

PROPOSAL FOR A SINO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE

*A letter to Count Okuma, Prime Minister of Japan,
from Dr. Sun Yat-sen; dated May 11, 1914.*

Dear Count Okuma,—I have the honor to bring to your notice the desirability of Japan assisting China in her efforts to reform and the fact that only the adoption of such a policy will relieve the critical situation in the Far East. In return, China will open up her markets for the benefit of Japan's industry and commerce. The two countries are so interdependent and so complementary one to the other that if the proposed measures are carried into effect, the result will be beneficial to both. It will enable Japan to jump to the forefront of the world's greatest Powers and occupy a position similar to Great Britain's, while China will be able to preserve her integrity, develop her latent resources and become the richest country on the Continent of Asia. The two countries should help each other in the same relationship as the wheel and the axle in order that the peace of the world may be preserved and civilization enriched. The accomplishment of this task will be without precedent in history; it will be indeed one of the most wonderful achievements in the world. The time is now ripe and the opportunity thus provided should not be missed. Therefore, I hope you will carefully consider the points enumerated below.

Suffering under the despotic rule of the Manchu regime, the Chinese rose in 1911 to overthrow the Ching Dynasty and established the republican form of Government. Holding in high respect humanitarian principles, the Kuomintang sought to alleviate the sufferings caused by bloodshed by negotiating peace with the North. This led to the abdication of the Manchu Emperor, after which Yuan Shih-kai was elected President of the Republic of China. On assuming office, Yuan took the oath that he would abide by the Provisional Constitution and remain loyal to the Republic of China. After the assumption of office, however, Yuan broke his promises and his acts were contrary to the principles of righteousness. Under the cloak of republicanism, he ruled the country like a despotic monarch. Hence the people were very discontented and indignant, but they had no means to redress their grievances. Though he was more tyrannical than the Manchu Emperors, Yuan's authority over the country was much less respected. This accounted for the repeated insurrections in the past two years. That the Kuomintang will rise again and another revolution break out are foregone conclusions.

It is difficult to tell, however, whether the Republican Army will achieve success as easily and as quickly as desired if no outside help were forthcoming. If, during the period of destruction, a powerful nation came to the assistance of the Republican Army, the war will be of short duration. It will not only prevent great internal sacrifices, but will also remove the danger of foreign entanglements. As Japan is close to China, and the prosperity or ruin of one affects the other, it is but natural that the revolutionaries should first seek Japan's aid. During the period of reconstruction, lessons must be learned and technical assistance must be sought by China from advanced countries in regard to the reform of domestic administration, the training of the army, and the development of industries. Considering that Japan and China are nations of the same race and culture, not to mention their relationship during the revolutionary period, it is again but natural that

China should look for aid from Japan. After Japan has assisted China in reorganizing her administration, ennobling her culture, and developing her natural resources, the governments and peoples of the two countries will be on much more intimate terms than between any other two countries. With China throwing open all her markets for the benefit of Japanese trade and industry, Japan will virtually monopolize the commercial field of her neighbor. China then will strive to free herself from the bondage imposed on her by foreign Powers and to revise the Unequal Treaties, and in order to attain these objectives China will again need Japan's assistance in handling diplomatic questions. If Japan, after China has improved her laws, judicial and jail systems with Japanese guidance and help, takes the lead in effecting the abolition of extraterritoriality in China, the latter will in turn permit the Japanese subjects to settle in the interior, further facilitating the Japanese in China. By the time China regains her Customs autonomy, she will enter into a sort of Customs Union with Japan, whereby Japanese manufactures imported into China and Chinese raw materials imported into Japan, will be mutually exempt from Customs duty. In this way, the prosperity of Japanese commerce and industry expands with the development of China's natural resources. Take Great Britain, which consists of three islands, as an example. Her area is very small, but everybody knows that the reason why her strength increases every day is due to her acquisition of India which provides her a great trading market; it is on this account that other Powers cannot compete with her commercially. While the exploitation of Japan's natural resources has almost reached its limit without any more room for further expansion in Japan, China is large and rich with potential wealth yet to be developed. Japan could, therefore, without even incurring the trouble and expense of stationing her troops as Great Britain does in India, acquire big commercial markets in China. Thus the benefits that will accrue to her will be doubly great. This is what I mean, as aforesaid, that she will rise to the leading position in the world. Japan could, however, never gain such a position if she continues her present policy towards China. The reason is this, Yuan Shih-kai, who now rules China and who is unaware of the trend of affairs in East Asia, outwardly pretends to cultivate the friendship of Japan, but actually indulges in antagonism against her. Japan consequently will not be able to compete with other countries even though she has equal opportunity in China. For instance, in the case of the Han-yeh-ping deal, the China Merchants' Steamship Navigation Company, and the petroleum concession in Yenchi and Changchun, either the Chinese Government procrastinated, or it instigated the people to rise in opposition, or it transferred rights originally conceded to Japan to some other Power. With his authority yet to be consolidated, combined with the fear that the friendly relations existing between the Kuomintang and Japan may become even closer, Yuan pretends to be eager to cultivate the good will of Japan. At the same time he is making a cat's-paw of Japan, applying the famous tactics of playing off one Power against the other, so frequently resorted to by the Warring States during the latter part of the Chou Dynasty. Should Yuan's position be further strengthened, his attitude toward Japan will undoubtedly become worse. Should Japan refuse to support the revolutionary army, China will always be antagonistic towards Japan while Yuan is in power. Even if Yuan's Government were to collapse of its own accord, Japan could still not inspire the confidence of the Chinese people. Until Japan has established her true position in assisting China, the relations between the two countries can never be as satisfactory as

they should, because they have no common interests, no mutual benefits to share. On the other hand, if the revolutionaries do not enjoy the support from a powerful nation, it will be extremely difficult to realize the revolutionary objective. On this account, the revolutionaries are anxiously looking for outside support and Japan will reap enormous benefits if she comes actively to the revolutionary's assistance. This illustrates what I have said in the above, namely, that the two countries are so interdependent and so complementary one to the other that when the proposed measures are carried into effect, the result will be beneficial to both China and Japan. Some may say that Japan cannot solve the China problem alone without first obtaining the consent of the British Government. This is no cause for anxiety. The real state of affairs in China was revealed only recently. When Yuan first assumed office, he spent a good deal of money in inducing some of the foreign press correspondents in China to send home news and comments favorable to Yuan. These news and comments were taken as authentic and reliable even by the British Government. Public opinion in England, however, has since undergone a marked change. The London *Times* stated recently that Yuan had not the ability to suppress disturbances and restore peace. Moreover, Britain and France are on friendly terms and the French Government and people have no longer any confidence in Yuan, as may be seen from the cancellation of the Government's guarantee of the Banque Franco-Chinoise loan. The British Government's China policy is one of "perfect peace and order" in China. It has discovered its mistake in believing that Yuan is capable of keeping peace and order, preserving China's integrity. It is certain that the British Government will follow France's example and assume a different attitude towards China. If Japan suggests a practical method of solving China's problem which would lead to permanent peace in China, the step is sure to receive the approval of Great Britain. Since the Japanese Government usually has the understanding of Great Britain on the China problem, the latter also shapes her policy to meet the wishes of Japan. It is my firm conviction that peace and order in China can be maintained only when the Kuomintang holds the governmental powers.

The Chinese are roughly divided into three classes; the old mandarins, the Kuomintang and the masses. The masses take no active part in politics. The official class makes energetic efforts to protect their personal interests, but their energy lasts only as long as they are in power. When they are out of power they will be no longer in a position to offer any resistance. Such was the conspicuous example of Yuan himself when he was dismissed by the ex-Prince Regent. Yuan considered himself lucky for having escaped death and did nothing whatsoever by way of resistance. The Kuomintang, on the other hand, is composed of persons imbued with principles; the Party members are determined to attain the end they have in view even at the cost of their lives. Those in the front lines may have to bear the brunt of misfortune and to sacrifice their lives, but those behind will still forge forward. They could not be suppressed even during the Ching Dynasty, when they were ruthlessly massacred by the authorities. Anyone who has studied the conditions in China will realize that, as long as the aims of the Kuomintang have not been achieved, China will never have peace. Therefore it is perfectly clear that the preservation of peace in China depends on the solution of this one and only problem. Though it may be an extraordinary matter for a Government to support the people's party of another country to overthrow their government, yet only extraordinary men can accomplish extraordinary

deeds in order to attain extraordinary results. You are the extraordinary man and this is the extraordinary opportunity which awaits you to exhibit your extraordinary ability and talent.

I, Sun Wen, am the representative of the Kuomintang, and in this capacity I have told you frankly what we are expecting from Japan in connection with our revolutionary movement. History shows that France helped America, Great Britain helped Spain, and the United States helped Panama in gaining their independence. The assistance rendered by France to America in connection with the latter's independence movement was given for the cause of humanitarianism and justice; the British help Spain to overthrow Napoleon was for the sake of self-preservation; while the United States' aid to Panama was animated by a desire to enjoy the facilities of the Panama Canal. In assisting the Chinese revolutionaries to overthrow their despotic government, the country giving such assistance will be able at one stroke to realize the three-fold object mentioned above. What is the fear, then, which prevents Japan from going into action? It is scarcely necessary to mention that secrecy and adroitness are necessary in order to avoid diplomatic suspicions and to carry the matter to a successful conclusion. I have offered my humble opinions regarding the future of East Asia for your careful consideration and entreat you to enlighten me with your advice.

Yours, etc.,
(Signed) Sun Wen