

## Preface

### Address at the Opening Session of the Third Annual Meeting at Huazhong Normal University on May 7, 2011

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Good morning! Welcome to Huazhong Normal University, located here in the heart of China. Our university combines a century of tradition and modern dynamism. I sincerely hope that our beautiful campus and friendly service will make you feel at home.

I am greatly honored to take over the baton from President Huang Junjie to serve as the third President of the Society for Cultural Interaction in East Asia for one year and to take charge of preparations for the current annual meeting. I hope that I can live up to your expectations, dedicate myself to the rigorous approach of the previous two annual meetings, handle well the meeting logistics, and make the current meeting another success. I also hope to promote further friendly exchange and interaction among scholars both in East Asia and from around the world, and to enhance academic research.

Since this year is the 100th anniversary of the 1911 Revolution, my colleagues and I decided to choose “The 1911 Revolution and Asia” as the theme for the current meeting.

About one hundred years ago, right here in Wuchang—where the present annual meeting is being held—the first shot of the first uprising of the historic 1911 Revolution was fired. This Revolution was in many ways a bourgeois democratic revolution that overthrew the rule of the Qing Dynasty and put an end to over 2,000 years of feudal autocratic monarchy in China. The Republic of China was then established and a Provisional Constitution, which was in nature the constitution of a bourgeois republic, was formulated. The 1911 Revolution was not only epoch-making politically, but also socially. The Revolution initiated a century of tremendous change in modern China.

The 1911 Revolution was also closely connected to other East Asian countries, such as Japan and Korea. China and Japan are close neighbors separated only by a strip of water. This geographic proximity facilitated the

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Meiji Restoration having an inspiring and profound impact on Chinese revolutionaries of the time. This is evidenced by the large number of revolutionaries, such as Sun Yat-sen, Huang Xing, and Song Jiaoren, who either studied or sought refuge in Japan, which was a convenient location for communicating information and formulating strategies. A good example is the Tongmenghui (Chinese United League), which was founded in Tokyo in 1905, and became an important revolutionary organization in the 1911 Revolution. Other examples are newspapers such as the *Minbao* and *Xinmin Congbao*, which were both started in Tokyo, and that carried the most famous controversy ever to occur between the revolutionaries and reformists. Many Japanese, including Yamada Yoshimasa, Miyazaki Tōten, Kayano Nagatomo, and Umeya Shōkichi, showed sympathy and support for the Chinese revolution and established lifelong friendships with revolutionary leaders like Sun Yat-sen, Huang Xing, and others.

In Korea, the Righteous Army was inspired in 1905 and 1911 by a series of revolutionary activities initiated by Sun Yat-sen in China. After the 1911 Revolution, leaders of the Korean Independence Movement were in close contact with Chinese revolutionaries. The Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea, which led the Korean Independence Movement, was founded in 1919 in the French concession in Shanghai.

Many in the Chinese diaspora lived in Nanyang (Southeast Asia), and constituted an important source of financial and political support for the 1911 Revolution. Statistics indicate that donations from overseas Chinese in Nanyang reached the sum of five to six million dollars in the year 1911 alone. Southeast Asian countries like Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Burma (Myanmar), and Siam (Thailand) were influenced by the 1911 Revolution to start their own national liberation movements. Sun Yat-sen established close ties and profound friendships, for example, with the Philippine revolutionary Marino Ponce and the Vietnamese revolutionary Phan Boi Chau while in Japan.

Obviously, research on the significance of the 1911 Revolution must extend spatially to include the whole of Asia as well as the rest of the world. From an Asian perspective, the 1911 Revolution was an important part of the national revolutionary storm that swept through Asia at that time. After the success of the Wuchang uprising, Lenin declared with great excitement that a new source of the great world storm has emerged in Asia. In his view, the 1911 Revolution led by Sun Yat-sen “achieved freedom for four-hundred million unenlightened Asian people and awakened them to take part in political life. One-fourth of the population on earth has woken from their deep sleep and is headed for brightness, movement, and struggle.” Sun Yat-sen was the one in Asia who could “represent the sincere, revolutionary, and radical

democratic bourgeoisie” and was “a worthy comrade of the great French propagandists and activists at the end of the 18th century.” Indeed, Sun Yat-sen had a strong sense of commitment and responsibility to the renaissance of Asia.

As early as 1897, on his first meeting with Miyazaki Tōten in Japan, Sun Yat-sen expressed his grand ambition of establishing a revolutionary army “for the common people of China, for the yellow race of Asia, and for the humanity of the world.” As he grew older, Sun Yat-sen focused increasingly on the “greater Asia doctrine” that he had advocated. He realized that “except for Japan, all the other weak and small nations in Asia were suppressed and suffering from the pain of racism. They shared the same pains and sufferings and were bound to stand together to fight against the brutal and great powers.” His idea of defending and aiding the weak and small nations in Asia and in international relations had a profound influence on his successors. Similar ideas can be easily found in Mao Zedong’s and Zhou Enlai’s diplomatic thought. Even Indonesian former President Sukarno said that he was influenced by Sun Yat-sen’s thought when he was young. “As a young man, I was inspired by the Three Principles of the People put forward by Dr. Sun Yat-sen.” “Ever since then, influenced by the Three Principles of the People, nationalism has taken root in my heart.”

By using an Asian perspective to research the 1911 Revolution and its influence, we shall consider not only the political interaction between China and other Asian countries. With an understanding of the concept of “cultural interaction” as defined by the Society, we shall also analyze the conflicts, communication, and interaction between the various regions of Asia in politics, economics, and culture. This interaction took place at all levels and in-depth, facilitating mutual political trust and a sense of cooperation. Sun Yat-sen and other revolutionaries held the important outlook that Asia was an integrated whole—a community bound together by common interests and destinies—and that the destiny of Asia must be kept in the hands of the people of Asian countries. “(The people of Asia) must break away from the fetters of Europe and be the masters of Asia instead of being colonized.” Sun and others believed that all Asian countries were equal and that no country should attempt to seek dominance in Asia. In view of Japan’s militarist tendencies and attempt at hegemony in Asia at that time, Sun Yat-sen made a special appeal to the Japanese people in his later years: “It’s up to you, the Japanese people, to make careful observation and prudent consideration as to whether Japan shall become lackeys of the West or defenders of benevolent governments in the East.”

ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and the “East Asian Community” that was advocated by former Japanese Prime Minister

Hatoyama Yukio are in a sense manifestations of this new consciousness of Asian integration. Of course, there is still a long way to go from this initial formation of a consciousness of Asian integration to creating an Asian consensus. Obstructed by various historical resentments and territorial disputes, the goal of real equality and coexistence of Asian nations and the establishment of a community like the European Union will not be achieved within a short period of time. Yet, a brighter future lies ahead for Asia if we can show respect for each other's cultural heritages and values, eliminate one single dominant value system and the bias of one country as the center. We must also break away from historical prejudices to explore a new framework of reconciliation and cooperation between Asian nations in the process of multi-cultural interaction and integration to achieve reconciliation among nations, establish strategic and mutually beneficial relations, promote the development process of Asian integration, and create a mutual vision for the peaceful rise of Asia.

Of course, Asia has never been an isolated continent. It can never develop without influence from Europe, America, Oceania, and even from distant Africa. This is even more so in the current unprecedentedly intensified process of globalization. The intervention and influences of Western civilization shall by no means be neglected when considering East Asian and Asian issues. The Asian and global perspectives should be combined. The interaction between Eastern and Western civilizations, which is a long-term interaction, should also be included in the paradigm of observation of "cultural interaction."

As far as cross-cultural interaction is concerned, historically the interaction between modern Western civilization and ancient Oriental civilization ranged from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean and to the east coast of the Pacific, creating a most spectacular landscape of cultural interaction between East and West in modern times. Further, with the rise of an emerging East Asia today, the Pacific Rim, which includes the west coast of the United States, the east coast of the Pacific, and Australian and New Zealand coasts in the South Pacific, may be the most active region in the world in terms of economic, political, and cultural interaction between East and West. The world's largest economies, such as the United States, China, Japan, Russia and Australia, all belong to this region. The major world religions, including Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, are also found in this area. Collisions, conflicts, struggles, compromises, cooperation, and competition among these areas are like the rolling waves in the Pacific: they will never cease and are always worthy of cross-cultural communication and research for the sake of exploring the possibilities of coexistence of different

cultures.

Thus, from the historic 1911 Revolution to globalization today, and from Asia to America, Europe, the Pacific, and Africa, research on cultural interaction is faced with a difficult task. We have a long way to go. It's worthwhile for scholars, whether or not they are present at this meeting, to explore its profound significance, establish a wider field of academic research, and achieve more fruitful academic results by working together.

Thank you!