

# Dr. Sun Yat-sen and Chinese Secret Societies

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Secret societies, of course, have long existed in China, and it is a matter of interest to the historian that Dr. Sun Yat-sen had a close connection with them. Like other large organizations, the societies were a mixture of scholars, heroes, patriots, illiterates, gangsters, and troublemakers in general. Among the secret societies were the Hung-men (Hung League), T'ien Ti Hui, San Ho, San T'ien or Triad, Chih Kung T'ang, and many others, most of which had carried on some underground activity against the Manchu Dynasty decades before Dr. Sun's revolutionary movement took place.

Dr. Sun's acquaintance with the secret societies came in his earliest years. His birthplace was a center of the societies—and these groups, as he well knew, had been deeply involved in the Taiping Rebellion. Dr. Sun was born in 1866, only two years after the death of the Taiping leader, Hung Hsiu-ch'üan, whose birthplace, Hua-hsien, is less than a hundred miles from Dr. Sun's in the Chung-shan district. The T'ien Ti Hui or Hung-men members had started several riots in Kwangtung at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> During the Taiping Rebellion many secret society members joined Hung's movement, and hence came the name of Yüeh-fei, or Kwangtung(nese) Bandits. After loss of the celestial capital at Nanking, Taiping remnants returned to Kwangtung, where as a child Dr. Sun heard stories about their revolutionary activities. He admired Hung Hsiu-ch'üan as a national hero and wished to follow in his footsteps.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Sun's early associates were mostly secret society members. His "first comrade," Cheng Shih-liang, was a leader of the Triad

society and had connections with other leaders in Kwangtung and Southeast Asia.<sup>3</sup> About the year 1886, Dr. Sun met Ch'en Shao-pai and Yu Lieh, also secret society members. Dr. Sun and his friends Ch'eng Shao-pai, Yu Lieh, and Yang Ho-ling discussed revolution incessantly—until their relatives and associates called them the Four Great Rebels.<sup>4</sup> One day in a temple at Canton the quartet met with an eighty-year-old hermit, Cheng An, who gave detailed instructions about the organization, purposes, and location of secret societies. He advised them to talk less and act more closely, more cautiously with secret societies in order to effect a successful revolution. This advice had lasting effect.<sup>5</sup> Whether or not Sun Yat-sen was initiated into a secret society at the age of twenty-two is hard to ascertain from the sources. One author states that the Four Great Rebels were sworn brothers, with Lu Hao-tung, Ch'eng K'uei-kuang, Chu Kuei-ch'üan, Ch'iu Ssu, Hsieh Tsuan-t'ai, and determined to share hardships and die together.<sup>6</sup> Another source remarks that Sun was close to Ch'en Shao-pai,<sup>7</sup> and thus it seems possible that Sun Yat-sen might have become a member of a secret society as early as 1887. Cheng Shih-liang's secret society connections and generous cooperation helped him with his revolutionary ambitions, cherished since 1885.<sup>8</sup> After Dr. Sun completed his medical training in 1892, he opened a drugstore in Macao where all nine of his employees were secret society members.<sup>9</sup> His close association with and exclusive use of secret society members prompts one to believe that in his early twenties Dr. Sun was surrounded by such individuals.

Dr. Sun, to be sure, was indebted to the West for some of his ideas. He had spent a few of his childhood years in Hawaii; he received some training in natural science because of his medical college work; and obtained some knowledge of social science from association with Ho Ch'i, Cheng Kuan-yin, and others who were predecessors of the reform movement of the 1890's. Ho Ch'i, an English-trained physician and lawyer, wrote about China's socio-political problems and international position and taught medicine and jurisprudence at the College of Medicine for the Chinese in Hong Kong—where Sun Yat-sen and Yu Lieh were students. Cheng Kuan-yin was a fellow native of the Chung-shan district, and an advocate of Westernization and parliamentary

government which would allow all citizens to use their abilities, to use land to produce at its fullest, to eliminate trade barriers, and to improve the transportation system.<sup>10</sup> Such writings influenced Sun's later political ideas. Sun persuaded Ho and Cheng to support his revolutionary desire to overthrow the Manchu government instead of remodeling it.

Still, for both ideas and methods, Sun relied on the societies. Dr. Sun's early organizations were patterned after that of the societies. He was perhaps inspired by the Fu-*jen* literary society, which promoted interest in Western ideas through new publications. It was founded in 1892 by Yang Ch'ü-yün and Hsieh Tsuan-t'ai, both of whom were affiliated with secret societies.<sup>11</sup> Most likely, Dr. Sun formed some kind of secret political organization at Macao in 1893; by November 1894, it was perfected in Honolulu and called Hsing Chung Hui (Revive China Society).<sup>12</sup> Following secret society practice, Sun made all members of the Hsing Chung Hui swear to fight against the Manchus, and to restore China. Initial members were Teng Yin-nan, a wealthy leader of the Triad society in Honolulu, and Teng's supporters.<sup>13</sup> Ma Ch'ao-chün, president of the world-wide Hung-men organization, has revealed that most members of the Hsing Chung Hui in Honolulu were Hung Men elders.<sup>14</sup> Lo Hsiang-lin, an authority on the early history of Sun's activities, also remarks that if there had been no Hung Men there would have been no Hsing Chung Hui.<sup>15</sup>

Returning to China in January 1895, Sun founded a Hsing Chung Hui in Hong Kong. The basic members were still Cheng Shih-liang and Ch'en Shao-pai, with addition of Yang Ch'ü-yün, Hsieh Tsuan-t'ai, and others. Sun was elected president of the Hong Kong Hsing Chung Hui, which insured his being the first president of China if the revolution succeeded. Even so, Yang Ch'ü-yün challenged the election. For the sake of furthering the revolution, Sun yielded to him despite the angry protest of Ch'en Shao-pai. Yang was president of the Hsing Chung Hui for nearly five years (from Aug. 1895 to Dec. 1899). In 1899 he was obliged to resign when an assembly at Hong Kong, consisting of many leaders of the Triad and Elder Brothers' Society who were invited by Shih Chien-ju and Pi Yung-nien to come from the Yangtze

valley and form a new organization called Hsing Han Hui (Revive the Han Society), chose Dr. Sun as their leader.<sup>16</sup> Obviously, Sun yielded the presidency in 1895 because of Yang's greater power in Hong Kong, but by 1899 Sun could muster more support than Yang. After a few years the powerless Hsing Chung Hui was reorganized and named T'ung Meng Hui, traditionally translated as "Sworn-Together Society" because all members took the vow together before Sun Yat-sen. On the membership card, the date was indicated by a secret society's year-title *T'ien-yün* (literally, Heaven's Fortune) to distinguish from the then-emperor's title of *Kuang-hsü*. But as a matter of fact it should be translated as the Revolutionary Alliance of Sun Yat-sen's Hsing Chung Hui, Huang Hsing's Hua Hsing Hui (China's Prosperous Society) and Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei's Kuang Fu Hui (Restoration Society).<sup>17</sup> The T'ung Meng Hui was inaugurated in 1905 at the headquarters of the secret Japanese Black Dragon Society in the Akasaka District of Tokyo. The leaders of the Black Dragon Society, such as Tōyama Mitsuru and Uchida Ryōhei, were Sun's friends and supporters. At that time, Sun was very familiar with the ceremonies and psychology of secret societies. As befits a great man, he openly admitted that in Hawaii he had formally joined the Chih Kung T'ang in 1903, a different name for the Hung League in the United States and Canada. The high rank of Hung-kun—literally, Red Club, with the power of a commander—was conferred upon him. His main purpose was to obtain from his fellow society members in the United States and Canada the badly needed money to finance the armed riots in China.

In view of this background, it can come as no surprise that Dr. Sun's ten armed revolts were conducted primarily by secret society members. The first attempt to take Canton on October 26, 1895, was mainly by secret society members, 3,000 of whom were expected to be sent by Yang Ch'ü-yün from Hong Kong. A group of disaffected troops from Swatow also helped. Sun remained in Canton to conduct the coup, while Yang was responsible for raising funds, ammunition, and "soldiers." Owing to poor planning and the exposure of the plot, the attempt failed. More than forty of some two hundred rebels coming belatedly

from Hong Kong were arrested and executed. Dr. Sun managed to escape to Hong Kong and thence to Japan. Yang Ch'ü-yün left for Saigon, Calcutta, and Africa, in which places he organized branches of the Hsing Chung Hui. Yang did not return to Hong Kong until 1900, after which the Hsing Chung Hui became inactive.

The second revolt was made at the turn of the century when Peking was troubled by the Boxer Rebellion. The Triad leader, Cheng Shih-liang, was ordered to take Huichow near Kowloon on October 10, 1900, and, if successful, to proceed from there along the coast to Amoy where military supplies would come from Formosa. Assisted by perhaps six hundred Triad members, including Huang Fu, a Triad leader summoned from Borneo, Cheng Shih-liang fought well for a fortnight.<sup>18</sup> Lack of reinforcements and supplies caused him to disband his followers; the next year he died in Hong Kong. About the same time a young adventurer, Shih Chien-ju, made a heroic attempt to kill the governor-general, Te-shou, in Canton by digging a tunnel under the government building and filling it with explosives. When the attempt failed, Shih was arrested and executed. He was a Dragon-head, or leader of the Ko Lao Hui or Elder Brothers' Society.<sup>19</sup> Yang Ch'ü-yün, suspected as an instigator of the plot, was murdered in Hong Kong on January 10, 1901, by a government agent sent from Canton.

With these two attempts at revolution, use of secret societies had become not only nation-wide but even world-wide. T'ao Ch'eng-chang, Pi Yung-nien, Ch'en Shao-pai, and many others actively associated with secret societies in Hong Kong, Canton, the Yangtze valley, and Southeast Asia. In Japan, Hawaii, the United States, and Canada, Dr. Sun, Feng Tzu-yu, and others fought against the Pao Huang Hui (Protect the Emperor Society) led by K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao.<sup>20</sup> K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao were reported as Cheng Lung-t'ou and Fu Lung-t'ou, Dragon-head and Associate Head respectively, of the Elder Brothers' Society.<sup>21</sup> Some of K'ang Yu-wei's followers, such as Hsü Chin and Liang Ch'i-tien, also joined the Chih Kung T'ang to secure their help.<sup>22</sup> It was necessary for Dr. Sun to

become an officer of the Chih Kung T'ang, to obtain financial support and to fight against K'ang's followers.

Dr. Sun's use of secret societies caused some serious discussions among Chinese students in Europe in 1905, but after three days and nights of discussion in Brussels he insisted that secret society members were more reliable than scholars (*hsiu-ts'ai*) or soldiers; they were, in fact, the only reliable forces for overthrowing the Manchu dynasty. He did promise to use both society members and soldiers, but refused to omit the T'ung Meng Hui oath.<sup>23</sup>

Other revolts followed. The main force in Sun's third and fourth attempts at revolt at Chao-chou and Hui-chou in Kwangtung in 1907 was secret society members from the seacoast. Two more attempts were made in 1907, at Chin-chou and Lien-chou (Kwangtung), under command of Huang Hsing and Wang Ho-shun, and at Chen-nan-kuan in Kwangsi, under the leadership of Huang Min-t'ang, Huang Hsing, Hu Han-min, and others. All these attempts met failure. Huang Hsing used the men defeated at Chin-chou and Shih-wan ta-shan to fight more than forty days along the border of Kwangsi and Annam, and made a reputation as an excellent soldier even though this attempt also failed. The eighth attempt at revolt, at Ho-k'ou in Yunnan by a few hundred secret society members under Huang Ming-t'ang, was again defeated. Huang Hsing could not help it. Lack of discipline and of fighting spirit were the reasons for defeat.<sup>24</sup>

Secret societies did not contribute much to the ninth and tenth attempts. Having learned from failure, Huang Hsing and Hu Han-min, who had planned the uprisings, began to rely more on participation of new armies and intellectuals than on secret society members. The ninth revolt was an army mutiny at Canton in February 1910. The tenth was an assault on Canton on April 27, 1911, which saw a loss of over eighty lives.<sup>25</sup> Among those men killed one was said to belong to the Triad society, while several others were liaison workers for secret societies, or adventurers fond of underground activities who may be suspected as secret society members.<sup>26</sup>

The last two important uprisings in 1911 were largely financed by secret society members. Whether there were many such mem-

bers participating in these attempts is unimportant. Their support of the two uprisings at Canton and the final success of the revolution at Wuchang meant a great deal. According to Feng Tzu-yu, half the cost of the riot at Huang-hua-kang was contributed by the Hung Men in Canada, who sold their club houses to raise money. The revolt at Wuchang was financed largely by Chih Kung T'ang brothers in the United States. At that time, the revolutionists in Hankow had little to eat or to wear.<sup>27</sup> This money galvanized them to action. Moreover, secret society members who had infiltrated government forces were easily persuaded by their comrades from the outside to support the revolutionary cause.<sup>28</sup> Huang Hsing was active in Kwangsi, and Liu Tao-i and Hu Ying in Hunan, Hupch, and other provinces in the middle of the Yangtze valley. Prompt declarations of allegiance to the revolutionary government by military leaders shortly after October 10, 1911, was a result of the earlier military movement.<sup>29</sup>

One should mention that several other uprisings and daring assassinations during these years were carried out by secret organizations. In addition to the ten revolutionary attempts, there were several independent uprisings. In August 1900, T'ang Ts'ai-ch'ang, Ch'in Li-san, and Lin Kuei led an uprising at Ta-t'ung in Anhwei, which failed. These scholarly leaders of the Elder Brothers' Society organized their members into an Independent Army (Tzu Li Chün), but after execution of the leaders, T'ang, Ch'in, and Lin, the army disbanded.<sup>30</sup> In January 1903, the secret society leaders Hung Ch'üan-fu, Hsieh Tsuan-t'ai, and Li Chi-t'ang mobilized the Hung Men brothers and started a revolt at Canton to set up a Ta-Ming Shun-t'ien Kuo or a "Nation of Great Ming Following the Will of Heaven" (this title indicates a conjunction of secret society and Taiping principles).<sup>31</sup> In the same year (1903) an uprising took place in Yunnan under command of the Elder Brothers' chief, Chou Yün-hsiang, who led local miners to the border of Kwangsi. Although government forces suppressed this effort, the survivors organized a Shih Szu Hui—a "Swear-to-die Society"—which laid the foundation for the quick decision of Yunnan in 1911 to join the revolutionary regime.<sup>32</sup>

In September 1904, Huang Hsing and Ma Fu-i, a great leader

of the Elder Brothers' Society in Hunan and Hupeh, planned a revolt, but the plot was exposed before it could get underway. In the following year, Ma Fu-i tried again; he was arrested and executed. Ma's followers determined to take revenge by a series of riots at Li-lin, Hunan, and P'ing-hsiang in Kiangsi. They were suppressed after a few weeks. Several thousand people lost their lives after this attempt.<sup>33</sup>

About the same time, there existed a Kuang Fu Hui or Restoration Society with the famous scholar Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei as its figurehead, while Tao Ch'eng-chang, an old hand in secret societies, became its executive director. Many secret society leaders such as Hsü Hsi-lin and famous woman leader Ch'iu Chin, in Chekiang and Kiangsu respectively joined the Restoration Society and opened the Tai-t'ung Academy. Here, military drill was given day and night to some six hundred chosen secret society men who would serve in the future as officers in the eight armies of secret societies that Ch'iu Chin organized.<sup>34</sup> In coordination with Ma Fu-i's uprising in Hunan, Hsü Hsi-lin shot down the Manchu governor of Anhwei, En-ming at Anking on July 6, 1907. This shocking incident led to arrest of Ch'iu Chin a week later in Chekiang and her death as the first woman martyr. About a year later, a young army officer and member of the Kuang Fu Hui, Hsiung Ch'eng-chi, started another revolt at Anking in November 1908, but the attempt collapsed in two days. The contribution of Hsü Hsi-lin and Hsiung Ch'eng-chi to the 1911 revolution was acknowledged by Dr. Sun in 1912 when he tried to bring the T'ung Meng Hui and Kuang Fu Hui into cooperation.<sup>35</sup> One should add that Wu Yüeh, who in September 1905, threw a bomb at the five imperial commissioners at the Peking railroad station as they were about to start their trip to study constitutional systems abroad, was also a member of the Kuang Fu Hui.<sup>36</sup> Most of these actions, as Dr. Sun admitted, were independent undertakings.<sup>37</sup> It is to be noted that the several revolutionary attempts conducted directly or indirectly by Sun Yat-sen and Huang Hsing, though important, were limited to the coast and the corner of southwestern China in the border of Kwangtung, Kwangsi, and Yunnan. Such news could not be widely spread to all parts of the kingdom during the days of



underdeveloped journalism and political restriction. The independent armed revolt at Li-lin and Ping-hsiang in Hunan and Kiangsi (1904) began to bring the revolutionary tide to the middle of the Yangtze valley. Subsequently the daring actions of Hsü Hsi-lin, Hsiung Ch'eng-chi, and the woman martyr Ch'iu Chin really made news in central and northern China and disheartened the Manchu officials. This psychological effect perhaps caused the governor-general to flee from the capitol at Wuchang as soon as he heard the gunfire on the tenth of October.

The Restoration Society and the Revolutionary Alliance were at odds. In 1907, T'ao Ch'eng-chang and Chang Ping-lin urged Sung Chiao-jen and T'an Jen-feng to call a general meeting to replace Sun Yat-sen by Huang Hsing as president of T'ung Meng Hui because of his failure of the armed revolts at Chao-chou and Huichou and other accusations and suspicions. While Huang Hsing was loyal to Sun without open criticism, T'ao Ch'eng-chang and many other members of the Restoration Society carried on rival actions even in Southeast Asia. T'ao and his members from Chekiang made "great contributions" as Sun Yat-sen admitted. Nevertheless, on January 14, 1912, T'ao was assassinated in a Shanghai hospital. Apparently, the two parties had trouble in Kwangtung and the Shanghai area. The complicated involvement and relations between the Restoration Society and Revolutionary Alliance cannot be delved into without a special article to be prepared in the future.<sup>28</sup>

Secret society leaders meanwhile had formed several revolutionary organizations. Besides the Independent Army and the Restoration Society, there were such groups as the Hua Hsing Hui (China Prosperous Society), T'ung Ch'iu Hui (Common Enemy Society), Kung Chin Hui (March Together Society) and Chung Kuo T'ung Meng Hui Chung P'u Tsung Hui (Headquarters of China's Revolutionary Alliance in the Central Yangtze), all of which contributed to the final armed revolt at Wuchang. The China Revival Society was set up in 1903 by Huang Hsing, Liu K'uei-i, and Ma Fu-i, possibly as a substitute for or competitor against the Hsing Chung Hui which was then inactive. It consisted of many of Ma Fu-i's men and Huang Hsing's friends, students, and admirers, such as Sung Chiao-jen, Hu Ying and T'an

Jen-feng; all became prominent in the great revolution. One of its members, Wan Fu-hua, made his reputation by attempting to assassinate an ex-Kwangsi governor in 1904.<sup>39</sup> A sister organization of the Hua Hsing Hui was the Common Enemy Society formed by Huang, Liu, and Ma to attract the uneducated secret society men.

The March Together Society, under direction of Chang Po-hsiang, derived from the T'ung Meng Hui in 1907, and had for its purpose the indoctrination of all secret groups as well as students and soldiers. Chang was a chieftain of the Szechwan secret order entitled Hsiao I Hui, (Filial and Heroic Society). Upon return to China from Japan in 1908 he tried to unite all secret forces along the Yangtze valley under one standard, the March Together Society, a branch of which was set up in Hupeh in April 1910 with Sun Wu as local chief. Liu K'uei-i, T'ao Ch'eng-chang, and many other leaders of clandestine associations joined this organization. The slogan "equal distribution of land" was changed to "equal distribution of human rights," so that the poorer secret society people would not be discriminated against after success of the revolution. Many fighters in the Wuhan revolution belonged to the March Together Society. Sun Wu's accident while making explosives in the Russian Settlement at Hankow caused arrest of many revolutionaries in the Wuhan cities (Oct. 9, 1911) and thus accelerated the great revolution on the following day.<sup>40</sup> We found that Sun Wu was a member of the Triad.<sup>41</sup> Hsiung Ping-k'un, a sergeant in an engineering battalion who ordered the first shot in the historic revolution on October 10, was a member of the March Together Society.<sup>42</sup>

Meanwhile, the Headquarters of China's Revolutionary Alliance in the Central Yangtze was founded at Shanghai on July 31, 1911, under guidance of Sung Chiao-jen, Ch'en Ch'i-mei (or Ch'en Ying-shih), T'an Jen-feng, and Chiao Ta-feng, to promote military action in central China. That Sung, T'an, and Chiao were close collaborators of clandestine orders can be proved without much difficulty, for they were close to Huang Hsing and Liu K'uei-i and there are sources stating their confidential ties.<sup>43</sup> Whether Ch'en Ch'i-mei joined a secret society

or not is hard to say. After returning from Japan in 1908, he set up a hiding place in Shanghai to entertain revolutionary comrades from Kiangsu and Chekiang, and called this place Liangshan p'o, a historical name for underworld men as mentioned in the novel *Shui-hu chuan* (which was translated by Pearl Buck as *All Men Are Brothers*). Ch'en is said to have been on intimate relations with Chang Kung, a leader of the confidential association Lung Hua Hui, and with other secret societies as well as soldiers in Chekiang.<sup>44</sup> One source clearly states that "Mr. Ch'en Ch'i-mei of Chekiang personally joined the Ch'ing-pang or Green Party."<sup>45</sup>

Suffice to say that these revolutionary organizations were propelled by several energetic men such as Sun Wu, Sung Chiao-jen, T'an Jen-feng, and Chiao Ta-feng, who concurrently participated in the T'ung Meng Hui and other organizations. After the Canton fiasco in April 1911, the staff members of the T'ung Meng Hui were so dejected that Huang Hsing and Hu Han-min went into hiding in Hong Kong, while Sun Yat-sen was in the United States. It was T'an Jen-feng who suggested to shift the center of revolution from the Canton area to the Wuhan cities. Ch'en Ch'i-mei and Sung Chiao-jen decided on October 8 to send T'an Jen-feng to Hankow to discuss revolutionary problems with Sun Wu and Chü Cheng,<sup>46</sup> but on the tenth, before T'an's arrival, Sun Wu and other local leaders had already hastened the revolution by accident.<sup>47</sup> A contemporary source states that the Wuchang revolutionaries were a group of ebullient youths who did not rely on the guidance of any leader, even though followers of Sun Yat-sen whom they regarded highly from a long distance. Receiving little financial support from Sun's party, they were often poverty stricken.<sup>48</sup> The Wuhan cities were taken by them without any high leader on the scene.<sup>49</sup> As Chü Cheng remarked, at that time all revolutionists loosely belonged to the Revolutionary Alliance.<sup>50</sup> Some of the youths may be nameless heroes.

Huang Hsing, the second-ranking leader of the 1911 revolution, seems to have been a secret society member.<sup>51</sup> While Dr. Sun did not set foot on the mainland or interior of China for sixteen years—from October 29, 1895, to December 25, 1911—

Huang Hsing commanded or was deeply involved in most of the uprisings. There is no question that he made great contributions to the revolution which have been well presented by Hsüeh Chün-tu in his *Huang Hsing and the Chinese Revolution* (Stanford Univ. Press, 1961). Sun Wen and Huang Hsing were the number-one and number-two leaders respectively of the 1911 revolution. But whether Huang Hsing was a secret society member cannot be answered even by Dr. Hsüeh, a son-in-law of Huang. It is not easy to solve this problem because few upper-class men would like to admit themselves as such or be identified with such undignified membership. There is, however, evidence to show Huang's relations with the powerful leader Ma Fu-i of the Elder Brothers' Society. In Huang Hsing's biography, written by his old friend Liu K'uei-i, there is valuable information. It seems that in the early spring of 1904, Liu K'uei-i and Huang Hsing made an arrangement to meet Ma Fu-i at Hsiang-t'an, about seventeen miles south of Changsha in Hunan. To avoid attention of the government officials, the two scholars, Huang and Liu, pretended to be farmers by wearing short jackets, rain caps, and shoes instead of using umbrellas and boots. They walked about ten miles through the snowy night to meet the secret society leader in a mining cave at a hillside in the Hsiang-t'an district. Sitting on the ground by a good wood fire in the cave, the three men planned a new regime for China. During the night, all small paths from the hills were carefully watched by secret guards. Thus they were able to talk to their hearts' satisfaction. Ma ordered his men to dig a hole in the ground and fill it with wood, so as to roast chickens under a wood fire. The leaders drank, ate, and talked happily until dawn. On the way home, Huang Hsing wrote a poem, two lines of which may be translated as "We made the union [*chieh-i*] by a cup of wine; driving away the Manchus would be so easy as killing chickens."<sup>22</sup> Here the literary allusion *Chieh-i* obviously derives from the story of the three sworn brothers in a peach garden described in *Romances of the Three Kingdoms*; it is a classical reference to secret union. Huang and Liu must have been familiar with Ma so as to trust one another in such a confidential meeting.

If the above sounds like interpretation and speculation, there

is strong evidence which says that Huang K'c-ch'iang (i.e., Huang Hsing) joined the Ko Lao Hui, or Elder Brothers' Society, in Hunan and Hupeh and was a Lung-t'ou or dragon-head, a high rank in the society. A statement to this effect was made by Feng Tzu-yu.<sup>53</sup> Feng admitted that he was a member of the Triad and Chih Kung T'ang, and his words should bear weight. Two other sources confirm that "Huang Hsing was a Hung Men brother."<sup>54</sup>

A contemporary writer says that although the revolutionary idea had been advocated for more than ten years, the person who put it into action was Huang Hsing.<sup>55</sup> If Huang's contribution to the revolution was undeniable, then the contribution of the basic fighters—secret society members with whom, as we have seen, Dr. Sun had close relations from his childhood to 1912—should not be ignored.

In 1918, two eminent scholars—Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei who was the first director of the Kuang Fu Hui, and Chang Hsiang-wen—suggested a special chapter in the contemplated formal history of the Republic of China for those secret societies which made a considerable contribution to founding the new regime. Dr. Sun declined the suggestion on the ground that their connections with the revolution were loose, their organizations autocratic, and their members mostly ignorant of democratic principles. Sun thought that it behooved some scholars to write a book on the history of Chinese secret societies, but that such information should not be inserted as a special chapter in the formal historical account of the Republic.<sup>56</sup>

Dr. Sun's attitude toward secret societies was criticized by Huang San-te, a leader of the Chih Kung T'ang who helped him a great deal in the United States but later came to dislike him. Huang said that when Sun was in straits he relied on the Hung League; when he was in a high position, he despised the Hung League.<sup>57</sup> A general tendency in Chinese history is that he who is successful is a king; whoever fails is a rebel or bandit. The successful king usually belittles the contribution of other fighters. When Dr. Sun honored Huang Hsing by announcing Huang's illness and death in 1916, he did not give any appraisal of Huang's contribution to the founding of the Republic.<sup>58</sup> It is

likewise understandable that he would not give much credit to secret societies.

These ideas are unsound. It is unavoidable for a great man to incur some criticism. During his lifetime Dr. Sun's leadership was challenged many times by his associates.<sup>50</sup> Being a Christian he always tried to prevent the shedding of blood, as when he yielded the presidency to Yuan Shih-k'ai for a peaceful unification of China, and to win the hearts of his comrades' friendship, such as Huang Hsing, who was always loyal to him and did not care whether he was a premier or minister of war in the provisional government of the Republic of China. As a leader Dr. Sun was undoubtedly superior to Huang Hsing, who was a daring and unselfish fighter but whose political ideas were few and who "left no political writings."<sup>51</sup> Dr. Sun's understanding of the international situation, his firm belief that China would not be partitioned by foreign powers after 1900, his farsighted and able leadership, his political theory expressed in eloquent lectures, his ability in raising money from overseas Chinese, all these enabled him to mobilize forces and direct them from afar to fight for the final goal. His intimate knowledge of secret societies gave him insight to judge their qualities and evaluate their work. He was, as Confucius says, like a north star, which keeps its place and toward which all stars turn.

## NOTES

1. The T'ien Ti Hui, San Ho, San Tien, or Hung Men started riots in various places around Canton in 1802, 1817, 1837, 1845, and 1848. See *Ch'ing shih-lu* (*Chia-ch'ing*) *ch'uan* 95, p. 19; *ch'uan* 105, pp. 2-3; *ch'ing shih-lu* (*tao-kuang*) *ch'uan* 299, pp. 5-6; *ch'uan* 300, pp. 42-43; *ch'uan* 118, pp. 20-21; and *ch'uan* 451, pp. 4-5.
2. See Sun's Preface to the *T'ai-p'ing t'ien-kuo chan-shih* (The Military History of the Taiping Kingdom) in *Kuo-fu ch'uan-chi* (a complete collection of the National Father [Sun Yat-sen's] writings, compiled by the Committee for the Compilation of Materials on the Party History, rev. ed., Taipei, 1957), V, 219-220; Lo Chia-lun, *Kuo-fu nien-p'u ch'u-kuo* (the National Father's chronological biography, first draft copy, Taipei; The Kuomintang History Committee, 1958) I, 39-40; and Chang Ch'i-yin *Tang-shih k'ai-yao* (a general history of the party; Taipei, Chung-yung kai-t'ao wei-yuan hui, 2nd ed. 1951), I, 6.

3. Chiang Chün-chang, *Chung-hua min-kuo k'ai-kuo shih* (a history of the founding of the Republic of China, Taipei, Cheng-chung shu-chu, 1957), p. 60.
4. Yang Ho-ling, one of the four rebels, is not so well known as the other three. Yang was a fellow villager of Sun in the Chung-shan district, and a son of a wealthy merchant family with a store in Hong Kong called Yang Yao-chi, which served as a rendezvous for the rebels and other close friends. See T'an Yung-nien and Chen Kuan-nan, *Hsin-hai ho-ming hui-i lu* (Reminiscence of the 1911 revolution, Hong Kong, Yun-chiao shu-tien, 1938) I, 85; and *Kuo-fu nien-p'u*, I, 99.
5. *Kuo-fu nien-p'u*, I, 39-40.
6. T'an Yung-nien, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 38, 39, 61-62.
7. Lu Tan-lin, *Ko-ming shih-t'an* (a discussion of the revolutionary history; Chungking, Tu-li ch'u-pan she, 1945), p. 205; Feng Tzu-yu, *Chung-hua min-kuo k'ai-kuo-ch'ien ho-ming shih* (revolutionary history before the founding of the Republic of China, Chungking, Chung-kuo wen-hua fu-wu she, 1946) I, 2.
8. Chiang Chün-chang, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
9. The names of the nine workers in the drugstore are given in Feng Tzu-yu, *Ko-ming i-shih* (informal history of the revolution; the Commercial Press, Shanghai, 1946), IV, 42.
10. Ch'en Shao-pai, *Hsing Chung Hui ho-ming shih-yao* (a brief history of the revolution of the Revive China Society) in *Hsing-hai ho-ming* (the 1911 Revolution; Chung-kuo shih-hsüeh hui, Peking, 1957), I, 23-24; and Lo Hsiang-lin, "The influence of the National Father's revolutionary ideas on Ho Ch'i and Cheng Kuan-yin," *Kuo-fu chiu-shih ten-ch'ien chi-nien lun-wen chi* (essays for the commemoration of the ninetieth birthday of the National Father; Taipei: Chung-hua wen-hua ch'u-pan she, 1956), I, 40-57. See also Teng Ssu-yu and John Fairbank, *China's Response to the West* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2nd ed., 1962), p. 113 ff.
11. Yang Ch'ü-yün was put in command of 3,000 Triad members from Hong Kong who participated in the first armed revolt Ch'en Shao-pai, *Hsing-chung hui ho-ming shih-yao*, p. 30). This duty must have been performed by an insider, not an outsider of the Triad. As for Hsieh Tsuan-t'ai, his father, a merchant in Australia, was an elder of the Triad society. Hsieh was said to be so obedient that he always worked in deference to his father's will; therefore, he may be considered a member of the society also (see Feng Tzu-yu, *Ko-ming i-shih*, II, 23-24). Moreover, Yang Ch'ü-yün and Hsieh and other early friends of Dr. Sun were recorded as important members of the Hung Men (T'an Yung-nien, *op. cit.*, I, 61-62). For more information about the Fu-chen wen-she, see Wang Hsing-jui, "Ch'ing-chi Fu-chen wen-she, yü ko-ming yü-tung ti kuan-hsi" (the Fu-chen literary society and its relation to the revolutionary movement), *Shih-hsüeh tsao-chih*, No. 1, pp. 35-45 (Dec. 1944).
12. Chou Lu, *Chung-kuo kuo-min-tang shih-kao* (draft history of the Kuomintang; Shanghai, 1929), I, 28; Hatano Kenichi, *Chūgoku kokumin-tō tsushi* (a general history of the Chinese Nationalist Party; Tokyo, 1943), pp. 43-45; and Marius B. Jansen, *The Japanese and Sun Yat-sen* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1954), p. 61. The fundamental source is Dr. Sun's own writing, "Kidnapped in London" in which he said, "When I was in Macao, I began

to know a political movement with the purpose of reforming China. This organization was called Hsing-Chung hui or Revive China Society." He was sympathetic with its purpose and immediately became its member. *Kuo-fu ch'üan-chi*, VI, 169. This idea is not adopted by Sun's official historian, Lo Chia-lun, possibly because Sun might make a mistake in his recollection, and if his own words were not mistaken he was not the founder of the Hsing-Chung hui but a participant.

13. T'an Yung-nien, *Hsin-hai ko-ming hui-i lu*, I, 58; and Chu Hsiu-chia, *Hua-ch'iao ming-jen ch'uan* (biographies of famous overseas Chinese; Taipei, Chung-hua wen-hua ch'u-pan hui, 1955), I, 75-84.
14. Ma Chao-chün, "Hung-men tsung-chih yü san-min chu-i" (the aims of Hung Men and the Three People's Principles), a mimeographed essay written for the seventieth anniversary of the establishment of the headquarters of Chih Kung T'ang in Honolulu dated July 1, 1962. These sheets were given to me by Mr. Ma when I visited him in Taipei.
15. When I discussed Dr. Sun's relation with Chinese secret societies with Professor Lo Hsiang-lin in his residence at Kowloon, he wrote these words in my notebook: "Mei-yu Hung Men chiu Mei-yu Hsing Chung Hui."
16. According to Feng Tzu-yu, Yang Ch'ü-yün yielded the presidency when he realized that the leaders of the secret societies summoned from the Yangtze Valley, Fukien, and other provinces, supported Sun (*Ko-ming i-shih*, V, 12; and *Kuo-fu nien-p'u*, pp. 87-88).
17. This is based on Chang Chi-yün, *Tang-shih Kai-yao*, I, 76. The Hua Hsing Hui (China Prosperous Society) was organized in 1904 by Huang Hsing, Liu Ku'ei-i, Ma Fu-i, Ch'en T'ien-hua, Sung Chiao-jen, and others in Changsha, Hunan overtly for the purpose of developing Chinese industry and covertly for mobilizing old and new army men and secret society members for a revolt. See *Hsin-hai ko-ming hui-i lu* (Recollections of the 1911 Revolution) compiled by the Modern History Research Department of the Academy of Science, Peking, the Chung-hua Book Co., 1961), II, 140. The Kuang Fu Hui (Restoration Society) was founded in 1904 and directed for the first period by Chang Ping-lin, Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei, and Kung Pao-ch'üan, with the headquarters at Shanghai. The director for the middle period was Hsi Hsi-lin and Ch'iu Chin with the headquarters at Shao-hsing. Its director for the last period was T'ao Ch'eng-chang with the headquarters at Shanghai. The two guiding men seem to have been Kung Pao-ch'üan and T'ao Ch'eng-chang, who were very close friends working together for many years on secret societies. Kung was the son-in-law of Chang Ping-lin and thus it is conceivable that the two outstanding scholars, Chang Ping-lin and Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei, were invited to head the Kuang Fu Hui for attracting other members, while Kung and T'ao worked most of the time behind the scene. See *Hsin-hai ko-ming hui-i lu* (Peking, 1961), I, 170 and *Hsin-hai ko-ming*, I, 519-525.
18. *Hsin-hai ko-ming*, I, 168, and *Ko-ming i-shih*, I, 129-131.
19. Lo Chia-lun, *Kuo-fu nien-p'u*, I, 87, 101-102.
20. Feng Tzu-yu, *Chung-hua min-kuo k'ai-kuo ch'ien ko-ming shih*, I, 146-147.
21. A long list of members of the Ko Lao Hui was reported by Chang Chih-tung to the Peking court and it is reproduced from the Palace Archives in *Hsin-hai ko-ming*, I, 265-276. The same information is also given in



- Tai Wei-kuang, *Hung-men shih* (a history of the Hung-men; Nanking, 1947), p. 104.
22. Feng Tzu-yu, *Hua-ch'ao ko-ming k'ai-kuo shih* (a history of the founding of the nation by over-seas Chinese revolutionists; Shanghai, The Commercial Press, 1947), p. 55.
  23. *Ko-ming wen-hsien* (documents of the revolution compiled by the Kuomintang Committee for the Compilation of Materials on the Party History; Taipei, 1953), II, 256; and Wu Hsiang-hsiang, *Chung-kuo hsien-tai shih ts'ung-k'an* (Modern Chinese history series; Taipei, Cheng-chung shu-chu, 1960), I, 68-73.
  24. Hsü Shih-shen, *Kuo-fu ko-ming yuan-ch'i hsiang-chu* (Detailed supplementary notes on Sun Yat-sen's autobiography; Shanghai, Cheng-chung shu-chu, 1947), pp. 136-137.
  25. *Ko-ming i-shih*, V, 169; and Chou Lu, *Kuang-chou san-yüeh erh-shih chiu ko-ming shih* (history of the Canton revolution on the twenty-ninth of the third month, Changsha, the Commercial Press, 1939). Many of the vivid descriptions in this book such as dialogues of the martyrs with government officials and their heroic ways in meeting their executions seem to be based largely on the author's imaginations.
  26. Chu Yün-chang, *Ch'i-shih-erh lich-shih chung-ti hua-ch'iao* (the over-seas Chinese among the seventy-two patriots; Overseas Chinese Library, Taipei, 1948), pp. 53-54.
  27. Feng Tzu-yu, *Ko-ming i-shih*, IV, 217-227; and *Chung-hua min-kuo k'ai-kuo ch'ien ko-ming shih*, I, 144-151.
  28. *Chung-kuo ko-ming chih* (a record of Chinese revolution, 1911 ed.), III, 1; and Liu K'uei-i Huang & Hsing ch'uan-chi, pp. 21-22, 27.
  29. *Wu-ch'ang shou-i* (the Wuchang revolution; compiled by a committee for the documents commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Republic of China), pp. 134-140; Feng Tzu-yu, *Chung-hua min-kuo k'ai-kuo ch'ien ko-ming shih*, I, 167-172; and *Hsin-hai ko-ming* V, 6-7.
  30. Lin Kuei and T'ang Ts'ai-ch'ang were Fu-lung-t'ou, Associate Dragon Heads of the Elders Brothers' Society (*Hsin-hai ko-ming*, I, 276); while Ch'in Li-san, a disciple of T'ang; may be considered a close associate of secret society members. *Ch'ing-shih* (history of the Ch'ing Dynasty; Taipei, 1961), VIII, 6147, 6149-6150.
  31. See Hung Ch'üan-fu's uprising in *Hsin-hai ko-ming*, I, 315-321. The financier of the uprising, Li Chi-t'ang was also a secret society member, while Hung Ch'üan-fu was a member of the Triad. T'an Yung-nien, *Hsin-hai ko-ming hui-i lu*, I, 46-47; and *Chung-kuo Hung-men hai-wei k'un-chung k'en-chin ta-hui t'e-k'an* (a special publication for a great reunion of the overseas Chinese Hung Men brothers; Taipei, 1947 [?]), p. 44.
  32. Feng Tzu-yu, *Chung-hua min-kuo k'ai-kuo ch'ien ko-ming shih*, I, 103-132; and *Hung-men shih*, pp. 122-124.
  33. Liu K'uei-i, *Huang Hsing ch'uan-chi* (Peiping, 1929), pp. 12-14, 21-25.
  34. Both Ch'iu Chin and Hsü Hsi-lin joined the Triad society at Yokohama. Although Ch'iu Chin also joined the Tung Meng Hui, Hsü Hsi-lin refused to do so. See Feng, *Ko-ming i-shih*, V, 74; *Ch'iu Chin Chi* (collections of Ch'iu Chin's writings; Peking, Chung-hua shu-chu, 1960), pp.

- 179-183; and Wu Yü-chang, *Hsing-hai ko-ming* (the 1911 Revolution; Peking, Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1961), p. 14.
35. Dr. Sun's telegram is reproduced in *Ko-ming i-shih*, V, 74-75; also in *Kuo-fu ch'üan-chi*, IV, 153. From this document we learned that in January 1912 the Tung Meng Hui army commanders could not get along with the Kuang Fu Hui generals in Kwangtung. Sun tried to bring the two parties into harmonious cooperation by mentioning the Kuang Fu Hui's contributions to the revolution such as the actions of Hsü Hsi-lin, Ch'ü Chin, Hsiung Ch'eng-chi, and the capture of Shanghai, Nanking and Chekiang.
36. See T'ao Ch'eng-chang, *Che-an chi-lüeh* (a brief account of the revolts in Chekiang) in *Hsin-hai ko-ming*, III, 17.
37. Sun's "Ko-ming yüan-ch'i" or "Sun's autobiography" in *Hsin-hai ko-ming*, I, 12.
38. See note 35. After T'ao's assassination, Sun telegraphed Ch'en Ch'i-mei to arrest the murderer, and to write a biography for T'ao because of his long effort and great contribution to the revolution (*Kuo-fu ch'üan-chi*, IV, 153-154). But who ordered the assassination? According to Ma Hsü-lun, a famous professor of National Peking University, and a native of Chekiang, Mr. So and So was the architect (*Ko-ming wen-hsien*, I, 520). It is too early to solve such a delicate problem until more sources will be made available. As for the criticism against Sun Yat-sen, see "Sung Chiao-chen" *Li-shih yen-chiu* (Oct. 1961), V, 34; and Chin Ch'ung-chi, Hu Sheng-wu, and Lun Huang Hsing, *Li-shih yen-chiu* (June, 1962), III, 18; and Feng Tzu-yu, *Ko-ming i-shih*, V, 74.
39. *Ko-ming i-shih*, II, 86-87; *Kuo-fu nien-p'u*, I, 137; and *Wu-ch'eng shou-i*, No. 1, II, 18.
40. Yang Yü-ju, *Hsin-hai ko-ming hsien-chu chi* (the first steps of the 1911 revolution; Ko-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, 1958), pp. 37-38; Chang Kuo-kan, *Hsin-hai ko-ming shih-liao* (historical sources of the 1911 revolution; Ko-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, 1958), pp. 43-45; *Ko-ming wen-hsien*, II, 94; and *Ko-ming i-shih*, V, 203-205.
41. Sun Wu, a good friend of T'ang Ts'ai-ch'ang and Wu Lu-chen, was a member of the San Ho Hui (*Tang-tai ming-jen shih-lüeh* [brief biographies of famous men in the present generation] in *Man-ch'ing pai-shih* [informal history of the Manchu dynasty, 1912], *Tse* 10, 14b-15; and Wu Yü-chang, *Hsin-hai ko-ming*, pp. 94-95).
42. *Ibid.*; and *Ch'ing Shih*, VIII, 6211.
43. Feng Tzu-yu, *Chung-hua min-kuo k'ai-kuo ch'ien ko-ming shih*, I, 153; and Chang Nan-hsien, *Hu-pei ko-ming chih-chih lu* (an account of the Hupei revolution according to his personal experience; Chungking, 1945), pp. 67-73; 209-214; and *Chung-kuo ko-ming chih*, III, 5.
44. *Ko-ming i-shih*, II, 91, 99.
45. Chih Sung-teu, *Min-kuo ch'un-ch'iu* (chronicles of the Republic Period; Hong Kong, Hai-t'ien culture service, 1961), p. 8. How reliable this source is is difficult to verify. It is better to wait for more evidence before drawing any definite conclusion.
46. Chü Cheng, later president of Judicial Yuan of the Nationalist government, is also recorded as member of a secret society (Wu Yü-chang, *Hsin-hai ko-ming*, p. 94).

47. *Ko-ming wen-hsien ts'ung-k'an* (miscellaneous publications of revolutionary documents; Nanking, Sept. 1947), No. 7, pp. 2-6.
48. Yang Yu-ju, *Hsin-hai ko-ming hsien-chu chi*, 45; and Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China, 1840-1928* (N. J. Van Nostrand, 1956), pp. 236-237, 245-247.
49. Liang Ch'i-ch'ao noticed that the revolutionary leaders did not have any great power, plan, and revolutionary army. Not until Szechwan and Hupei declared independence and Yuan Shih-k'ai agreed with republicanism did the second-ranking leader, Huang Hsing, come from Hong Kong to Wuchang (Oct. 28). Not until all provinces in the lower Yangtze became independent and the Wuchang military government was to move to Nanking did the first leader, Sun Yat-sen, return to Shanghai (Dec. 25). Ting Wen-chiang, *Liang Jen-kung hsien-sheng xien-p'u chung-pien ch'u-kuo* (a first draft of raw materials for Mr. Liang Jen-kung's biography narrated year by year; Taipei, World Book Co., 1958), II, 377.
50. Chü Cheng, *Chü chiao-sheng hsien-sheng ch'üan-chi* (a complete collection of Chü Cheng's writings; no indication of publication place, 1954 [?]), I, 222.
51. Sun Wen and Huang Hsing were referred to as Sun Huang because of their important positions in the revolution history. See Chin Chung-chi and Hu Sheng-wu, *op. cit.*, p. 17, and Hsieh Shih-ch'in, *Shu-kung sui-pi* (desultory notes of Hsieh Shih-ch'in) in *Hsin-hai ko-ming tsu-liao* (source materials of the 1911 revolution; Peking, Chung-hua shu-chu, 1961), pp. 487-491. Hsieh was the chief secretary of the March Together Society.
52. Liu K'uei-i, *Huang Hsing ch'üan-chi* (Peking, 1929), pp. 6-7. Chün-tu Hsieh translates the two lines as "Sealing the alliance with wine, Expelling the Manchus like killing chickens" (*Huang Hsing and the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 18-19).
53. Feng Tzu-yü, *Chung-hua min-kuo k'ai-kuo ch'ien ko-ming shih*, I, 150.
54. *Chung-kuo Hung-men hai-wai k'un-chung k'en-chin ta-hui t'e-k'un*, p. 50; and *Hung-men shih*, p. 115.
55. *Chung-kuo ko-ming chi*, *Tse* 2, 2 and *Tse* 3, 1.
56. *Kuo-fu ch'üan-chi*, V, 322.
57. Huang San-te, *Hung-men ko-ming shih* (revolutionary history of the Hung League, 1937), p. 35.
58. *Kuo-fu ch'üan-chi*, V, 238-239. The original letter of Ts'ai and Chang is in *Kuo-fu p'i-tu mo-chi* (Documents with the National Father's autographic comments, compiled by Lo-Chia-lun), p. 42.
59. For instance, Dr. Sun's leadership was challenged by Yang Ch'ü-yün in 1895, by Yu Lieh who set up a separate secret society, Chung Ho T'ang against Sun's Hsing Chung Hui in 1900 (T'an Yung-nien, *Hsin-hai ko-ming hui-i lu*, I, 148-150); by Hsieh Tsuan-t'ai who supported Yung Wing for the provisional president if Hsieh's revolutionary movement in 1901 were successful (Feng Tzu-yü, *Ko-ming i-shih*, II, 24), and by T'ao Ch'eng-chang and Chang Pin-lin who tried to replace Sun as the *Tsung-li* or director of the T'ung Meng Hui by Huang Hsing in 1907 (Liu K'uei-i, *Huang Hsing ch'üan-chi*, p. 29; and Feng Ch'eng-chün, *Chung-hua min-kuo k'ai-kuo ch'ien ko-ming shih*, II, 9).
60. Hsieh Chün-tu, *Huang Hsing and the Chinese Revolution*, p. 185.