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**ABOLISHING THE YELLOW STREAK
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From the *North China Standard*
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AT the time of the Revolution I wrote in a review of a book on the great Empress Dowager: 'The great misfortune of the Chinese is that they are not known. It is because the people of Europe and America do not know what we really are that they —in the words of the Empress Dowager — think "we are only Chinese and look down upon us."' This attitude of Europe and America is the real cause of the antiforeign feeling in China which exploded in the Boxer outbreak in 1900.

As the Boxer explosion was a revolt against foreigners for thinking we are only Chinese and looking down upon us, so the present Revolution is a revolt of the people against the Government for allowing foreigners to treat us like that. The present Revolution is not a revolt against a corrupt Government, but a revolt against the weakness of the Government. The real motive is not hatred of the Manchus. The motive which gives power -- fanatical power — to the Revolution, is the intense feeling of humiliation at being looked down upon by foreigners. The fanatics of the 'New Learning' imagine that the reason why foreigners look down upon us is because we have the queue, and, because the Manchus are responsible for this badge of contempt to foreigners, these fanatics hate the Manchus and insist upon getting rid of everything Manchu in China. There is, as the clever Putnam Weale truly says, 'a world of pathos in the present queue-cutting Revolution.'

In fact, as the Boxer outbreak in 1900 was a fanatical explosion of hurt national pride, so the present Revolution is a fanatical outburst of national vanity. But here is where these fanatics will very soon find out their terrible mistake. Foreigners will not respect us more, will not cease to think we are only Chinese, simply because we have cut off our queues and put on European clothes. I am perfectly certain the people of Europe and America will respect us less when we cease to be Chinese and become merely imitation Europeans. I repeat, the great object of the fanatic Republicans in China, in cutting off their queues, pulling down the Ta Ching Dynasty and setting up a Republic, is to get rid of the 'yellow streak.' But now the Lincheng Note has proved that these fanatic Republicans have failed to get rid of the yellow streak by the method they have adopted. For, although China has become a Republic in which the President wears a top hat and the Chinese Foreign Minister gives Waichiao-pu balls, yet, with all his New Learning, the most up-to-date Westernized Chinaman, Dr. Wellington Koo, in his immaculate European frock-coat and top hat, is still considered an 'immature conceited Oriental,' and, what is more, when this Dr. Wellington Koo wrote a most exquisite polite Note to the Diplomatic Corps, the only answer he got was 'No argument, but do what we tell you or beware!'

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In fact the Lincheng Note of the Diplomatic Corps is or should be an eye-opener to the demented educated class who now call themselves Republicans in China, that they have made a mistake in the method which they have adopted to get rid of the yellow streak. Cutting off queues, giving Waichiao-pu balls, making China a Republic, bribing

Parliamentarians to elect a President, and illuminating Peking when the President is elected will not enable us to get rid of the yellow streak.

In one sense therefore, I think, this Lincheng Note of the Diplomatic Corps may do good. For it will, as I say, make the Republicans now in China see their mistake, or else the people in China will rise up to force them to see their error. Indeed this banditry in China is really a protest of the people to show that what the *real* people of China want is not a Republic, illumination of Peking, top hats and Waichiao-pu balls, but good government. For foreigners should know that the government of China is a despotism tempered, not by epigrams, not by paper constitutions and parliamentary votes, but by banditry.

But the foreigners who laugh at the Republic and inveigh and howl against the bribery and corruption of the Republicans, instead of sympathizing with the people of China when they are trying to put an end to this Republic with its bribery and corruption, now want to organize a foreign police force and send us battleships to put down this banditry, which, I repeat, is the only constitutional means which the people in China have to protest against a bad government.

The eventual result of this interference of foreigners with the people of China in their effort to put an end to this Republic with its bribery and corruption will be that, as at the time of the Boxer movement, the people will rise up not only against the Republic and the Republicans, but against all foreigners and everything foreign in China. Before the Boxer trouble, foreigners in China thought that Sir Robert Hart had lost his wits when he prophesied a terrible future outbreak. Now I want to tell foreigners that, unless the foreign Powers and foreigners change their policy toward China and the Chinese, a new Boxerdom is sure to come sooner or later, and when it does come it will be something compared with which the earthquake in Japan will be a very small affair.

But here foreigners will say to me, 'What then do you want us foreigners to do?' Well, Matthew Arnold said that if his countrymen got him into a committee room, the one advice he would give them would be Socrates's 'Know thyself.'

Professor Lowes Dickinson in his book, *Appearances*, says, 'The Englishman in China wanted the Chinaman to reform and become an Occidental or Western man, but when the Chinaman actually became an Occidental the Englishman, instead of admiring, gnashed his teeth at the awful result.' In other words, foreigners in China, with their New Learning, wanted China to be Westernized and the Chinaman to be, not an Oriental conservative Chinaman with his pigtail, but an Occidental of progress, liberty.

Yet now, when the Chinaman has actually become an Occidental, an actual Republican, a modern democratic Republican of the up-to-date American type, with democracy, or shall I say *democracy*, in his brain and a top hat on his head, foreigners are horrified to see that this change in the Chinaman has produced Tuchunates, bribery, corruption, civil war, and banditry. Or, to put the matter in still plainer language, foreigners have been

telling the Chinese that, if they want to make progress, they must learn the modern political science of the Western nations; but now, when the Chinese have not only

learned, but also actually adopted in the government of China, this modern political science, — with a Republic, corruption, bribery, and banditry as a result, — foreigners in China, instead of seeing their own mistake, raise a furious clamor; and the Diplomatic Corps sends China this stern Lincheng Note, threatening all sorts of things — threatening even to refuse to recognize the President of the Republic!

This, then, is what I mean when I say that foreigners themselves have made an awful mess of things in China. In fact this is the moral issue of the Lincheng Note, and, unless foreigners take the trouble to understand this moral issue, things in China will go from bad to worse, until a new Boxerdom comes, and when it does come, it will be something compared with which, I repeat, the earthquake in Japan will seem a very small affair.

The present queueless Republican Chinaman is a vampire, a 'Frankenstein,' whom foreigners themselves have created, and this Frankenstein, this awful vampire, is the Yellow Peril of the German Kaiser. And this vampire, the queueless Republican Chinaman, when he joins with the Russian Bolsheviki, as the Soviet Envoy, Karakhan, is trying to persuade him to do, will destroy not only the civilization of China, but the civilization of the whole world. Therefore, in the words of the German Kaiser I want to say here: 'Look to it, ye peoples of Europe, arise and save your most sacred possessions.' It is the prevalence of dominant materialism among foreigners in China which makes it difficult and almost impossible for even the well-meaning and good men among them to take a just and fair view of questions of right and wrong between Chinese and foreigners, as we see in this Lincheng case. And what creates this arrogance of dominant materialism in the Western people is the yellow streak — the yellow streak which the foreigner in China sees in the half-naked shivering ricksha coolie waiting before his hotel. The half-naked coolie helps to deepen the yellow of the yellow streak of the Chinaman in the eyes of the foreigner who rides in his motor-car and sips costly cocktails in the Hôtel de Pekin.

Let me frankly say, however, that we Chinese are as much responsible for this yellow streak as the foreigners. For when foreigners first came to China we Chinese not only did not regret but were even proud of this yellow streak — in other words, we were proud and arrogant to be Chinese, and looked down upon strangers as uncivilized foreign devils. Indeed, after careful study I have come to the conclusion that our past wars with the other nations before the Boxer outbreak were caused as much by the arrogance of our mandarins as by the aggressiveness of foreigners. The arrogance of our old mandarins was the arrogance of the ancient Jews who said of the Romans, 'Those people are cursed, because they know not the Law.' In other words, as the arrogance of the foreigner, the treaty port gentleman in China, is the arrogance of dominant materialism — the arrogance of the snob — so the arrogance of our old mandarins was the arrogance of assumed moral superiority — the arrogance of the moral prig. In fact, the mandarins corresponded exactly to the class of people in England whom Matthew Arnold calls the Philistines.

Thus we see that it was this moral prig Philistinism of our mandarins

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which hindered real reform in China. The Manchus are the least antforeign class in China. But, curiously, foreigners in China who wanted China to reform, instead of supporting the Manchus, looked up to and supported the 'Grand Old Man' of China, as they called him,

Li Hung-chang, the typical representative of the mandarins, of the very class of men whose Philistinism was the real hindrance to any true reform in China.

Now this moral prig arrogance of the mandarins was not completely broken until after the Japanese War. Indeed the Japanese War was not a war between China and Japan, but a war between Japan and the mandarin oligarchy. After the Japanese War, Li Hung-chang fell and the rule of the mandarin came to an end. Then the 'literati' — the class of men whom I have called the educated gentlemen of China — came into power, and started what is now known as the first Reform Movement, by which China for the first time showed that she was willing to adopt what is best in the civilization of the Western nations, in order to improve, modify, and adjust her civilization so as to enter into the comity of nations.

Among the literati who took part in this Reform Movement — *quorum pars magna fui* — there were two classes of men: the true literati and the scribes or 'snob-literati.'

But this Reform Movement — by which the real educated gentlemen of China wanted, by adopting what was best in the civilization of the Western nations, to make China fit to enter into the comity of nations — was soon wrecked by the snob-literati, who also took part in it.

The snob-literati in China mistook for the real democracy which, since the break-up of the Feudal System, is in process of evolution in Europe and America, the *democracy* of professional propagandists and yellow journalists.

In my book, *The Story of the Chinese Oxford Movement*, I said: ---

The terribly tragic aspect of the situation in China is that, while the Chinese nation are called upon to throw away their own civilization and adopt the civilization of modern Europe, there is not one educated man in the whole Empire who has the most remote idea of what the modern European civilization really is. . . The snob-literati wanted to Europeanize China by a single fiat of the Emperor. If the late Empress Dowager had not succeeded in taking the reins of government out hands of her nephew, and putting down the so-called Reformers with a strong hand, the world would have seen the Chinese nation behaving like a madman who breaks and smashes all the furniture in his house, substituting for these an imitation paper house with imitation paper furniture.

In order to help the Empress Dowager put down the dangerous mob of snob-literati, Viceroy Chang Chih-tung wrote his famous book *Learn*, in which he admonished the educated classes in China that, if we Chinese must adopt some part of the European civilization, before doing so we must first 'learn' and find out what the real European civilization is. In fact, this famous book at once rallied the true literati, the real educated gentlemen in China, to the support of the Empress Dowager and helped her to put down with a strong hand the snob-literati.

When the Empress Dowager came out of her retirement to deliver the Emperor from the hands of the snob-literati in China, who wanted to throw away the civilization of China and put in its place an imitation paper civilization, foreigners went so far in their uncalled-for interference that it was even rumored that the Diplomatic Corps in Peking would refuse to recognize her. The result of this

high-handed interference was that the people, the real people of China in the North, rose up, not only against the so-called reformers, but also against all foreigners and everything foreign in China. This was the tragedy of the Boxer uprising in 1900.

When the Empress Dowager returned to Peking after the Boxer uprising, she again took up the programme of the first Reform Movement, by which China sought to adjust her civilization so as to enter into the comity of nations. But the task of carrying out this programme now became more difficult, because meanwhile another class of men had risen, more dangerous than the old snob-literati.

They may be called mob-literati, and are recruited principally from the foreign-educated returned-student class. The old snob-literati were overeducated men, but this new class of mob-literati are superficially, half educated men. As the snob-literati mistook quack political science for true political science, so the mob-literati mistook for the real civilization of Europe the civilization of the foreigners in Shanghai. Kang Yu-wei was the typical representative of the snob-literati. Dr. Sun Yat-sen may be taken as the typical representative of the mob-literati.

It was the mob-literati who, taking advantage of the revolt of demoralized soldiery in Wuchang, started the Revolution of 1911. When the Revolution came, Viceroy Chang Chih-tung being dead, the Government of China was like an army without a chief-of-staff and staff officers. . . . In Li Hung-chang's time the mandarins were real mandarins, even though they were moral prig Philistines. But under Yuan Shih-kai the mandarins of the new oligarchy were not real mandarins, but what we Chinese call 'Rice Bowl' mandarins. As the mob-literati are recruited from foreign-educated returned students, so the Rice Bowl mandarins are recruited from the merchant and comprador class, men who become mandarins not by examination but by purchase. The real mandarin was proud, arrogant, and stupid, but the Rice Bowl mandarin is servile and combines stupidity with cunning. For, as Confucius says, 'in old times stupidity meant simple-mindedness, but to-day stupidity means cunning and deceit.'

As Li Hung-chang was the typical representative of the real mandarin, Yuan Shih-kai may be considered as a true Rice Bowl mandarin.

When the Revolution broke out in 1911, the Rice Bowl mandarins became panic-stricken, and, in order to save their rice bowls, threw away everything, their beautiful old costumes, their queues, their honor, and, with their honor, their Emperor; and surrendered to the Revolutionists, the returned-student mob-literati.

Why did the Rice Bowl mandarins make such a poor show and surrender? Because the foreigners in China were on the side of these mob-literati. It will be remembered that the foreign Chambers of Commerce, the treaty port gentlemen in Shanghai, who have the mistaken idea that the object for which God created the 400 millions of Chinese is for the British to trade upon, had actually the impudence to send a telegram to the Emperor of the Great Chinese Empire asking him to abdicate!

How is it possible that foreigners in China could act in a way which they would not dare, would not dream of doing in any other country? The answer can be given in the words of Anson Burlingame, at one time American Minister to China, who, writing in 1816, said, 'When I came to China, the policy advocated by the foreigners in China was: The Chinese

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are conceited barbarians and must be forced to adopt our civilization!' This is already the yellow streak, the moral issue, which we again see to-day in the Lincheng Note.

Now I have come to the main point of this article. Unless foreigners take the trouble to understand the moral issue which I have tried to explain —and in order to understand they must realize that we Chinese are not barbarians and will not adopt their civilization under compulsion — there can be no peace in China and the Far East; but, on the contrary, a terrible explosion will soon come, compared with which, I say a third time, the recent earthquake will seem a very small affair.

Last of all, I want to call upon the *gentlemen* among foreigners, especially British gentlemen, to help us, the few real educated gentlemen now in China, to save Chinese civilization from the mob-literati who want to destroy this civilization and to substitute for it the kind of democratic civilization advocated by the snobs in Shanghai. In order to do this, the gentlemen of the foreign community must first help put down the democracy of snobs, who clamor that the Chinese are 'conceited barbarians who must be forced to adopt their civilization,' and second, these educated gentlemen among foreigners must help convert the treaty port gentlemen into real gentlemen who will show the few real educated gentlemen now in China the same honor and respect they would show a real educated gentleman in their own country.

When the democracy of snobs among foreigners is put down, the returned-student mob-literati will become harmless, for it is their pathetic fear of 'loss of face' with the foreign snobs in China that makes these half-educated returned-student mob-literati, with their swelled heads and vanity, become fanatics seeking to destroy Chinese civilization. As for the Rice Bowl mandarins now in power in Peking, when they see that foreign gentlemen treat the real educated gentlemen in China with honor and respect, they will be sure to come to them, even to come and kowtow to them, and help them organize the present chaotic government in China, so as not only to put down banditry, but to bring peace and order into this Great Flowery Land — in fact, to save the civilization of China, and, in saving the civilization of China, to save the civilization of the world.