of the most commonly read texts on party doctrine, while the writings of Tao Xisheng also circulated.[620]

[618] Clinton, 'Fascism, Cultural Revolution, and National Sovereignty in 1930s China', 241

[619] Bodenhorn, 'Chen Lifu's *Vitalism*', passim. Mei Siping's emphasis on the primacy of 'life' specifically anticipated that of Chen Lifu.

[620] Klaus Mühlhahn finds that compulsory reading in the Guomindang's Xifeng prison camp for 'thought reform' included Sun's and Chiang's works, but also Zhou Fohai's explanation of the Three Principles, Tao Xisheng's 'History of Chinese Political Ideas', and writings by Dai Jitao, in addition to classics and Zeng Guofan's work. See Klaus Mühlhahn, *Criminal Justice in China: a History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 2008), 142

8. Negotiating Orthodoxy IV: Confucian Apotheosis

> The people of our country have essentially had two views of Confucius. The first is to see the doctrine of the classicists [*rujiao*] as a religion, and Confucius as the founder of that religion... the second is to despise Confucius, or think that his learning had many errors and led to evil amongst the Chinese nation and that we should topple him, or that his learning is already obsolete, not suited to the modern age...[621]

Six years after the Nanjing state first marked Confucius' birthday, 1934 saw the link between Confucius and the Guomindang elevated to an unprecedented level with a new national holiday commemorating the Sage's birth. Newspapers reported on two particularly grand celebrations: one at the central party headquarters in Nanjing, and one held at the temple marking Confucius' birthplace in Qufu. These events marked the culmination of the rise of revolutionary traditionalist discourse and the special identification of Confucius with the national revolution; at the same time, for the anonymous critic with whose words this thesis began, as for other critics, they represented a turn towards the 'old'.

Scholars have focused on the 1930s as the period in which the Guomindang turned towards symbols of the past: the new ceremony joined with other events such as Chiang Kaishek's pronouncements on the link between Confucius and Sun Yatsen (discussed in the previous chapter) and the (much more discussed) New Life Movement. As this thesis has shown, these developments did not appear suddenly, but built on the rise of traditionalist language in the 1920s. Yet, as Wang Jingwei's speech at the central government commemoration in Nanjing shows, the events of the 1930s had another feature in common with the earlier period: struggles over the meaning of the past. For Rebecca Nedostup, Guomindang leaders turned to 'heroic figures from China's past' like Confucius out of a desire for 'national unity', but Confucius was a divisive as well as a potentially unifying figure: the national Confucius commemorated in 1934 was constructed between rival views, and open to hostile readings.[622]

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[621] Wang Jingwei, 'Wang Jingwei zai Guomindang zhongyang dangbu juxing de Kongzi danchen jinian hui shang tichang zun Kong de jiangyan ci' [Wang Jingwei's speech promoting reverence for Confucius at the Guomindang central party headquarters Confucius birthday commemoration], *Minguo ziliao* 5.1, 539–43, 539–40

[622] Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 268

This thesis therefore concludes by showing how struggles continued over the meaning of Confucius, and the 'inherent culture' of which he had been identified as a central representative. Although in 1928 the Ministries of the Interior and Education had formally issued orders to protect temples and to commemorate Confucius, those who identified themselves as Confucius' true followers continued to petition and protest over the issues of ritual, temples, and reading the classics.

The problem can usefully be considered one of authenticity. Prasenjit Duara suggests the existence of 'regimes of authenticity', as nation-states and nationalists constantly 'simulate symbols of timeless authority' in order to proclaim the 'timeless unity of the nation' even while embracing and promoting narratives of constant progress and change.[623] The construction of Confucius and the 'inherent' values associated with him can clearly be seen within this framework. Yet the rival claims of Confucians show that this regime could not operate uncontested: groups and individuals questioned the government's proclamations and instead put forward their own claims to authenticity by promoting ritual practices, the preservation of temples in ways other than those sanctioned by Nanjing, and the precedence of classical texts over party doctrines.

Ambiguity and the Problems of Control: the Timing and Meaning of Commemoration

As noted in the previous chapter, at the end of 1928 the *Standards for Preserving or Abolishing Temples* put forward a vision of Confucius as an object of secular nationalist commemoration, as part of a wider state-approved pantheon. This effort to separate Confucius from 'superstitious' ritual could not go unchallenged.

The *Standards* reflected the fact that, as shown at the end of Chapter Six, Confucian groups had responded to the 1928 birthday commemoration with dissatisfaction and continued efforts to influence policy. The Ministry of the Interior's claim to 'revere Confucius' as an educator, transmitter of the nation's historical culture, and forerunner of revolutionary values met with challenges to its authority on the grounds of authenticity, arguing that the birthday was insufficient to revere Confucius and thus bring

[623] Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 28–33

peace to the nation. At the same time, the fact that Confucian groups could claim government sanction for their rituals raised the risk that the new state could be associated with the sacrifices held by the emperors and their 'militarist' successors. Consequently, in 1929 the state sought to assert greater control over the commemoration.

One means of control was through timing. In May 1929 the Ministry of the Interior received a request from Zhang Chengliang, head of the Confucian Religion Association branch in Pucheng, Fujian, asking for the date of the 1929 birthday commemoration. This indicates that, though the Ministries of the Interior and Education had set the date as the twenty-seventh of the eighth lunar month in the previous year, ritual practitioners still looked to the state to determine the ritual calendar and thus legitimise their activities. The response to Zhang's request was that a date had already been set. The Ministry of Education had considered the problem when setting the schedule of school and government holidays for the year, and in the process had received a specific order from the Administrative Yuan that Confucius' birthday be held on the twenty-seventh of August.[624] The lunar calendar date, then, was simply directly transposed to the solar calendar, in a move which accorded with the party's aggressive promotion of the new calendar and attack on the schedule of rituals and holidays which the lunar calendar mapped out. The campaign against the old calendar, studied in detail by Rebecca Nedostup, was part of a wider drive against 'superstition' that sought to reorder the lives of citizens of the Republic according to the new calendar of commemorative days.[625] Confucius' commemoration, divorced of its connection to the presumed historical date of the Sage's birth, was thus made part of this schedule. The Ministry of the Interior accordingly informed all provinces and cities that they 'should all follow this in the hope of unity and avoiding discrepancies'.[626]

As with other elements of the campaign against the lunar calendar, the government sought to enforce the new date. The case of a Confucian Religion Association branch in Ipoh (Malaysia) shows the state taking an aggressive approach to the subversion of its intended commemoration, with the Ministry of the Interior using the case to set a precedent to be followed within and outside China. The Ministry took action in response

[624] 'Neizheng bu pi' [Instructions from the Ministry of the Interior], *Neizheng Gongbao* 2.5 (June 1929), 5
[625] Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 229–40
[626] 'Neizheng bu zi' [Information from the Ministry of the Interior], *Neizheng Gongbao* 2.5 (June 1929), 21

to an October communication from the party branch headquarters for British-controlled Southeast Asia, claiming that the Ipoh Confucian Religion Association had continued to celebrate Confucius' birthday according to the lunar calendar, 'in direct contravention of the government's order'. Moreover, it seemed that the Association was attempting to use the previously Nanjing-sanctioned birthday event to promote itself and its cause, creating a 'Confucian religion flag' and distributing it among the people to 'mislead them'.[627]

The Ministry responded by forbidding this activity and moreover issuing a general order to party branches across Southeast Asia and local governments in China to 'strictly forbid' holding ceremonies according to the lunar calendar and producing 'Confucian religion' flags.[628] The order, printed in the *Zhejiang Government Monthly* (*Zhejiang minzheng yuekan*), included the original request for action from Malaysia, which identified the Confucian Religion Association branch in the strongest terms as a 'reactionary faction'. Thus in asserting ritual control over Confucius' birthday and attacking the promotion of rival interests through it, the Ministry answered and publicised the Southeast Asia branch's call to 'give counter-revolutionary factions something to fear'.[629] Where advocates of Confucian ritual threatened party-state authority they could still be considered enemies.

Though setting the date as part of the solar calendar integrated the commemoration into the government's ritual calendar, the way that Confucian groups had associated themselves with the government's memorial day continued to create a problematic ambiguity over how Confucius should be ritually remembered: Confucius' birthday rituals in the temples could readily evoke the imperial past for those open to it.

As noted in Chapter Six, soon after the announcement of the memorial day the Ministry of the Interior had to reply to a request for 'sacrifice' funding by denying that the largely unspecified new ritual was a sacrifice. The issue of naming recurred in 1929 with a petition from Chen Guisun, the head of the Beiping Confucian Way Association (*Kongdao hui*). The central government did not elaborate in 1929 on a ritual format, and

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[627] 'Zhejiang sheng minzheng ting xunling di sanwuyi hao: jinzhi Kongzi danri jinian reng yong yinli bing zizao Kongjiao qi' [Zhejiang province civil affairs department order 351: continuing to use the lunar calendar and making Confucian Religion flags are prohibited] *Zhejiang minzheng yuekan* 36 (20 January 1930), 303

[628] 'Zhejiang sheng minzheng ting xunling di sanwuyi hao', 303

[629] 'Zhejiang sheng minzheng ting xunling di sanwuyi hao', 304

accordingly Chen contacted Nanjing seeking clarification. Chen asked whether, since the Confucius birthday commemoration had replaced the spring and autumn *ding* days as 'the day of sacrifice to Confucius', the Sages who were enshrined in the temple for 'subordinate sacrifices' should be sacrificed to alongside Confucius. Chiang Kaishek's office, in forwarding the request to the Executive Yuan, noted that 'it seems they may be sacrificed to together'. The Executive Yuan, however, passed the matter on to the Ministries of the Interior and Education to discuss, and their conclusion was altogether different. After noting that in the previous year the spring and autumn rites had been ended, the birthday commemoration introduced, and then the date changed to the solar calendar, the Ministries decided that 'the sacrifices to Confucius have already been changed to a commemoration... when this Chen Guisun and others refer to sacrificing to Confucius, they have obviously fundamentally misunderstood, and no further discussion is needed'.[630] By publicising this response through state media, the Ministries evidently sought to establish a clear separation between sacrificial activity and the new form of 'commemoration'.

While seeking to control the meaning of 'commemoration', the same order also attempted to more precisely delimit and thus control space in the Confucius temples. Huang Yushou, a local government representative in Mengcheng, Anhui, had requested clarification on whether the spirit tablets to Confucius and secondary figures in the Confucius temples should be destroyed, and whether the 'Hall of Great Completion' (*dacheng dian*) sign at the door to the main sacrificial hall should be hung as normal. Evidently the order to preserve the temples while repurposing them, combined with the lack of sacrifices, had caused confusion over what precisely was to be preserved and in what form.

Discussion on the matter by the Ministries of the Interior and Education produced a detailed resolution on managing the temples, which shows both the drive toward control and the troubling ambiguities that remained.

As with the issue of 'sacrifices', disassociating the temples from the imperial legacy required a terminological change: 'the name 'Hall of Great Completion' touches on

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[630] 'Kongmiao shenwei cunfei fengyi an' [On preserving, abolishing, and moving spirit tablets in Confucius temples], *Jiangsu sheng zhengfu gongbao* 308 (9 December 1929), 11

autocratic thinking, [and should be] changed to 'Confucius temple' [*Kongzi miao*]'.[631] Confucius' spirit tablet, however, could be retained inside the central hall, with the tablets of the 'four corollaries, ten worthies, and former worthies and classicists from the side halls [who receive] subsidiary sacrifices' moved into niches alongside it. The Ministries moreover ruled on who should be commemorated, declaring that the Song dynasty geomancer and numerologist Cai Yuanding's 'words and actions are clear, and sufficient to serve as a model; he should be ranked with the former Confucians', while for predecessors of Confucius and the ancestors of the Song dynasty 'School of the Way' figures Zhou Dunyi, Cheng Yi, Cheng Hao, Zhu Xi, and Zhang Zai, 'there are no records of achievements, and thus there is no need to specifically sacrifice to them, and they are unfit to be placed beside the shrine for Confucius' tablet'.

This 1929 order thus allowed for a Confucian intellectual lineage to be recognised and commemorated, while following the earlier *Standards* (and the example of imperial dynasties) in seeking to distinguish which figures were worthy of commemoration. This list went further than the *Standards*, however, by enshrining and thus granting a measure of state recognition to a much wider range of figures, including the Song Dynasty School of the Way thinkers, in still sharper contrast to Dai Jitao's exclusive 'golden age' vision of Confucius. At the same time the Ministries sought to avoid making the temple the sole memorial site and to distinguish the newly labelled Confucius temples from the active imperial ritual sites they had formerly been by preventing local historical figures from being added:

> If in any place there have been illustrious predecessors and great people, with extraordinary moral conduct and doing great things for the people, who are worthy of respect, there is no harm in considering other means of commemoration. There is no need for them to be added into the Confucius temple...[632]

As well as specifying which figures were worthy of commemoration, the resolution further detailed how temple space was to be managed. With the various spirit tablets contained entirely within the main hall, other halls were open for alternative uses: aside from the halls on either side of the former Hall of Great Completion, additional shrines

631 'Kongmiao shenwei cunfei fengyi an', 11
632 'Kongmiao shenwei cunfei fengyi an', 12

for 'renowned officials and former [local] worthies' could also be done away with.[633] The order stated that halls other than the main one 'should still be dealt with according to the previous method for using and protecting Confucian temples'. It was explicit, however, in giving the main hall a ritual function in the form of the birthday commemoration: 'for the purposes of revering the former worthies', the most important subsidiaries were to be commemorated at the temple together with Confucius on the twenty-seventh of August.

This commemoration, the order made clear, did not mean sacrifices. Accompanying its criticism of confusion over whether to 'sacrifice', the order explicitly identified speeches as a focal point of this commemoration with the note that

> Moreover a certain amount of space should be left before the hall of the Confucius temple for students and masses to gather to listen to speeches when the commemoration is held, with the aim of using measures appropriate to the time and so maintaining the idea of revering the sages and revering Confucius.[634]

The Ministries thus acted against the slippage of connotation between commemoration and imperial-style sacrifice rituals, and to further legislate the role of the temples.

Yet the ambiguity could not easily be resolved. By using the phrase 'revering Confucius' (*zun Kong*) the Ministries invited criticism: this term had served as an object of attack for Ye Chucang's 1919 and 1922 criticisms in *Awakening* and continued to be used in articles attacking those calling for a resumption of the sacrifices.[635]

The Ministries obviously sought to redefine the meaning of 'revering Confucius' to avoid sacrificial associations. Yet this proved impossible. Chiang's office, in making its recommendation, had evidently seen no difficulty with the government specifying the recipients of sacrificial ritual. Even within the same order text, the various figures whose spirit tablets shared the temples with Confucius' were referred to as 'subsidiary sacrifices', while the order moreover identified figures that there was 'no need to sacrifice to'. Clearly, then, despite the explicit disavowal of 'sacrifice', the term survived as a

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633 'Kongmiao shenwei cunfei fengyi an', 11–12
634 'Kongmiao shenwei cunfei fengyi an', 12
635 Ye Chucang, 'Chi jin zhi zun Kong zhe' and 'Chirou liudu de Kongzi'; see e.g. Zhao Huaizhen, 'Zun Kong lunzhe keyi xiu yi'

means to label those to whom the temples were dedicated. A final problem–and the apparent source of Chen Guisun's confusion–was that, while the Ministries were at pains to point out that commemoration was not the same as sacrifice, with no precise format specified the meaning of 'commemorate' remained open to interpretation. Thus when the order concluded that the various 'former worthies' should be commemorated together with Confucius, it undermined its earlier attempt at a clear distinction. An article in the *Shenbao* newspaper bears testimony to the central government's ultimate inability to dictate terminology, noting that for Confucius' birthday in 1929 the heads of the Education and Social Bureaus in Beiping went to the Confucius temple to 'sacrifice to Confucius' (*si Kong*).[636]

Preservation and Contestation: the Impacts and Limits of Temple Policy

Available evidence suggests that temple preservation orders, beginning with Minister of the Interior Xue Dubi's order in May 1928, had at least some success in both preserving the Confucius temples and putting them to use. Yet with on-going tensions over the meaning of the sacrifices and demands that the state show greater commitment to Confucian causes, the order 'recording respect' for the Sage as a contributor to the nation's historical culture and revolutionary principles would not have the harmonious results that Xue had intended. Struggles continued into the 1930s over the use of the temples, and appropriations of Confucian sacrificial ritual by leaders in China's relatively autonomous regions offered a contrast to the Nanjing state's carefully balanced secular approach. The authenticity of Nanjing's commitment was thus repeatedly challenged.

Reports in the *Shenbao* newspaper show temple preservation in 1928. In Jiaxing, Zhejiang, the local 'construction committee' decided both to repair the local 'civil temple' (the *wenmiao*, dedicated to Confucius) and to knock down the Kuixing pavilion.[637] Kuixing was the deity believed to confer examination success and was thus popular among the literati. In the new Republican order, however, prayers for success were readily understood and rejected under the rubric of 'superstition', and the pavilion's historically close relationship to the temple was evidently insufficient to save it. The Shanghai city government too responded to the Ministry by ordering the city's Education Bureau to protect a Confucius

636 'Ping Jin yaoxun' [Important news from Beijing and Tianjin], *Shenbao* 29 August 1929, 8
637 'Jiaxing', *Shenbao* 13 June 1928, 11

temple within the boundaries of the city.[638] In Songjiang, near Shanghai, the local government reassigned revenue from temple lands, which had been earmarked after the end of the rites for education, to finance the Confucius temple's preservation.[639] The order to preserve the temples was also applied to local disputes: following the official end of the sacrifices, ancient trees in the Confucius temple at Baoying, Jiangsu, had apparently been chopped down, and in response to a local petition the Ministry of the Interior called on the Jiangsu provincial government to investigate this 'deeply inappropriate' act.[640]

Local governments also followed the order in putting the temples to use. A Confucius temple in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu, which in 1929 had served as a provincial 'training centre', was further used in April 1930 as a 'propaganda facility for teaching the people' during a 'mass education propaganda week'; the local Education Department's statement cited the regulations for managing and putting to use Confucian temple property.[641] More permanent and sweeping changes were planned and eventually carried out in Shanghai, with a new park constructed on the temple grounds. The buildings were, following the national regulations, used for a popular education centre complete with library, lecture hall, museum, art displays, and space for 'physical education'.[642] This plan, the progress of which was the subject of frequent reports in the *Shenbao*, was first announced in October 1928 and saw completion in December 1931.[643] In line with the detailed instructions of 1929, the temple's central Hall of Great Completion was preserved amidst the change.[644]

Broad surveys suggest that the adaptation of Confucius temples occurred on a large scale, although they leave unclear how many of the conversions occurred during the Nanjing decade; some may have occurred earlier. Based on a survey in the Chinese

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638 'Shi fu ling jiaoyu ju jieshou Kongmiao' [City government orders education bureau to take over Confucius temple], *Zhongyang ribao* 26 August 1928, 3.2

639 'Songjiang', *Shenbao* 5 July 1928, 11

640 'Baoying', *Shenbao* 24 September 1928, 10

641 'Zhenjiang wenmiao gai chong minzhong jiaoyu xuanchuan huisuo' [Zhenjiang civil temple converted to provide propaganda facility for teaching the common people], *Jiangsu sheng zhengfu gongbao* 405 (7 April 1930), 10–11

642 'Choujian Gongyuan ji Tushuguan' [Plans to build garden and library], *Shenbao* 18 October 1928, 23; 'Choushe Minzhong Jiaoyuguan' [Plans to build popular education centre], *Shenbao* 15 November 1928, 23

643 'Wenmiao gongyuan tushuguan dingqi kaimu, minzhong jiaoyuguan buri qijian' [Date set for opening of civil temple library and park, work to start on popular education centre], *Shenbao* 27 December 1931, 15

644 'Wenmiao gaijian gongyuan reng bao wenmiao guji sansen gongsi de biao' [Conversion of civil temple to park will retain civil temple ancient site, Sansen company wins bid] *Shenbao* 27 February 1931, 9

Educational Yearbook, Zhou Huimei shows that in 1931 at least nine of the ninety-four 'common people's schools' in Zhejiang were based in Confucius temples.[645] The Yunnan provincial Education Department in 1929 ordered that a popular education centre be established in each county's civil temple.[646] There was no official survey of Confucius temples until October 1934: this incomplete survey, carried out by the Ministry of the Interior, found that of eight hundred and seventy-four Confucius temples across six cities and eight hundred and seventeen counties, only seventeen were 'ruined', while five hundred and thirty-two had been put to 'educational' use, one hundred and thirty-two were occupied by local government and party bodies, and seventy-two by the military, leaving one hundred and sixty-five unspecified. This survey suggests that the Yunnan Education Department drive had been successful, listing thirty-nine of fifty-seven temples in that province as 'educational'.[647]

Zhou Huimei's study of the popular education centres suggests that the conversion of temples fitted harmoniously with their ritual functions, with the schools representing the line from the *Analects* 'there are no distinctions in teaching'.[648] In some cases the schools 'directly carried on the Confucius temples' functions by holding sacrifices to Confucius' using the 'traditional ritual format'. Zhou cites one of the schools in Kunming, which hired a member of staff due to his familiarity with the Confucian sacrifice.[649]

Other cases, however, show continued tensions over the temple sites. In addition to the conversions above, the *Shenbao* recorded more destructive changes in the 'old civil temple' in Jiaxing, which was to be converted into a 'children's recreation space', with existing buildings dismantled and bricks, stone, and wood sold to raise funds.[650] Laws in 1928 and 1929 confirming that local education organs had the exclusive right to manage temple property obviously disrupted existing gentry management in the temples: the high-profile conversion of the Shanghai civil temple resulted in the disbandment of its

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[645] Zhou Huimei, *Minzhong jiaoyuguan yu Zhongguo shehui bianqian* [Popular education centres and social change in China] (Taibei: Xiuwei chuban, 2013), 321–22. Zhou notes that as the original survey lacked uniform details on the centres' locations, the figure may only be a partial one.

[646] Zhou Huimei, *Minzhong jiaoyuguan yu Zhongguo shehui bianqian*, 66

[647] 'Neizhengbu quanguo Kongmiao shikuang diaocha baogao' [National survey of condition of Confucius temples across the country by Ministry of the Interior], *Minguo ziliao* 5.1, 549–50. Goossaert and Palmer describe the wider localised phenomenon of temple confiscation and conversion in Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 47–50, 125–28

[648] Analects: Zhu Xi, *Si shu zhangju jizhu*, 168

[649] Zhou Huimei, *Minzhong jiaoyuguan yu Zhongguo shehui bianqian*, 381

[650] 'Jiaxing', *Shenbao* 8 June 1929, 10

previous 'sweeping bureau' (responsible for cleaning and maintenance) in March 1933.[651]

Conversions to educational uses could provoke protest. In Yunnan in 1932 the Educational Journal reported that the Education Department's establishment of a provincial Mass Education Centre in Kunming, which involved making repairs and changes to the walls and buildings, 'gave rise to misunderstandings from the independent Confucian Sacrifice Association (*Si Kong hui*), which... issued a declaration libelling the educational authorities. Its misunderstanding of the Way of revering Confucius and elucidating ethics caused a stir in intellectual circles...' In response to the public controversy, the provincial government issued an order confirming the Education Department's right to dispose of the temple, and moreover criticised Sun Guangting, the former member of the Yunnan provincial assembly who in 1928 had publicly protested against the University Council's ending of the sacrifices, who had apparently gone to the Centre to 'pull down the walls and insult public servants'.[652]

Songjiang, near Shanghai, saw a disturbance which explicitly challenged local Guomindang authority. A man named Ren Shichang, claiming to be the head of the high-profile redemptive society the World Morality Society (*Wanguo daode hui*), formed a branch of the society in Songjiang and applied to the local Guomindang branch for recognition. The latter decided the group's identity was unclear and needed further investigation. Ren and a colleague in response carried a spirit tablet dedicated to Confucius and a banner, waving them in the street and singing 'smash the party branch'. For this local power struggle the Confucius temple served as a point of protest: the *Shenbao* reported that when they arrived at the party headquarters the two spoke to onlookers, blaming the party branch for the temple's dilapidated state.[653]

A 1933 protest by the famous proponent of anti-Qing revolution and national essence scholar Zhang Binglin shows how education departments following the government's 1929 instructions could be viewed as desecrating temple land. Zhang telegrammed Lu Diping, who had become the chairman of the Zhejiang provincial government, to protest the beginning of a longstanding plan to convert the Hangzhou Confucius temple

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651 'Wenmiao sasao ju chefei' [Civil temple sweeping bureau disbanded], *Shenbao* 22 March 1933, 18

652 'Shengfu mingling jiejue si Kong hui yi chang fenrao' [Provincial government orders resolution of Confucian Sacrifice Association controversy], *Yunnan jiaoyu zhoukan* 2.2 (1932), 43

653 'Songjiang', *Shenbao* 3 July 1933, 9

for the use of the Normal University. In line with the government's 1929 law, the plan allowed the Hall of Great Completion to retained its original appearance; everything else, Zhang wrote, would suffer, with the gatehouse to be converted into a dormitory and the two side halls completely destroyed. The plan, Zhang wrote, was a failure both to preserve ancient heritage and to 'revere the Former Teacher', both goals which the national government had proclaimed.[654]

Where Xue Dubi had claimed that putting temples to educational use was a means of preserving them, Zhang was sceptical: 'some say we can use the teachers' college to protect the Confucius temple; they don't know that in ancient times a new coat of paint or changing the [wooden] eaves would be called 'destroying the temple', whereas now they demolish the side halls and make a dormitory of the gatehouse, and cheat people by calling it 'preservation'.[655] From Zhang's point of view it appeared that the particular concern the government had shown to 'preserve' the Confucius temples had in practice brought destruction: he declared that other shrines in the city 'which had not been in the [imperially approved] register of rites' had survived, and noted that the adjoining examination school and former government buildings could be used if space were needed.[656] Modern use of the temples for education was evidently in Zhang's eyes a threat: he noted that though the Confucius temple at the Imperial Academy in Beijing had become dilapidated, the educational authorities there at least 'had not dared to occupy' it. Even those temples (like that in Beijing) which had been recognised as 'ancient heritage', Zhang wrote, were difficult to preserve; how much more so those in Zhejiang which had not? His account mentioned a local temple 'damaged' by being turned into a hospital for wounded soldiers, and the Hangzhou prefectural and county temples, which had been 'destroyed' (presumably through lack of maintenance).

Zhang's telegram, published in Cheng Yu's 1934 'Record of Revering Confucius Through the Ages' (*Lidai zun Kong ji*), evidently disputed Nanjing's claim that Confucius' link to national culture was best represented through educational use of the temples: authentic preservation would mean keeping them physically intact as 'ancient relics'. Where for Chiang Kaishek true Chineseness meant recognising the Nanjing state's construction of Confucius and national culture, Zhang Binglin raised the same challenge against agents

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654 Cheng Yu, ed., *Lidai zun Kong ji*, 40–41
655 Cheng Yu, ed., *Lidai zun Kong ji*, 41
656 Cheng Yu, ed., *Lidai zun Kong ji*, 40–41

of the Nanjing state: those who dared to violate temple space 'cannot be Chinese people'.[657]

Accompanying these challenges were continued appeals for the Nanjing government to go beyond the existing balanced and explicitly compromising measures to show greater commitment to Confucius. The *Shenbao* reported in May 1931 that the Deputy Head of the Huaihe Water Resources Committee and representative of the Zhejiang Agricultural Association Zhuang Songpu proposed at the National Assembly to 'unite and protect the masses and cultivate the people's morality' by 'carrying out the doctrine of rites'. Zhuang proposed a far more radical union of Sun Yatsen and Confucius than the Nanjing state was willing to establish. Although this 'doctrine of rites' took as its name the generalised term for the imperial orthodoxy which radicals had attacked, Zhuang proposed a new system to suit the demands of modern society, Sun's principles, and 'national conditions'. It also involved measures which recalled the campaigns for a Confucian state religion, though incorporating Sun: 'churches' were to be built at each Confucius temple, with Confucius and Sun both commemorated within them.[658]

The Xinzheng, Henan branch of the Confucian Way Association (*Kongdao hui*) made another ambitious (and costly) proposal in December 1931, calling for the rebuilding of all Confucius temples. In response the Ministry of the Interior declared that since the condition of temples varied, with 'some hav[ing] unrepaired leaks in the buildings due to going many years without repair', while others were intact due to local fund-raising to repair them, and local economic conditions varied, such an order would be impractical. The maintenance which the Ministry required was thus to be carried out through local initiative: '[i]f there is a need for repair, it can only be carried out by local discussion and fundraising'.[659]

These national-level proposals for greater commitment from Nanjing went unrealised. The relative autonomy of parts of China, however, allowed local leaders to claim legitimacy through Confucian ritual and so offer an implicit contrast with Chiang's government's delicately balanced approach. In 1930 the largely autonomous military

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[657] Cheng Yu, ed., *Lidai zun Kong ji*, 41

[658] 'Minhui taolun xin yanfa an' [National Assembly discusses new salt system], *Shenbao* 12 May 1931, 5

[659] 'Qufu xiansheng xianxian linmiao xiufu shenqing zizhu' [Requests for help with repairing the forest and temple to the former sages and worthies at Qufu] *Guoshiguan* archives, Guomin zhengfu, 001–051800–004, 98–100

commander of Manchuria Zhang Xueliang led the members of the Liaoning provincial assembly in an 'extremely solemn' spring sacrificial ritual to Confucius, taking the step the Nanjing government refused to take in reinstating the sacrifices according to the lunar calendar.[660] The *Shenbao* reported that an autumn sacrifice followed in September of the same year, presided over by the governor of Liaoning.[661] In Chongqing, too, the sacrifices which Confucian groups had petitioned the Nanjing government to restore made a return under the Sichuan military leader and government chairman Liu Xiang, in October 1933.[662]

The issue of repairs at the Confucian temple at Qufu, Confucius' ancestral home, is revealing both of the rhetorical commitment by government leaders and of the practical limits of policy. The complex had been damaged by shelling in fighting between Yan Xishan's forces and those of the central government in the 1930 Central Plains War. Recognised lineal descendant of Confucius Kong Decheng thus sent a telegram to Chiang Kaishek in July of that year calling on him to order his troops to protect the temple 'out of [his] sincere desire to esteem the classicists and value the Way'. Chiang responded by issuing the order and blaming the damage on Yan, claiming that the latter had shown his claims to 'revere the rites' to be false with his wanton artillery fire.[663] Yet demonstrating this commitment proved a greater challenge when it came to repairing the damage at the temple. As Li Guannan shows, though in April 1931 the Executive Yuan declared its intention to restore the complex and so 'promote the inherent national culture', funding proved difficult despite Chiang Kaishek's personal support. The central government agreed to supply 100, 000 *yuan*, less than one-tenth of the funding required for the most conservative repair plan, in instalments, but this money was not allocated until 1934.[664] Dai Jitao took part in a fundraising campaign with the Shandong provincial government, but by the end of 1932 this had obtained only 10,000 *yuan*.[665] As Li suggests, 'preserving the temple in Qufu received low priority on the government agenda'; this was perhaps unsurprising, given the deepening crisis of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria.[666]

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660 'Liaosheng chunding si Kong' [Spring sacrifices to Confucius in Liaoning], *Shenbao* 9 March 1930, 8
661 'Dongbei jinwen' [Recent news from the northeast], *Shenbao* 25 September 1930, 6
662 Xiang Chu, ed., *Baxian Xianzhi Bangongshi Xuanzhu* [Selected annotations from the Baxian gazetteer office] (Chongqing chubanshe, 1989), 262
663 *Shilüe gaoben* Vol. 8, 363–64 (22 July 1930)
664 Li Guannan, 'Culture, Revolution, and Modernity', 449, 452
665 Li Guannan, 'Culture, Revolution, and Modernity', 450–51
666 Li Guannan, 'Culture, Revolution, and Modernity', 451

Apotheosis: the 1934 Confucian Commemoration

Li Guannan's conclusion that the lack of restoration at Qufu confirmed 'the fallen status of Confucianism in the GMD's ideological agenda', however, is accurate only if we take 'Confucianism' to refer to the temple-based ritual practice which Confucian groups continued to demand.[667] For 1934 was the high point for the Nanjing state's alternative imagining of Confucius as both symbol of national culture and forerunner of the Guomindang's revolutionary principles: in May of that year the Central Executive Committee agreed to promote the commemoration of Confucius' birthday as a national holiday (as opposed to the more limited school-based measures of 1928), the ritual celebrations of which were publicised across the nation. Yet, though the central government assumed unprecedented control of the commemorative ritual by initiating the decision and by specifying a precise format to be followed, the commemoration on August 27 reveals the challenge of differentiating the party-approved image of Confucius from the figure to whom the emperors had offered sacrifices.

Unlike the events of 1928, this move originated not from external pressure but from the heart of the government itself: the proposal at the 123rd meeting of the Central Executive Committee's standing committee was officially put forward by Chiang Kaishek, Wang Yangming, Dai Jitao, and Ye Chucang. A subsequent standing committee decision on August twenty-third confirmed the importance of the ritual and made clear that it was to express the link between Confucius and Sun: a commemoration would be held during Sun Yatsen memorial week at an 'expanded memorial meeting' in the Central Party Grand Auditorium.[668] The format decided for this event, and for the similar ones that were to be held by 'each party, government, army, and police organ, each school, and each organisation' across the country, also made this connection by setting out 'key points for propaganda': 'recount the events of Confucius' life', 'explain his ideas', and 'explain the connection between Confucius and Sun Yatsen's revolutionary thought'.[669] Where the 1928 decision had produced ambiguities by giving no ritual format for the

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[667] Li Guannan, 'Culture, Revolution, and Modernity', 45

[668] 'Kongzi danchen jinianri an (1)' [Commemoration of Confucius' birthday, 1], *Guoshiguan* archives Guomin zhengfu, 001–051616–002

[669] 'Guomindang zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui zhuanqing Guomin Zhengfu mingling gongbu si Kong banfa han' [Guomindang central executive committee letter requesting National Government to order and announce means of sacrificing to Confucius], *Minguo ziliao* 5.1, 530–31, 531

commemoration, in 1934 the government specified the process in detail: all attendees were to solemnly stand while music played, then they would sing the party anthem and bow to 'the flags of party and country, the portrait of the Director-General, and the portrait of Confucius'. The leading figure present would then read Sun's testament before explaining 'the significance of commemorating Confucius' and give a speech; following this the attendees would sing the 'Confucius memorial song' and the ritual would conclude with music.[670] The format thus followed closely that used for the commemoration of Sun Yatsen as well as for other ritual gatherings, and the order of events firmly placed party and Confucius together, with the national flag, party anthem, and Sun's image apparently taking precedence.[671] The Central Executive Committee did not decide on the Confucius memorial song until after the 1934 ritual. The song they chose in October confirmed that this version of Confucius was interpreted entirely through Sun's selections: its lyrics came from the *Book of Rites* passage describing the 'Great Unity' Sun had cited. In its preface the Committee explained that this passage 'truly is the basis of the Three Principles of the People'.[672] A decision shortly before the memorial day, on August 18th, cemented the relationship between Sun and Confucius and demonstrates concern to clearly establish the hierarchy of the two: 'Confucius' image should be placed on a table before the image of the Director-General'.[673]

According to an account in the *Times Monthly* (*Shishi yuebao*), the Nanjing ceremony was appropriately grand, with over two thousand people attending. A banner summarised the state's understanding of Confucius' contribution to the Chinese nation: '[his] virtue joins with Heaven and Earth, [his] Way is foremost among ancients and moderns', evoking both the trans-historical moral values promoted by the Guomindang and Dai Jitao and Chiang Kaishek's connection between the golden age Confucian Way and the principles of national revolution.[674]

According to speeches at the Nanjing commemoration by Dai Jitao and Wang Jingwei,

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[670] 'Guomindang zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui zhuanqing Guomin Zhengfu mingling gongbu si Kong banfa han', 531

[671] 'Guomindang zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui zhuanqing Guomin Zhengfu mingling gongbu si Kong banfa han', 531

[672] 'Guomindang zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui banfa "Kongzi Jinian Ge" mingling' [Guomindang central executive committee promulgates order on Confucius memorial song], *Minguo ziliao* 5.1, 531

[673] 'Kongzi danchen jinianri an (1)' [Commemoration of Confucius' birthday, 1], *Guoshiguan* archives Guomin zhengfu, 001–051616–002, 91–93

[674] Guo Youshou, 'Si Kong dianli quanguo longzhong juxing' [Confucius sacrifices held in grand style across the country], *Shishi yuebao* 11.4 (1934), 145–46

the authentic Confucius was the one defined by the party-state. Wang Jingwei's speech was published in journals as well as the state-controlled *Central Daily News* (*Zhongyang ribao*), which devoted extensive coverage to the commemorations across several days.[675] Wang's version of Confucius clearly followed that of Dai Jitao, positioning Confucius as Sun's predecessor. In Wang's speech we also see, however, the importance of revolutionary traditionalist techniques in separating this version from rival constructions.

Wang Jingwei's praise was, if anything, still more concentrated on the figure of Confucius than Dai Jitao's had been, giving him a uniquely privileged position as the source of 'all' of the nation's culture and learning. Wang dismissed the notion he claimed had appeared over 'the last few decades', that the 'unique respect' accorded to Confucius was the result of imperial manipulation and suppression of the other 'hundred thinkers' of the pre-Qin period.[676] In stark contrast to the National Essence writings of the 1900s that had emphasised these 'hundred thinkers' over the imperially sanctioned figure of Confucius, Wang's speech presented their achievements as far behind those of Confucius, the 'intellectual father of China's four hundred million' who 'absolutely could not be mentioned together with the hundred thinkers'.[677]

Yet this uniquely vital position could be misunderstood. Wang, as noted in the introduction to this chapter, triangulated the party's vision of Confucius between the 'unreasonable' alternatives of worshipping him as founder of a religion and condemning his 'learning' as 'obsolete' or historically harmful.

In the process Wang stressed Confucius' utility for the nation-state. The religious interpretation was, as Wang explained it, born out of a desire for international parity, 'thinking that only this way can he compete with Siddharta, Jesus, and Mohammed, thinking that because others have religion, so can we...'. Confucius' contribution to China's culture was, however, unique precisely in its lack of 'a trace of religion'. But Confucianism nevertheless achieved religion's 'greatest aim', which was giving humanity

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675 'Wangshi baogao' [Mr Wang's Speech], *Zhongyang ribao* (28 August 1934), 2; Wang Jingwei, 'Jinian Kongdan de zhongyao yiyi' [The Major Significance of Commemorating Confucius' Birth], *Qiaowu yuebao* 1.7–8, 6–9; Wang Jingwei, 'Kongdan jinian zhi yiyi' [The Significance of Commemorating Confucius' Birth], *Shangbiao gongbao* 91 (1934), 10–13

676 Wang Jingwei, 'Wang Jingwei zai Guomindang zhongyang dangbu juxing de Kongzi danchen jinian hui', 540

677 Wang Jingwei, 'Wang Jingwei zai Guomindang zhongyang dangbu juxing de Kongzi danchen jinian hui', 541

'a common belief' and thus making people's actions meaningful. This common belief ultimately served the national community's interests: "if a nation has no common belief, then its thoughts and actions cannot be concentrated, its strength will be small, and it will not be able to compete for survival, like a plate of loose sand'.

The second misguided view, to 'despise Confucius', was thus a rejection of national culture. Wang argued that 'the whole of our culture and academic thought' in the present age derived from Confucius, who took the existing culture and learning and systemised it to ensure its survival. 'Every word of the *Poems*, *Documents*, *Changes*, *Rites*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals* was transmitted to us by Confucius', and to despise Confucius would thus be ungrateful. This cultural legacy preserved the nation: 'if we discard [the memory of Confucius' contribution], it will no longer be possible to arrest the nation's decline'.

As with the previous interpretations of Sun Yatsen, Dai Jitao and Chiang Kaishek, although the learning attributed to Confucius was a focus for Chinese unity, it was ultimately global in the form of the 'ideal human society' in the 'great way' passage of the *Book of Rites*, which Wang attributed directly to Confucius.[678] In identifying this as crucial, Wang's speech showed that Dai Jitao's vision of the connection between Confucius and Sun had been firmly established in party rhetoric: Confucius had created the 'ideal', but only through Sun and his party could it finally be realised.[679]

Thus Confucius' true meaning was inherently tied to the party: the fault of those who saw Confucianism as religion was 'to revere Confucius but not know how to revere him'.[680] Wang avoided presenting this inheritance as merely conservative, challenging the notion that Confucius' thought was no longer suited to the age and simultaneously legitimating his own interpretation of Confucius, with the *Classic of Changes* line 'daily renew one's virtue', which expressed that Confucius 'wished us to develop and enlarge his teachings, advancing together with the times'.[681]

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[678] Wang Jingwei, 'Wang Jingwei zai Guomindang zhongyang dangbu juxing de Kongzi danchen jinian hui', 539.

[679] Wang Jingwei, 'Wang Jingwei zai Guomindang zhongyang dangbu juxing de Kongzi danchen jinian hui', 539–40.

[680] Wang Jingwei, 'Wang Jingwei zai Guomindang zhongyang dangbu juxing de Kongzi danchen jinian hui', 540

[681] Wang, 'Wang Jingwei zai Guomindang zhongyang dangbu juxing de Kongzi danchen jinian hui shang', 540. The *Classic of Changes* quotation derives from the *Commentary on the Judgements*: Zhu Xi, Zhouyi benyi [The Original Meaning of the Zhou Changes] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2009), 14

Thus Wang separated Confucius from the imperial legacy with a device similar to Dai's 1925 distinction between 'what can be done' and 'what is done': 'benevolence' was a constant value, but the 'conditions' in which it was expressed varied from age to age. Confucius' appeal to benevolence could thus be maintained and applied equally to all, instead of to the sovereign, and could be made compatible with 'liberty and equality'. 'Propriety', too, was historically universal in that it arose whenever two or more people interacted, but its specific content could change. Wang thus identified the prostration that 'Confucius promoted' as suited only to the age when people sat on mats on the floor; in the modern age a bow would suffice. The new ritual form of the birthday celebration, Wang's words suggested, was thus proper and promoted 'equality for all and mutual love between all', and the past kowtow could be rejected. Like Sun's earlier critique, and those of Chiang Kaishek in the then-active New Life Movement, this allowed for a criticism of Chinese people as not meeting the standards of Europe and America despite the rich legacy of 'benevolence' and 'propriety' bequeathed to them. By Wang's description Europeans and Americans, when bumping into each other in the street, showed more courtesy to strangers because Chinese people had failed to adapt the 'conditions and content' of their propriety to more complex and concentrated modern life.[682] To be true to Confucius, then, meant taking eternal principles and applying them according to present conditions; to this end Wang deployed Mencius' line describing Confucius as 'the timely Sage', adding that this made him 'the modern Sage.[683]

Dai Jitao's speech reinforced the point that the party defined the meaning of Confucius for the modern nation: 'when I commemorate the birth of the First Teacher Confucius, who completed China's culture, still more do I commemorate the victory of the National Revolutionary movement that revitalises China's culture'. Crediting Confucius with saving China's civilization amidst the chaos of the late Zhou Dynasty, Dai made Confucius' life a parallel to Sun and his party's work in 'saving the country' from foreign imperialism and internal fragmentation. [684] Yet Dai also stressed a difference by which the party retained its revolutionary credentials: '[p]erhaps there were many thinkers and scholars in Confucius' time who had independent, new thought... but what the citizens

[682] Wang Jingwei, 'Wang Jingwei zai Guomindang zhongyang dangbu juxing de Kongzi danchen jinian hui', 542–3

[683] Wang Jingwei, 'Wang Jingwei zai Guomindang zhongyang dangbu juxing de Kongzi danchen jinian hui', 543. Mencius quote: Zhu Xi, *Si shu zhangju jizhu*, 315

[684] Dai Jitao, 'Dai Chuanxian zai zhongyang dangbu juxing de Kongzi danchen jinian hui shang tan zun Kong yiyi' [Dai Jitao speaks on the meaning of revering Confucius at the Guomindang central party headquarters Confucius birthday commemoration], *Minguo ziliao* 5.1, 543–46, 544

of China urgently needed was not that, but to completely inherit the inherent national culture, develop it and carry it forward'. By contrast, Sun needed to 'create': 'the present responsibility to save the country is more urgent than in Confucius' time, and the task harder than in Confucius' time... [o]nly by believing in the Director-General's principles can we recover China's civilisation, and truly develop the unitary Great Way of '"holding firm to the middle"'.

Dai admitted the controversy over the commemoration, stating that 'this commemoration of Confucius will now and in the future will give rise to arguments from not a few deluded Chinese people', but concluded that the solution was a Confucius thoroughly connected to the party and its modernising agenda: 'we firmly believe that only realising the Three Principles of the People, recovering our inherent morality and ability, and meeting head-on and catching up with global scientific culture, is truly sufficient to commemorate Confucius'.[685]

The limits of control

Yet, on the same day as the scrupulously balanced presentation of Confucius as defined through the party's agenda in Nanjing, another ritual in Qufu–much publicised in subsequent newspaper accounts–raised doubts over the government's control of Confucius as a symbol.

The Central Executive Committee agreed to send one of their number, Ye Chucang, to Qufu to 'make offerings', accompanied by representatives of each of the five government Yuan, the Ministries of the Interior and Education, and of the Shandong government. The ritual format decided for Qufu was to be similar to that in Nanjing: attendees were to stand for music, sing the national anthem, and the state representatives were to present flowers, read a commemorative address and bow three times to Confucius' spirit tablet.[686]

As the use of the phrase 'make offerings' in the government order suggests, however, the event in Qufu was troubled by ambiguity: reports commented on the 'old style' of the ritual. Section Chief of the Central Ceremonial Bureau Chai Zuyin's address

[685] Dai Jitao, 'Dai Chuanxian zai zhongyang dangbu juxing de Kongzi danchen jinian hui', 546
[686] 'Kongzi danchen jinianri an (1)', *Guoshiguan* archives Guomin zhengfu, 001–051616–002, 120–23

appropriately linked Confucius to party and nation, listing the state representatives in attendance and focusing on 'the world belong[ing] to all', the Great Unity, and Sun Yatsen's role in 'widely expounding this meaning', while also finding a place for Confucius' contribution to and consonance with each of the Three Principles of the People.[687] Newspaper reports from Qufu, however, detailed the ways in which the rituals, carried out by Confucius' descendants in Qufu, recalled the imperial rites:

> ...before the temple the ancient instruments were laid out, and the players all wore square black hats and purple patterned gowns. The ten sacrificial articles included the [customary] dish and platter... and a whole ox, pig, and goat were sacrificed. Ye Chucang... and the other representatives... all wore long robes and surcoats, with yellow insignia, going first to the mansion of the Yansheng Duke [Kong Decheng, the recognised direct male descendant of Confucius], then to the Confucius temple's Hall of Great Completion for the rite. A full cohort of over five thousand students attended. The sacrificial ceremony was solemn and grand... after the chief sacrificer, assistant sacrificers, and others reached their places, they lined up in six rows. First martial music was played and they sang the national anthem, then Ye presented a flower ring, and Cai Zuyin of the Central Bureau of Ritual gave an address. Then they bowed three times, and ancient music was played and they bowed once more. By half past seven the ceremony was finished, and following it the Kong family held their family sacrifice...'[688]

At the 'family sacrifice', according to the *National News Weekly*, '[e]verything was done according to the ancient way'. Moreover, despite Wang Jingwei's explicit efforts to define a non-religious Confucianism, the ritual was held by the Kong family together with the Confucian Religion Association, which had cultivated close ties with Qufu and the family.[689] Though it is unclear whether the central government representatives attended this ceremony, then, the widespread reporting of the event and their arrival in Qufu could be seen to give official approval to a ritual format which for commentators recalled the imperial past and evoked the arguments for Confucianism as a religion.

Li Guannan's assertion that '[a]lthough in Qufu the GMD officials and the Kong lineage ran a show based on "ancient rites," its spirit was actually defined by the GMD leaders in Nanjing' thus overstates the ability of the Nanjing government to determine the

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[687] Guo Youshou, 'Si Kong dianli quanguo longzhong juxing', 145–46
[688] Guo Youshou, 'Si Kong dianli quanguo longzhong juxing', 145–46
[689] 'Kongdan jinian sidian longzhong' [Grand sacrifices to commemorate Confucius' birth], *Guowen zhoubao* 11.35 (September 3 1934), 1–2

meanings attributed to Confucius through the rites.[690] Members of the central government evidently expressed their concern over the association of the party-state with the rites in Qufu: in September 1934 He Jian, still governing Hunan and an enthusiastic supporter of and participant in the 1934 rituals, telegrammed Nanjing expressing concern over reports that after coming back from Qufu, members of the central government had discussed changing the 'old' format of the 'family ritual' held there. He rejected a change to the ritual title accorded Confucius ('Great Completer, Utmost Sage, First Teacher') and called on the government to solicit opinions rather than unilaterally altering the ritual process, apparently in the hope that literati protests would forestall any change.[691] In 1935, though the birthday was again commemorated in Nanjing, the central government sent no representatives from there to Qufu: the highest guest this time was the head of the Shandong government.[692]

Given these links, it is unsurprising that for critics of the Nanjing government the commemoration seemed to mark not a reinvention of Confucius but a 'restoration of antiquity'. In this the beginning of annual commemoration in 1934 joined other parts of the broader traditionalist trend we have identified, along with the beginning of the New Life Movement and Chiang Kaishek's earlier adoption of the 'transmission of the Way'.

These traditionalist moves continued to provide ammunition for political opponents, who appealed to the forward movement of history and exploited the counter-revolutionary associations of traditionalism and Confucius: Hu Hanmin in 1933 criticised Chiang for the 'Confucianisation' of Sun, proclaiming that 'when I look in the newspaper I can't help but feel that now is not 1933, and still less is this a year in which Japan is stealing our northeast and encroaching on north China- we have instead returned to some time between five hundred and three thousand years ago'.[693] To claim Sun had 'completely' inherited the 'orthodox thought' of China's past, as Dai Jitao and subsequently Chiang Kaishek had done, was as Hu put it to make him a 'moralist or an ordinary scholar'. Revolution, by contrast, must be an act of breaking with the past.[694]

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690 Li Guannan, 'Culture, Revolution, and Modernity', 427

691 'Kongzi danchen jinianri an (1)', *Guoshiguan* archives Guomin zhengfu, 001–051616–002, 211–12

692 Kongzi danchen jinianri an (2)' [Commemoration of Confucius' birthday, 1], *Guoshiguan* archives Guomin zhengfu, 001–051616–003, 54–56

693 Hu Hanmin, 'Sanmin zhuyi de xinwu guan' [Idealism and Materialism in the Three Principles of the People], *Sanmin zhuyi yuekan*, 1.4 (April 1933).

694 Hu Hanmin, 'Sanmin zhuyi de xinwu guan', 139

In 1934 Communist Party writers likewise continued to draw on Chen Duxiu's language in the New Youth journal in 1915 for their attacks on Chiang's government, accusing its New Life Movement of promoting 'slave morality' and 'the old doctrine of rites' with the aim of 'anaesthetising the masses' resistance'.[695] Communist propaganda in the 1930s fitted the Guomindang into the new context of international and transnational struggle by identifying the appeal to historical native culture with the aim of control as a 'Fascist' means of social control. Perhaps more damaging, in the Chinese context, was that Guomindang traditionalism could be presented as 'working in concert from afar' with the 'revitalisation of the doctrine of rites' in Japanese-controlled Manchuria.[696] The rulers of the newly-established Manchukuo had installed the last Qing emperor as head of state there, and in 1934 named him emperor once more. At the same time, the Japanese controlled government promoted both explicitly classical moral values and the notion of rule by the 'Kingly Way' (*Wangdao*) which Sun Yatsen had at the end of 1924 celebrated and recommended to Japanese readers and listeners as an 'Eastern' alternative to coercive Euro-American state power, governing by rational moral suasion.[697] Sun's vision of a Chinese global modernity, meant to dissuade Japanese aggression, was thus ironically echoed in the ostensible philosophy of a state made possible by the very same military force, whose existence violated the territorial integrity he had promoted, and which directly challenged his successors in Nanjing. For critics like those in the Communist Party, the explicit appeal to Confucian wisdom and morality from Manchukuo only served to confirm that it was a tool of social control and, as Chen Duxiu had argued in 1917, inherently linked to the counter-revolutionary project of 'restoration'.[698]

At the same time, the aftermath of the commemoration saw further efforts from campaigners. Those calling for the full restoration of sacrifices to Confucius, preservation, maintenance, and even fresh building of temples across the country, and classics-reading cast doubt on the government's sincerity even as they appealed to and thus associated themselves with its own traditionalist discourse.

The fate of 'classics-reading' campaigns is a sign of state actors' ambivalence and wish to

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[695] 'Guomindang tichang nuli daode' [The Guomindang Promotes Slave Morality], *Hongse Zhonghua* 238 (26 September 1934), 4; 'Guomindang faxisidi de nuli jiaoyu' [The Guomindang's Fascist Slave Education], *Hongse Zhonghua* 239 (29 September 1934), 4

[696] 'Guomindang faxisidi de nuli jiaoyu', 4

[697] Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 63

[698] Chen, 'Fubi yu zun Kong' [Restoration and Revering Confucius], *Xin qingnian* 3.6 (August 1917)

avoid the charge of reaction. He Jian, who as we have seen played a major role in securing the central government's ritual recognition of Confucius and replaced Lu Diping to become acting Chairman of the Hunan Provincial Government between 1929 and 1937, and Chen Jitang, the military leader who dominated Guangdong, took advantage of the 1934 national commemoration of the Sage to promote the reading of texts from the Four Books and Five Classics in schools in their provinces, reversing Cai Yuanpei's 1912 policy as Minister of Education.[699] These moves, lambasted by self-proclaimed New Culture representatives like Hu Shi and Lu Xun, seemed in line with central government leaders' inclinations. Chiang Kaishek had repeatedly recommended the Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean, and leading party figure Chen Lifu wrote in support of classics-reading in a 1935 Journal of Education (*Jiaoyu zazhi*) special issue debating the matter. Chen's argument, however, sought balance, rejecting the 'excessive reading and stilted reading' he associated with the imperial examination system: modern reading of the classics would benefit from 'scientific knowledge'.[700] He stopped short of calling for compulsory reading and left the questions of which classics students should read and how the books were to be edited to 'later research'. In keeping with Chen's caution, the state issued no national law on this controversial issue despite He Jian's proposals, which even in Hunan could not be realised.[701] In keeping with the central government's efforts to control Confucius as a symbol of the party-state, it appeared there was general agreement that, as Hu Hanmin had put it in 1927, 'to go to Confucius by means of Sun' was unnecessary or even harmful.[702]

Chen Jitang and He Jian were not the only regional leaders to respond to the commemoration by claiming a more authentic commitment. In Taiyuan, Shanxi province, the common people's school established in 1933 on the site of the prefectural Confucius temple served in 1935 as a site for the commemoration of Confucius' birthday with the involvement of the Ancestral Sage Society (*Zongsheng hui*), Heart-cleansing Society (*Xixin she*), Morality Study Society (*Daode xueshe*), Red Swastika society (*Hong wanzi hui*) and other groups which the Guomindang had generally condemned as 'superstitious'.

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[699] Shuk-wah Poon, *Negotiating Religion in Modern China: State and Common People in Guangzhou, 1900-1937* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2011), 8

[700] Chen Lifu, 'Chen Lifu xiansheng de yijian' [Mr. Chen Lifu's opinion], *Jiaoyu zazhi* 25.5 (May 10 1935), 39–40

[701] Luo Yuming, *Huxiang wenhua yu Hunan de zun Kong dujing, 1927–1937* [Hunan culture and reverence for Confucius and classics-reading in Hunan, 1927–1937] (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 2004), 190, 200, 227–55. Poon notes that Chen Jitang's efforts in Guangdong were similarly thwarted: Poon, *Negotiating Religion in Modern China*, 8

[702] Hu Hanmin, 'Zhongshan xian yu ru Mo', 1

Provincial chairman Yan Xishan sent a representative as chief libationer, and representatives of party, government, police, and army, schools, and unspecified local groups attended. Slogans at the end of the event united Confucius with the nation in the context of the Japan occupation of Manchuria: 'In commemorating Confucius we must strengthen ourselves without rest! In commemorating Confucius everyone must take responsibility for saving the country!'[703]

If relatively autonomous local leaders put forward potentially more 'authentic' alternatives to Nanjing's constructions of Confucius, more directly threatening were claims linked to the newly established Manchukuo state. The calamities of the 1930s made claims to more authentically represent China's native culture still more politically charged, as the Manchukuo state proclaimed its adherence to the 'Kingly Way'. Where the Guomindang had an ambivalent relationship with the groups Prasenjit Duara has labelled 'redemptive societies', whose rhetoric of moral revival and subsequent global peace and progress shared much with that of Sun and of the party-state under Chiang Kaishek, Manchukuo leaders actively promoted such groups as assisting its 'moral' rule.[704]

Cheng Yu, a devotee of Confucius who during the 1930s produced multiple editions of the *Record of Reverence for Confucius Through The Ages and Outsiders' Commentary on Confucianism* (*Lidai zun Kong li yu Kongjiao wailun*), demonstrates how Manchukuo hovered as rival to the party-state's claims to authenticity. Like Wang Zhiping's 1928 *China's Culture: The World's Dawning Light*, the *Record* celebrated the government's decision to commemorate Confucius, and photographs inside of those who had contributed to the promotion of Confucius in the Republic included He Jian and Dai Jitao. The selection, however, also included Yuan Shikai and Zheng Xiaoxu, the Qing loyalist who in 1932 became notorious as the Prime Minister of Manchukuo.[705] To a greater degree than Wang Zhiping's text, moreover, Cheng's own writings expressed a deep disappointment with the government's failure to be authentically Confucian. He included letters from himself to Chiang Kaishek in 1931 and 1938, pleading for classics-reading to be made compulsory in schools. An incident recounted in the last letter shows this charge of

[703] Zhou Huimei, *Minzhong jiaoyuguan yu Zhongguo shehui bianqian*, 380
[704] Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 89–129 contrasts the generally hostile attitude of the Guomindang to these groups to that of the Manchukuo state.
[705] Cheng Yu, ed., *Lidai zun Kong ji*, unpaginated section

inauthenticity: Cheng visited the Ministry of Education to discover that He Jian's proposals for students to read the classics had been shelved. He asked 'the party branches in each province hang the words "Loyalty, filial piety, humaneness, love, trust, righteousness and peace"; if we don't read the books that contain [them], how can we cultivate people [who embody them]?' only to receive the answer that the words themselves were enough, and that the member of the Ministry to whom he spoke had himself not read the classics.[706] Expressing his despair in the face of successive calls to reinstate classics-reading failing, Cheng raised the spectre in the northeast. He quoted newspaper reports showing commitment in Japan to reading the classics, and concluded with the words '[m]y hopes that [China] will revere Confucius and read the classics have been dashed. War between China and Japan is about to start; I angrily declare that I can only wait until Japan comes to correct us'.[707]

The threat that the Japanese invasion might produce rival claims was borne out from an unexpected source. Wang Jingwei, who in 1940 established himself as head of the collaborationist Republic of China in Japanese-occupied Nanjing, made the attack on Chiang's inauthentic commitment to Confucius explicit by reinstating spring and autumn rites: 'After 1928 the [spring and autumn sacrifices] were ended, and replaced with a birthday commemoration: the ritual was brief and simple, and certainly not the way to revere the Utmost Sage. Now the Central Executive Council has decided to restore the spring and autumn rites to the former teacher Confucius'.[708] Wang's rival government thus made its own claim to authentically inherit the Way.

Conclusion

In the context of competition with the Japanese-controlled state of Manchukuo, the Nanjing state intensified its links to Confucius. The 1934 national commemoration, which was repeated in subsequent years, built on previous constructions of the Sage within Guomindang discourse, and in particular on the 1928 decision to commemorate him in schools. It was, however, far more publicised, and moreover it emphasised the

[706] Cheng Yu, ed., *Lidai zun Kong ji*, 75
[707] Cheng Yu, ed., *Lidai zun Kong ji*, 74–75
[708] 'Wang wei xingzhengyuan huifu si Kong dianli ling' [Order from the false Wang Jingwei government's Executive Yuan restoring sacrifices to Confucius], in Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo Zhonghua Minguo shi yanjiushi and Shandong sheng Qufu wenwu guanli weiyuanhui,, eds., *Kongfu dang'an xuanbian* [Selections from the Confucius Mansion archives] 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 41–42

doctrinal link that Chiang Kaishek had established between Confucius and the state's figurehead Sun Yatsen. This link was clear both in the ritual format and in the statements of the leading figures involved.

The 1934 commemoration was marked by the revolutionary traditionalist characteristics we have noted throughout this thesis, reflecting the on-going negotiation of the meanings of Confucius. These negotiations saw representatives of the party-state insisting on controlling the timing of commemoration, the conduct and meaning of the rituals and the space of the temples. These distancing measures allowed Guomindang members to separate their constructions of Confucius from religious claims, but for that reason raised questions over the authenticity of the party-state's commitment.

The 'old-style' commemoration at Qufu, however, shows that the Nanjing state could not monopolise the meanings of Confucius. The involvement of Confucius' descendants and the sacred ancestral grounds were important to Nanjing's claim to authenticity, but in legitimating and promoting the rites there the government appeared to its critics more than ever to be 'restoring antiquity', even as rivals made their own claims to authenticity.

Conclusion to Part Two

Constructions of Confucius were an important part of the Guomindang's traditionalist discourse, and as such followed the broader trends traced in the first part of this thesis: positive references to Confucius were present in party discourse from 1919, but accompanied by radical condemnations of temple-based sacrificial rites. Sun Yatsen and in particular Dai Jitao affirmed the place of Confucius as both a contributor to China's national culture and a forerunner of Guomindang doctrines, but this view was established as orthodox only gradually after the founding of the Nanjing state, with the latter part proving more controversial than the former.

The case of Confucius shows how traditionalist symbols mobilised in Guomindang discourse were constructed in dialogue with, and often in opposition to, alternative versions of the same symbols. I have not viewed the latter as 'authentic' or 'original' interpretations of Confucius, in contrast to which claims made within Guomindang discourse were inauthentic: the claims of groups like the Confucian Religion Association can likewise be understood as reinterpretations. Thus, while members of the Guomindang could reinvent symbols as part of their agenda, others were carrying out their own reinventions.

Although party members sought to separate their statements from these alternative claims, as the preceding chapters have shown this was not possible. Confucius was a meaningful symbol for people precisely because of these diverse interpretations, made relevant and widespread through the physical presence of temples and images as well as through the transmission of texts. These manifestations could not be ignored, especially as the Guomindang under Chiang Kaishek established a national government.

Thus, when in 1928 the Nanjing government, following Sun Yatsen's earlier statements, identified Confucius as having a key role in China's national history, the process was one of negotiation with groups that made their own claims to Confucius. The years that followed showed increasing assertion of links both between Confucius and Chinese culture (making recognising the former essential to recognising the latter) and between Confucius and the Guomindang's own revolutionary doctrines. At the same time, as we have seen efforts to separate Confucius from temple-based sacrificial ritual continued.

The dual rituals of 1934, in Nanjing and at Confucius' ancestral temple at Qufu, show the impossibility of this separation. The 'old style' of the latter as reported by the media, with central government representatives in attendance, inevitably recalled the rites that the party-state had proclaimed to be 'superstitious'. Consequently the Nanjing regime's revolutionary traditionalist appropriation of Confucius left it open to charges from two sides: of inauthentic commitment to revolution, and of inauthentic commitment to Confucius.

Conclusion

This thesis has shown that, over the course of the 1920s, textual references to the Chinese past were an increasingly important feature of Guomindang discourse. These references particularly included cultural elements evocative of the late imperial orthodoxy, with Confucius being a central example. From the 'New Culture Movement' on, however, these references were accompanied by culturally radical claims stressing novelty and attacking the 'old', focusing particularly on elements of the late imperial orthodoxy such as ritual sacrifices to Confucius. The combination of these claims produced the practices I have termed revolutionary traditionalism. These practices were continually contested even as they increasingly came to define the Nanjing party-state into the 1930s, with opponents adopting radical stances rejecting any use of tradition while other groups put forward their own claims to and interpretations of the cultural elements invoked by Guomindang discourse.

Guomindang nationalism was far from unusual in being 'Janus-faced', as Margaret Clinton has noted.[709] Tom Nairn, who first put forward the two faces of Janus as an image for nationalism, described it as a typical rule that 'modernising ambition and novel cults of a particular past and tradition notoriously co-exist within most varieties of nationalism'.[710] What this thesis has shown, and what was distinctive in the case of the Guomindang, was the struggle over the meanings of symbols of the past. Guomindang members could construct 'novel' versions of these symbols, but these co-existed and competed with alternative visions of the late imperial cultural legacy, including radically critical ones (which Guomindang members had themselves expressed, among others) as well as rival 'cults'. This co-existence meant that Guomindang members could not dictate how their symbols were interpreted.

Contention over symbols was not, however, fatal: the vicissitudes of traditionalism should not be taken as a reason for the Guomindang's defeat by the Communist Party in 1949. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, some degree of struggle was inevitable: 'attempts to impose closure' and determine the meanings of national symbols could

[709] Margaret Clinton, 'Fascism, Cultural Revolution, and National Sovereignty in 1930s China', 10
[710] Tom Nairn, *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited* (London: Verso, 1997), 71

never entirely succeed, and alternative, rival meanings were (and are) always available.[711] Available sources make popular responses to the party-state's traditionalist language hard to judge, but we should not assume that this reception was negative overall, i.e. that identification with symbols associated with the past lost the Guomindang more support than it gained it.

References to the past by Guomindang members fit into wider social contexts that, as studies have increasingly shown, were not dominated by radical rejections of the past. Instead, we see the 'recycling' of features associated with the past in daily life, a boom in the publication of popular 'morality books' (including texts first written centuries earlier as well as newer works integrating quotations from earlier works), redemptive societies likewise claiming links to Chinese traditions while making their own innovations, and intellectual efforts that opposed the most extreme radicalism associated with the 'New Culture' by arguing for the value of the past.[712] Where earlier intellectual histories in particular tended to obscure these broadly traditionalist tendencies by focusing on radicalism, these studies by contrast suggest that the traditionalist language that came to define the Nanjing party-state was far from unusual. Though as we have seen campaigners for Confucian ritual presented the government's recognition as incomplete, those who professed respect for Confucius or a more general historical national culture offered a potentially receptive audience for the state's claims. The government's rhetoric of moral revival and reverence for Confucius shared key points with Kang Youwei (though the borrowing remained unacknowledged), the various redemptive societies, and the gazetteer-writing gentry.[713] Tensions over temples and rites notwithstanding, the Guomindang message could appeal. Aside from the fact that Confucian groups adapted their language to fit that of the state, it is telling that, as noted previously, a 1927 article by Shanghai writer Zou Taofen on the 'national spirit' promoted precisely the 'inherent morality, knowledge, and ability' that Sun Yatsen and his successors championed.[714]

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[711] Michèle Barrett, *The Politics of Truth*, 78

[712] Madeleine Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing: The City and its Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), passim; Jan Kiely, 'Shanghai public moralist Nie Qijie and morality book publication projects in Republican China', 5; e.g. Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 91–122; e.g. Tze-ki Hon, 'National Essence, National Learning and Culture'

[713] The local gazetteers of early twentieth century China, which continued to be compiled under the Guomindang, featured a mixture of long-established and new terminology in describing their localities and communities. See Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 124; Wang Liping, 'Qiantan minguo shiqi Yunnan difangzhi de xin tedian' [Brief Discussion of the New Features of Yunnan Gazetteers in the Republican Period], *Keji kaifa yu jingji* 22.7 (2012), 123–26

[714] Zou Taofen, 'Zenyang huifu women de minzu jingshen'

Moreover, these tendencies appear to have increased in the 1930s. Present-day historian Feng Chongyi describes a general trend of 'Sinicisation', emphasising China's distinct culture through references to the past, as a reaction to the Japanese invasion.[715] He Qiliang likewise argues that 'the Nationalist regime's conservatism, culminating in the New Life Movement in 1934, was built not upon thin air, but on an already conservatized Chinese society and its intellectuals... the "partification" of government, society, and culture in Republican China resulted, in part, from the cooperation of writers and artists'.[716] Feng views 'Sinicisation' in cultural and intellectual circles in the context of war: in 1939, with the Second United Front established between the two parties as they faced Japan, even the Communist Party showed traditionalist tendencies, with Mao celebrating China's 'history full of great thinkers, scientists, inventors, politicians, strategists, writers, and artists' and 'brilliant ancient culture'.[717]

In this context, although 'New Culture' representatives like Hu Shi attacked the government, other intellectuals aligned themselves with its traditionalist rhetoric. 1935 saw the publication of the 'Declaration for Cultural Construction on a Chinese Basis' (*Zhongguo benwei de wenhua jianshe xuanyan*) under the auspices of Nanjing officials Chen Guofu and Chen Lifu, signed by ten university professors. This document, part of on-going debates about culture, in many ways echoed earlier revolutionary traditionalist syntheses.[718] Philosopher He Lin, identified among the 'New Confucians' of the era for his Wang Yangming-inspired 'New Doctrine of Mind', was effusive in his personal praise of Chiang and like the latter wrote on the 'unity of knowledge and action'.[719] There were those, then, that supported and took seriously the government's traditionalism and Chiang's claim that his government inherited and promoted the Confucian Way.

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[715] Feng Chongyi, 'Zhongguo kang Ri shiqi de Zhongguohua sichao' [The Sinicisation trend during China's war of resistance against Japan', *Kaifang shidai* 2 (1998) 73–79

[716] He Qiliang, 'Way Down East, "Way Down West": Hollywood Cinema and the Rise of Conservatism in 1920s China, *Frontiers of History in China* 6.4 (2011), 522

[717] Feng Chongyi, 'Zhongguo kang Ri shiqi de Zhongguohua sichao', 76. See Mao Zedong, 'Zhongguo geming yu Zhongguo gongchandang' [The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party], *Mao Zedong xuanji* [Selected Works of Mao Zedong] Vol. 2 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1991), 621–55, 622; Mao Zedong, 'Xin minzhu zhuyi lun' [On New Democracy] *Mao Zedong xuanji* [Selected Works of Mao Zedong] Vol. 2 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1991), 662–711, 707

[718] Wang Xinming et al, '*Zhongguo benwei de wenhua jianshe*' [Declaration for Cultural Construction on a Chinese Basis], *Wenhua jianshe* 1.4 (1935), 1–4. See also Cai Yuanjie, 'Kangzhan qian Guomindang zhi Zhongguo benwei de wenhua jianshe yundong', passim, and more recently Helena Motoh, 'Cultural Construction with Chinese Characteristics: Contemporary Relevance of the 1935 Declaration for Cultural Construction on a Chinese Basis', in Jana Rošker and Nataša Suhadolnik (eds.), *Modernisation of Chinese Culture: Continuity and Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 33–46

[719] He Lin, *Dangdai Zhongguo zhexue* (Contemporary Chinese Philosophy), (Shanghai, Shengli chuban gongsi, 1945), 19. See Umberto Bresciani, Reinventing Confucianism: the New Confucian Movement (Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute for Chinese Studies, 2001), 215, 233–4

Moreover, in the face of rival claims to the Way from Manchukuo, the Guomindang state retained a crucial symbolic resource in the form of the descendants of Confucius; though the ancestral birthplace Qufu fell under Japanese control, the lineal descendant Kong Decheng and his family fled to Nanjing and subsequently to the temporary capital at Chongqing, with Kong using his prestige to denounce claims from Manchukuo.[720]

If this context supported Guomindang constructions of the past, however, it clearly also served to limit them. My thesis aligns with the argument put forward by 'ethno-symbolist' scholars of nationalism, that rather than having a free hand in inventing and manipulating cultural resources nationalist elites are 'directed and constrained by myths and memories in the process of constructing the nation'.[721]

This thesis has differed from ethno-symbolist analyses of nationalism insofar as the latter imply a *longue durée* view, tracing back continuities in 'myths and memories' which shape the modern era. Prasenjit Duara and Marc Andre Matten have suggested that such continuities have shaped Chinese nationalism.[722] I, by contrast, have bracketed the question of authentic continuity, instead viewing 'traditional' cultural elements as modern phenomena that were claimed to derive from the past. Yet this view can nonetheless address the question of how 'myths and memories' shaped nationalist projects, by considering symbols like Confucius as multivalent, open to a range of readings and not exclusively determined by those who deployed them.

The example of the Guomindang suggests that the 'Janus face' image of nationalism may be misleading insofar as it suggests passively looks back at a given past. Instead, the nationalist actively selects from and reinterprets cultural elements, wrestling with counter-interpretations, in a complex process.

In the context of considering these issues, the Guomindang discourse we have discussed

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[720] 'Qufu kongmiao fengsiguan Kong Decheng zai Hankou diantai zuo Kongzi xueshuo yu kangdi jiuguo guanxi de boyinci' [Speech by Kong Decheng, the sacrifice official at the Qufu Confucius temple, on the connection between Confucius' learning and resisting the enemy to save the country on Wuhan radio], *Minguo ziliao* 5.2 577–81

[721] John Hutchinson, 'Myth against myth: the nation as ethnic overlay', *Nations and Nationalism* 10 (1/2), 2004, 109–23, 109

[722] Prasenjit Duara, 'De-constructing the Chinese Nation', *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 30 (July 1993), 1–26, 7; Marc Andre Matten, 'The Worship of General Yue Fei and His Problematic Creation as a National Hero in Twentieth Century China', *Frontiers of History in China* 6.1 (2011), 74–94

is interesting in how paradigmatically 'modernist' it appears. One recurring characteristic of revolutionary traditionalist discourse was that it was explicitly instrumental: Guomindang members differentiated their appeals to the past from those of 'conservatives' or those 'restoring antiquity' by stressing their utility to the modern nation. Subsequent scholarship on the Guomindang has clearly been informed by this language: Joseph Levenson's argument that the party expressed a 'belief in the need to express belief' was supported by a quotation from Shao Yuanchong regarding the commemoration of Confucius in 1934: '[a] nation must always remain faithful to its own history and its own culture in order to maintain an independent existence on earth'.[723] Furthermore, in explicitly disassociating symbols like Confucius from religious interpretations and imperial-style ritual, party members clearly reinvented cultural symbols in line with party doctrine.

As this thesis has also shown, however, the claim to 'use the ancients and not be misled by them', as the *Theories of Sun Yatsen* put it, was itself a construction and a product of cultural struggle, claiming the authority to define the nation's culture and avoid the charge of conservatism. In practice Guomindang members were, through their upbringing and education, unavoidably implicated in the culture of the late Qing empire: there was no neutral ground from which to judge, select and reinterpret that cultural legacy. Moreover, focusing on discourse allows us to see that, aside from being inaccessible to the historian, the personal motivations of Guomindang members need not be decisive: what matters is how statements could be received. As Quentin Skinner suggests, even assuming the most cynical possible interpretation of an ideologist appealing to moral values, that he or she 'never believes in any of their professed principles', they nevertheless 'cannot hope to stretch the application of existing terms indefinitely': by appealing to terms conventionally understood in certain ways, they are to a degree constrained by those understandings.[724]

The impact of traditionalist discourse on the Guomindang and the Nanjing regime can thus be understood in terms of how party and state were perceived. As this thesis has shown, revolutionary traditionalist discourse had an important role in influencing from

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[723] Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: a Trilogy* Vol. 1, 106. Original article in English translation: Shao Yuanchong, 'Confucius and Present-day China', *Peiping Chronicle*, China Chronicle no. 8 (October 1934), 2–3

[724] Skinner, *Visions of Politics* Vol.1, 149, 156

where support and opposition came, for example by allowing Communists and critics like Hu Shi to position themselves as more culturally radical.

Related to this is the perception of the Guomindang under Chiang Kaishek as 'conservative'–a perception which, as we have seen, originated in the period studied and has influenced judgements down to the present day. By focusing on the meanings that others attributed to the Guomindang's revolutionary traditionalist discourse, we can see that this discourse may have encouraged conservatism even as leaders of the party-state strove for dramatic social change: social elites could, for example, read the endorsement of 'loyalty and filial piety' as enforcing their own position, while those seeking to transform local and familial power structures could become disillusioned for the same reason.

Traditionalist claims, I would suggest, also shaped the kinds of change promoted by the party state. The tutelary state, and the conception of its mission in terms of moral education, was closely bound up with Sun Yatsen's claims about the recovery of 'inherent morality'. As Joseph Fewsmith puts it '[b]y positing that social order emanated from consciousness, the KMT made cultivation of personal morality a primary goal of the revolution'.[725] The conception of both China's problems and their solution in moral terms became still more clear with the New Life Movement, which as previously mentioned was itself characterised by revolutionary traditionalist discourse. While this sense of moral mission was distinctive, the Guomindang was not unique: Sheldon Garon shows the importance of 'moral suasion' as part of the Japanese state's 'social management' throughout the twentieth century; indeed, in his view Japan's own 'New Life' campaigns, beginning in the late 1930s and re-launched in the post-war era, took inspiration from Chiang Kaishek.[726] Here again we also see that Guomindang language and practice shared assumptions with wider social practices: achieving social change through personal cultivation was an ideal shared by redemptive societies as well as secular radicals and revolutionaries.[727]

Another feature of Sun Yatsen's revolutionary traditionalist claims, as we have seen, was

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[725] Fewsmith, *Party, State, and Local Elites in Republican China*, 95

[726] Sheldon Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds: the State in Everyday Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 166

[727] Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 137; Rahav, *The Rise of Political Intellectuals in Modern China*, 66

the incorporation of the 'Great Unity' as an ultimately extra-national goal, and one which was to be achieved through cultural suasion and cooperative struggle against imperialism. This emphasis, I would suggest, also shaped Guomindang policy: Brian Tsui's research shows how representatives of the national government made overtures in these terms to Indian nationalist movements during the war against Japan.[728] Where a number of scholars have traced fascist influences within the Nanjing state in the 1930s, the 'Great Unity' ideal and its disavowal of what Hu Shi called 'narrow nationalism' mark a clear point of distinction between the Guomindang and the Fascist and National Socialist parties.

As the study of Confucius suggests, however, the 'revolutionary traditionalist' character of Guomindang claims to the past also cast doubt upon them. Jennifer Oldstone-Moore has suggested that the New Life Movement was 'religious', and 'firmly within the Confucian tradition using moral suasion, control of education and prescriptions for daily habits in its efforts to effect a top-down transformation of the people'.[729] In this her thesis offers a compelling challenge to the linked claims that 'Confucianism' was 'museumified' in twentieth century China and that the Nanjing state's deployment of 'traditional' symbols was fundamentally inauthentic because it was 'instrumental'. Instead, while the New Life Movement 'is an example of the transformation of religious traditions in a particular context', it authentically followed earlier 'Confucian' concerns.[730] Yet my research suggests that this view is incomplete in not considering rival claims: if constructions by Guomindang members can be treated as manifestations of 'Confucianism', they were far from unchallenged in this. Many, making their own diverse claims to inherit the Way from Confucius, denied the claims of the party-state. 'Confucianism' was thus a zone of contestation.

Revolutionary traditionalist discourse not only shaped the Guomindang regime, but also had an impact in defining Chinese culture during the transformations of the twentieth century. As this thesis has shown, this discourse evoked to a considerable extent important elements of the late imperial orthodoxy, by quoting basic educational texts like *The Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean* and by appealing to Confucius. Guomindang discourse, promoted after 1927 through state organs, thus played a role in

[728] Tsui, 'China's Forgotten Revolution', 211–54
[729] Oldstone-Moore, 'The New Life Movement of Nationalist China', 4
[730] Oldstone-Moore, 'The New Life Movement of Nationalist China', 22

preserving these elements as 'canonical', ensuring their continued relevance even as they were radically reinvented into new contexts.

The Guomindang role in this was not unique: as I have suggested, Guomindang traditionalism was part of a broader social and intellectual engagement with representations of the past, and relations between Guomindang and other representations were not necessarily harmonious. Nevertheless, as the official state discourse after 1927 it inevitably did much to influence wider trends.

Existing scholarship has downplayed this significance. Tze-ki Hon, for example, has written on the National Essence notion of 'revolution as restoration', which claims that 'China follows the global pattern defined by Western powers but takes a separate route to achieve the same goal', 'emphasizes the leading role of the educated elite in the nation's modernity', and 'focuses on an idealized political system of the Western Zhou period'.[731] According to Hon, 'revolution as restoration' existed only 'on the fringes of Chinese political discourse' after the 1900s.[732] My study by contrast suggests that similar claims (albeit without the specific political focus on the Western Zhou) were at the centre of political discourse in the 1920s and 1930s.

It is worth noting that the ambivalence of revolutionary traditionalism to some extent worked against this canonising effect. As we have seen, Guomindang members specifically resisted going 'by means of Sun into the classics' (as Hu Hanmin put it), and insisted on Sun and the party's priority in interpreting texts.[733] Hence Cheng Yu's 1938 charge, mentioned in Chapter Eight, that the state was uninterested in the classics. Again, though, given the multivalent and contested character of symbols the Nanjing state's limited commitment was not necessarily shared by others. Chen Jitang and He Jian both took advantage of the central government's traditionalist discourse to promote the classics, while Confucian groups likewise appropriated state language to advance their agendas.

It is interesting to consider here the question of why revolutionary traditionalist discourse drew specifically on orthodox elements of the imperial past. These elements

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[731] Hon, *Revolution as Restoration*, 118–19
[732] Hon, *Revolution as Restoration*, 118
[733] Hu Hanmin, 'Zhongshan xian yu ru Mo', 1

were not the only possible conduits for nationalism: the radical discourse associated with the 'New Culture' raised the possibility of a nationalism based on criticising the legacy of the past, while the National Essence writings of the 1900s allowed for alternative, less mainstream texts to be claimed as a heritage for revolutionary nationalism.[734] Here again the 'ethno-symbolist' interpretation of nationalism is helpful in suggesting an answer. As Anthony Smith puts it, the 'myths, symbols, values and memories' mobilised by nationalist elites are effective if they have 'popular resonance because they are founded on living traditions of the people (or segments thereof)'.[735] Confucius, educational texts and the moral terms to which Sun Yatsen appealed were widely recognised and readily available symbols around which the Qing empire had been united; they could serve a similar purpose for the Republic which had inherited its territory and people. As noted previously, to view Guomindang members as dispassionately selecting from a menu of possible national symbols is also somewhat misleading: symbols promoted by the Qing loomed large in their own education just as that of those to whom they sought to appeal. They could not avoid knowing them and thereby being influenced by them.

Citing Smith here does, however, raise the question of whether the symbols Guomindang members promoted aligned with 'living traditions of the people'. For Lucian Pye, nationalist efforts to 'idealize Chinese traditions' were unsuccessful because 'what was idealized was not the realities of the living Chinese mass culture; it was abstractions of a romanticized past'.[736] It is certainly true that the Guomindang tended to be indifferent towards or actively hostile towards elements of the 'mass culture' like local religious practices and the festivals of the lunar calendar. As we have seen, however, in other respects such as the publication of morality books and the promotion of Confucius the Nanjing state accorded with widespread practices. Again, the peculiarities of revolutionary traditionalism mean that party members made active efforts to distance their own claims from those of religious 'Confucians' and others: Guomindang claims thus tended to be quite explicitly 'abstractions'. The effects of such distancing, however, were as we have seen inevitably limited as groups associated their own objectives and

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[734] Paul Foster shows that the 'national character discourse' emerging from Liang Qichao's pre-1903 writings, and particularly evident as an element in the 'New Culture Movement', can be understood as a mode of 'ironic nationalism' using thoroughgoing critique to help build a 'new, modern character'; Paul Foster, *Ah Q Archaeology: Lu Xun, Ah Q, Ah Q Progeny and the National Character Discourse in Twentieth Century China* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), 20

[735] Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (London: Routledge, 2013), 45–46

[736] Lucian Pye, 'How China's Nationalism was Shanghaied', *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* No. 29 (1993), 107–33, 112–13

language with those of the government. Even if this happened against the will of its proponents, party-state discourse could be appropriated by people who advocated quite different 'living' cultural practices.

The Legacies of Revolutionary Traditionalism

The importance of revolutionary traditionalism in shaping both the Nanjing state and Chinese culture in the twentieth century can be seen in its lasting influence: both revolutionary traditionalist practices and the politico-cultural struggles that accompanied them have recurred down to the present day.

Revolutionary traditionalism would define the Guomindang far beyond the war with Japan. On Taiwan it again proved important to the government's legitimating efforts, as the party-state faced the multiple challenges of asserting its rule over an island which was both a former Japanese colony and a relatively remote, culturally diverse part of the Qing empire. In the process of 'Sinicisation' Confucius again worked alongside Sun Yatsen as symbols of the fallen motherland which the government pledged to retake.[737] In 1966, as the Cultural Revolution raged across the Strait, Chiang launched his own Cultural Revitalisation Movement (*Wenhua fuxing yundong*), drawing on previous appeals to Confucius and inherent culture positioned against destructive Communism to send a national and international message: China's national heritage, with Confucius again as key representative, was in the custody of the Guomindang.[738] If the revolutionary traditionalist discourse remained, so too did the struggles that accompanied it: the choice of 'revitalisation' (*fuxing*) here recalls earlier efforts to distinguish Guomindang claims from 'restoring antiquity' (*fugu*). The movement was launched in part in response to the continued claims of Hu Shi, as well as younger cultural radicals like Li Ao, against conservatism.[739]

The influence of the traditionalist rhetoric of the 1920s also extended beyond China and Taiwan: Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew, in power through the 1960s, 70s,

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[737] Allen Chun, 'From Nationalism to Nationalizing: Cultural Imagination and State Formation in Postwar Taiwan', *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 31 (January 1994), 49–69, 60–61

[738] Allen Chun, 'From Nationalism to Nationalizing: Cultural Imagination and State Formation in Postwar Taiwan', 57–58

[739] Warren Tozer, 'Taiwan's "Cultural Renaissance: a Preliminary View', *The China Quarterly* 43 (1970), 81–99, 90

and 80s, presented his own modernising adaptations of Confucius which incorporated an alternative eight-character formula of moral values incorporating the first four characters of Sun Yatsen's eight (loyalty, filial piety, and humane love) and Chiang Kaishek's 'propriety, righteousness, integrity, and a sense of shame', as well as the *Great Learning* chain from cultivating the self to bringing peace to the world.[740]

The Chinese Communist Party has also echoed Guomindang revolutionary traditionalism at various points throughout its history. Its rule in China has widely been characterised as culturally radical, thanks in large part to the Cultural Revolution's rhetoric and practice of radical separation from the 'four olds'–a still more extreme and thoroughgoing successor to the most iconoclastic tendencies of the New Culture Movement, and to the campaigns against 'superstition' which accompanied the Guomindang's Northern Expedition from 1926 to 1928 and which Guomindang and Communist Party members alike continued beyond that point. Yet the extent of this anti-traditionalism is prone to exaggeration: as Nylan puts it, in the years after 1949 the positions of Confucius and classicism were undecided, and scholars discussed Confucius in 'relative freedom'. Chairman Liu Shaoqi's 'How to Be a Good Communist' (*Lun gongchandangyuan de xiuyang*), originally published in 1939 and subsequently republished in the 1960s, explicitly drew on self-cultivation traditions 'in an attempt, not atypical for the period, to integrate Confucian and Communist ethics'.[741] We have already noted Mao Zedong's 1939 appeal to China's 'brilliant ancient culture': particularly during the struggle against Japan, the Communist Party saw other efforts to mobilise symbols associated with the past which shared much with Guomindang traditionalism in their explicit selection and reinterpretation.[742] Indeed, as noted in Chapter One, Barry Schwartz and Tong Zhang have identified 'critical inheritance', 'a deliberative process wherein both positive and negative aspects of historic figures are recognized', as a definitive characteristic of the Communist Party.[743]

If Communist antipathy to 'tradition' has been overstated, however, it is also true that in

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[740] Klaus-Georg Riegel, 'Inventing Asian Traditions: the Controversy between Lee Kuan Yew and Kim Dae Jung', *Development and Society* 29.1 (June 2000), 82; Wang Dianqing, *Xunqiu Zhongguo deyu zhi gen* [Seeking the roots of China's moral education] Vol. 2 (Changchun: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 2008), 266

[741] Nylan, *The Five 'Confucian' Classics*, 328–29. See Liu Shaoqi, *Lun gongchandangyuan de xiuyang* [How to Be a Good Communist] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1980)

[742] Chang-tai Hung, *War and Popular Culture: Resistance in Modern China, 1937–1945* (London: University of California Press, 1994), 221-69

[743] Schwartz and Zhang, 'Confucius and the Cultural Revolution', 101–127

more recent years the party-state has become increasingly traditionalist, and like the Guomindang before it has turned to Confucius and other symbols of the late imperial orthodoxy. This trend has appeared in sharp contrast to the Cultural Revolution, when Confucius came under highly specific attack with the 'Criticise Lin Biao, Criticise Confucius' campaign, which extended from an internal party campaign to a national mass drive which condemned Confucius in unprecedentedly strong terms.[744] The subsequent turn toward Confucius, part of a more general move at local and national levels to celebrate figures from history who had been condemned as 'feudal' and to affirm pre-revolutionary historical culture through activities like the academic promotion of 'national studies' *(Guoxue),* certainly suggestively recalls the Guomindang's official and painstakingly balanced recognition of the Sage after earlier attacks on his rites and temples.

Yet developments on the mainland have not been a replay of the 1920s and 1930s. Guomindang appropriations of the Confucian Way were, as we have seen, political moves made in a context of open conflict: the revolutionary traditionalism of Sun Yatsen and Dai Jitao was part of their moves for power within the party and the country. Chiang Kaishek's position, with the government established at Nanjing, was more secure, but even after the nominal unification of the country was confronted with constant division and with the invasion of Japan: efforts under his rule likewise served as a means of confronting Nanjing's many enemies. The Chinese Communist Party, by contrast, has enjoyed greater and more stable political power during its rehabilitation of Confucius, and its move towards Confucius has widely been seen as an effort to fill an 'ideological vacuum' left by its largely unspoken rejection of Maoism.[745] Yet developments on the mainland share significant features with the Guomindang's earlier efforts: like Guomindang members before them, Communist Party leaders must reconcile a tradition of sometimes explicitly anti-Confucian radical rhetoric (in which the legacy of the 'New Culture Movement' remains an important element) with traditionalist appeals. While 'Confucian' texts, symbols and terms might define the Chinese nation, another parallel lies in the global claims of recent Communist traditionalism: like Sun Yatsen before them, 'New Confucian' intellectuals as well as officials have presented 'Confucianism' as

[744] Nylan, *The Five 'Confucian' Classics*, 330–34
[745] E.g. Van Dongen, "Goodbye Radicalism!': Conceptions of Conservatism Among Chinese Intellectuals During the Early 1990s', 231

China's contribution to a future global order.[746]

If revolutionary traditionalist appropriations of the Chinese past have recurred in the PRC, so too have the alternative claims and challenges that accompanied them. Rising traditionalism has been far from entirely state-driven, and groups and individuals have challenged state agents' claims to represent the Chinese past.[747] At the same time, intellectuals identifying themselves with 'New Culture'-related radical legacies have resisted 'conservative' moves, and can appropriate the image of a counter-revolutionary Guomindang 'restoring antiquity' in the process.[748]

Guomindang appropriations of Confucius and other representations of the past, then, have had a lasting impact on ideas of culture, identity and power in the Sinophone world. The ambivalence and struggle that characterised them, however, remain unresolved.

[746] Nylan, *The Five 'Confucian' Classics,* 338

[747] See Guo Yingjie on conestation between 'New Confucians' and the CCP: Guo Yingjie, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary China: The Search for National Identity under Reform* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 72-90

[748] E.g. Luo Yuming is explicit in using his study of the 'classics-reading movement' in 1930s Hunan to criticise contemporary proponents of reading the classics; Luo Yuming, *Huxiang wenhua yu Hunan de zun Kong dujing*, 2–3, 328–31

Glossary of Chinese terms

Note: names of authors and publications are included in the bibliography.

Ai 爱
Badao 霸道
Bade 八德
Bo'ai 博爱
Chen Rongguang 陈荣广
Cheng 诚
Chi 耻
Chunqiu 春秋
Da Dao zhi xing ye tianxia wei gong 大道之行也天下为公
Dacheng dian 大成殿
Dacheng hui 大成会
Dang 党
Dao 道
Daode xueshe 道德学社
Daotong 道统
Datong 大同
Daxue 大学
Ding 丁
Feizhi 废止
Fugu 复古
Fuxing 复兴
Gaizu pai 该组派
Geming 革命
Gong 公
Guocui 国粹
Guojia 国家
Guojiao 国教
Guomindang 国民党
Guoqing 国情
Guoxue 国学
Guyou daode 固有道德
Guyou nengli 固有能力
Guyou zhishi 固有智识
Heping 和平
Hong wanzi hui 红卍字会
Huifu 恢复
Jian'ai 兼爱
Jie 节
Jinhua 进化
Jinzhi 禁止
Junzi 君子
Kaoju 考据
Kongdao hui 孔道会
Kongjiao 孔教
Kongmen 孔门
Kongmiao 孔庙
Kongxue 孔学
Kongzi xue 孔子学
Li 礼
Lian 廉
Liji 礼记
Lijiao 礼教
Lunchang 伦常
Lunyü 论语
Mengzi 孟子
Mingde she 明德社
Minquan 民权
Minsheng 民生
Minzu 民族
Nengzuo 能作
Ren 仁
Ren'ai 仁爱
Ren'yi 仁义
Rudao 儒道
Rujiao hui 儒教会
Rujiao 儒教
Sangang 三纲
Sanmin zhuyi 三民主义
Sanzijing 三字经
Shangshu 尚书
Sheng zhi shizhe 圣之时者
Shijie zhuyi 世界主义
Shijing 诗经
Shoujiu 守旧

Si Kong 祀孔
Sun Wen zhuyi xuehui 孙文主义学会
Suozuo 所作
Ti 悌
Tianxia wei gong 天下为公
Tianxia wei si 天下为私
Tianxia zhi da dao 天下之达道
Tianxia zhi da de 天下之大德
Tongshan she 同善社
Wangdao 王道
Wanguo daode hui 万国道德会
Wenhua fuxing yundong 文化复兴运动
Wenmiao 文庙
Xiao 孝
Xiaojing 孝经
Xin 信
Xinzheng 新政
Xixin she 洗新社
Xuanxue pai 玄学派
Xuegong 学宫
Yi 义
Yijing 易经
Yong 勇
Zheng mingfen 正名分
Zhengli guogu 整理国故
Zhengtong 正统
Zhi liangzhi 致良智
Zhi nan xing yi 知难行易
Zhi yi xing nan 知易行难
Zhi 智
Zhixing heyi 知行合一
Zhong 忠
Zhongyong 中庸
Zongsheng hui 宗圣会
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