YANSHENG MA LUM RAYMOND MUN KONG LUM

Sun Yat-sen's Fund-Raising Activities in Hawai'i

Sun Yat-sen (Sun Wen), the founding father of modern China, is one of the most respected and revered statesman in the world. At the turn of the twentieth century, he led the Chinese people in a revolutionary movement that overthrew the Manchu dynasty, ending more than four thousand years of imperial rule in China. The Republic of China was established in 1911, and Sun Yat-sen was elected the first provisional president.

Hawai'i and its people played an important role in Sun's life and revolutionary activities. For one thing, Hawai'i was known as Sun's second home because he spent his teenage years here and had relatives and many friends in the Islands. From 1878 to 1910, Sun visited Hawai'i six times, totaling more than seven years. During his years of exile, he was not allowed to land in some countries, for example, the Dutch Indies. Even in Japan, where he spent more than six years and which he adopted as a base for his operations, he occasionally found himself not so welcome. But he never had any difficulty returning to Hawai'i. The Chinese in Hawai'i wholeheartedly supported him and the revolution by donating time and money, sometimes sacrificing

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Raymond Mun Kong Lum was born in Hilo, was graduated from the University of Hawai'i, and worked as a printer, commercial artist, and manager of Lum and Feher Ltd.

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their lives and their sons' lives. Sun once called the overseas Chinese "the mother of revolution."

Hawai'i is also known as the cradle of the Chinese revolution because it was here that Sun founded the first revolutionary organization, the Hsing Chung Hui (Revive China Society). This organization later developed into a strong political party, the Tung Meng Hui (Alliance Society), which overthrew the Manchu regime. It was reorganized and became the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party). It was in Hawai'i that Sun and more than a hundred people first vowed to destroy the Manchus, and this little spark ignited the fire that burned down the decaying regime.

HAWAI'I'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TEN UPRISINGS

Sun organized ten uprisings before the October 10, 1911, uprising that finally overthrew the Manchu regime. In order to purchase weapons and ammunition and to pay the soldiers, Sun went abroad to raise funds from the overseas Chinese. The first place he went was Hawai'i, and his first attempt to raise money started with the Hsing Chung Hui in Honolulu. The first Canton uprising he instigated was mainly funded by the Chinese in Hawai'i.

In the beginning, when Sun first advocated revolution, he found that the task was most difficult. He wrote in his autobiography:

When the war with Japan ended, I thought it was time to act. . . . I went to Hawaii and America, established the Hsing Chung Hui in order to rally the overseas Chinese to help the revolution. However, people had not awakened to join in the revolution. I advocated for many months, and very few people responded. The only two men that helped with all they possessed were Dang Yun-nam and my brother, plus scores of relatives and friends who supported the cause. ¹

To raise funds, every Hsing Chung Hui member paid five dollars as a membership fee, and the organization issued stock at ten dollars a share, to be paid back tenfold after the revolution succeeded.² Sun collected \$288 in membership dues and \$1,100 in stock, but that was not enough to funding an uprising. Then, Sun's close friend Dang Yun-nam liquidated his personal assets and donated a large sum of

money to buy weapons. His brother Sun Mei also supported him by selling his cattle. It was with a sum of \$6,000³ from Hawai'i and some other funds he raised in Hong Kong that Sun launched the first Canton uprising in October 1894.

The second uprising, the Waichou uprising in 1900, was funded by donations from Chinese in Hong Kong and a Japanese supporter. Sun Mei was the only one in Hawai'i involved in funding this uprising. In a letter addressed to his friend Wo Jin-heng on October 30, 1909, Sun said:

In 1900, when the Waichou uprising was launched, we needed at least a hundred thousand dollars and more. I got some from Hong Kong, some from Japan. . . . I relied on my brother for help. My brother and I had been donating all we had for the revolution and my brother donated almost all he had. . . . Two years ago my brother filed for bankruptcy. . . . I am responsible for his bankruptcy. . . . 4

There is no record of the total amount of money Sun Mei gave, but the extensiveness of his contributions is verified by one source, Sun Fo's secretary, Hou Chung-i. Hou said that he heard in the Sun family discussions that Sun Mei's total contributions to the revolution amounted to \$700,000.5

The funding of the third through the eighth uprisings launched from May 1907 to May 1908 came from overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, Japan, Europe, Canada, the United States, and Hawaiʻi (Lai Hipp of Hilo sent \$1,150).6

The ninth uprising was mainly funded by overseas Chinese from the United States, and the funds for the tenth uprising in March 1911, the famous Wong Hua Gong uprising, came exclusively from the overseas Chinese all over the world. The Chinese of Hawai'i donated \$2,000.7

FIRST MILITARY BOND ISSUED IN HAWAI'I

To raise funds, Sun issued "military bonds," which were debenture certificates that promised the buyer repayment at ten times the value of the investment, plus special privileges after the revolution succeeded. This was supposed to provide incentives so that more people would buy the bonds. Later, experience showed that people were more concerned about possible incrimination than about the incentives. Many people were afraid to get involved in the revolution because they did not want their relatives in China to be targets of persecution. In 1904, Sun issued the first "military bond" in Hawai'i (see Fig. 1). The bonds were all printed in Honolulu. Sales were not as good as expected, however, and only \$2,000 was collected. When Sun left Honolulu, he took the unsold bonds to San Francisco and collected another \$4,000.8

DONATIONS FROM THE BROAD MASSES

The majority of Sun's supporters were overseas Chinese from the lower middle class, workers, intellectuals, and small merchants. They were not wealthy, but considering their means, they were most generous in supporting the revolution. When Sun talked about overthrowing the oppressive Manchu regime and building a strong and prosperous country that they could be proud of and a government that would protect their legal rights, they responded enthusiastically and gave all they could afford.

There were many moving stories of how the masses responded to Sun's appeals and donated whatever they could afford. For example,



FIG. 1. Military bond of 1904. The text reads: "US\$1 was received, to be repaid US\$10 after the Army succeeds. Date: 1904. Sun Yat-sen." (Lum Chee collection)

Wen Phong-fei, the editor of the *Tzu You Sun Bo* (The Liberty News) in Honolulu in 1910 and 1911, told stories about people coming to the newspaper office to donate money. One day, a worker came and donated twenty dollars although his monthly salary was only a little more than that. He was so sincere that "tears swell in my eyes," said Wen.⁹ In Honolulu, there were eighteen Chinese students who donated two hundred dollars every month. Each of them would give a little more than ten dollars a month while their monthly allowances were only twenty to thirty dollars.¹⁰

Young Wah-duck, whose father was Young Kwong-tat, the president of the Tung Meng Hui Honolulu chapter, said in an interview that when his father received letters or telegrams from Sun Yat-sen asking for donations, he would go to the bank to borrow a sum of money to send to Sun. Afterward, he would go to the members to collect money to pay back the bank. In those days, he said, nobody had that much money. The support of many people, each donating a small sum, helped pay back the loan.¹¹

Lum Chee, a general merchandise store owner in Hilo (the father of co-author Raymond Lum), was a loyal supporter of Sun. He was a member of the Chunghua Keming Jun (Chinese Revolutionary Army) in Hilo and later a member of the Tung Meng Hui. He donated money on many occasions, and he kept all the bonds and memorabilia of the revolution. Before he passed away in 1941, he told his son Raymond to keep all these precious documents and one day give them all to China, where they belonged. Raymond Lum went to Beijing in 1985 and gave the whole collection to the Sun Yat-sen Society of Beijing. The *People's Daily* of China reported the event on August 26, 1985.

One item in Lum's collection was a canceled check dated February 19, 1904, made payable to the order of S. Y. Sun in the amount of \$158.50. The check was signed by Tom Wai-kim, who was the treasurer of the Chinese Revolutionary Army Hilo chapter. He collected the sum from more than ten members and then wrote the check, which was endorsed by Sun and co-signed by Ho Fon, the president of the Hsing Chung Hui. The check was cashed in Honolulu on February 25, 1904 (see Fig. 2). This is an example of small donations from the masses.

There are no statistics available on the total amount of money that Hawai'i contributed, but there are references that show Sun on many occasions asked his supporters in Hawai'i to raise funds for emergency needs. In May 1910, he wrote a letter to "comrades in Hawai'i" from Penang, Malaysia, asking them to provide at least \$1,000 a month to the revolution. He said in the letter that there were more than one thousand Tung Meng Hui members in Hawai'i. If every member could donate one dollar a month, there would be at least one thousand dollars every month. Sun said that this was for urgent needs of the revolution. 12

In another letter of August 29, 1910, Sun told the "comrades in Hawai'i" how urgently he needed financial support and requested that they do their best to help. He wrote:

I had asked you to raise funds for urgent need in the South. If you had already collected the money, send it to Hong Kong immediately. If the funds are not ready, ready, please take urgent actions to help meet the emergency needs. It is imperative that we get the funding now, else it will be detrimental to the cause. Please help us out of this difficult situation. . . . Comrades in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong were at their wits' end. You are my only hope and I expect a lot from you people. No matter how much you might be able to collect, just send over immediately. ¹³



FIG. 2. Canceled check dated February 19, 1904. Tom Wai Kim, who signed the check, was the treasurer of the Chinese Revolutionary Army in Hilo. On the reverse side of the check are the signatures of Sun Yat-sen and Ho Fon, the chairman of the Hsing Chung Hui. (Lum Chee collection)

Obviously, in that year, Sun was desperately in need of funds as the revolutionary struggle had reached a critical stage, and he turned to his followers in Hawai'i for help. Hawai'i never failed him.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CHINESE IN HILO

Special notes should be made regarding the Chinese community in Hilo, which was most enthusiastic in supporting the revolution. The first revolutionary organization in Hilo, the Chunghua Keming Jun, was formed in 1903, and from that year on, donations to support the revolution continued through 1915. The amount was not large, but the donations came from the broad masses. For example, in 1907, the Revolutionary Army Headquarters in Hong Kong received \$1,150 from Lai Hipp, the leader of the Chunghua Keming Jun in Hilo. This

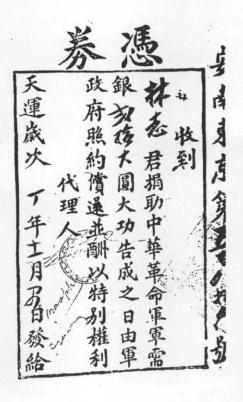


FIG. 3. Receipt for bond issued in Indochina, 1907. The text reads: "This is to acknowledge receipt of us\$20, donated by Lum Chee to the Chinese Revolutionary Army, to be repaid by the military government according to agreements made, plus special privileges. Date: November 4, 1907. Serial no. Tonking, Annam 5. . . ." (Lum Chee collection)

money was used as part of the funding for one of the six uprisings launched in 1907–1908. When Sun was in Indochina, he issued a huge amount of military bonds to raise funds for the six uprisings. In Lum Chee's collection there was a receipt for a donation of \$20 to the Chunghua Keming Jun dated November 4, 1907 (Fig. 3). The receipt carried a serial number identifying it as a bond issued in "Tongking, Annam." This receipt is proof that Chinese in Hilo directly contributed funds to one of the six uprisings launched during 1907–1908.

On July 19, 1910, Sun arrived in Singapore, and he again wrote to Hilo comrades asking for donations. The following year, Hilo members collected \$5,000 and sent the money to Sun. 15 In 1911, just before the March 29th Wong Hua Gong uprising, the Tung Meng Hui Hawai'i chapter got a letter from Sun asking for donations; the Hilo members sent 3,000 Hong Kong dollars to the Revolutionary Army Headquarters in Hong Kong. 16 By the turn of the nineteenth century, the Chinese population on the island of Hawai'i was at a peak, about 5,000, accounting for more than a fourth of all Chinese in Hawai'i. Most of them were plantation workers or small merchants. Considering the population and the amount of donations, one can see that the Chinese in Hilo were truly enthusiastic and generous in contributing to the revolution as best they could.

THE AMERICAN CHINESE REVOLUTIONARY ARMY FUND-RAISING BUREAU

Sun's most successful fund-raising operation was the founding of the American Chinese Revolutionary Army Fund-Raising Bureau and the issuance of the gold dollar banknotes in June 1911. At the time, the revolution was gathering momentum, and the spirits of the overseas Chinese were high. People were confident that the revolution was going to succeed and were ready to give. Thus fund-raising became much easier than in earlier years.

In June 1911, Sun was in San Francisco. His relations with the Chee Kung Tong, an organization that had more than 100,000 members (most of the Chinese in the United States were members), became very cordial, and the organization merged with the Tung

Meng Hui. Then they set up the Fund-Raising. Bureau, which was also called the Hung Mun Fund-Raising Bureau because the Chee Kung Tong belonged to the Hung Mun Fraternity. In order to get a tax exemption, the Bureau registered under the name Kwok Min Charity Bureau. Its office was situated at 36 Spofford Alley in San Francisco's Chinatown. At the time, that was the office of the Chee Kun Tong, and Sun worked from that office when he was in San Francisco. 17 In Lum Chee's collection, there was a letter of September 14, 1911, written by Sun Yat-sen to "the Hilo comrades." This letter was written on stationery printed with the letterhead of the Kwok Min Charity Bureau (see Fig. 4).

The gold dollar banknotes of the Republic of China were issued soon after the establishment of the Bureau. On one side of these banknotes the words were in English and on the other side in Chinese (see Fig. 5). They were issued in the name of the Republic of China, which had not yet formed at the time of issuance. Sun predicted that



FIG. 4. Letter of September 14, 1911, written and signed by Sun Yat-sen using the letterhead of the Kwok Min Charity Bureau of San Francisco. The letter, addressed to Sun's supporters in Hilo, discusses his travel plans and comments on revolutionary conditions in China. The letter does not specify the year in which it was written, but the content suggests that it was most probably written in 1911. (Lum Chee collection)





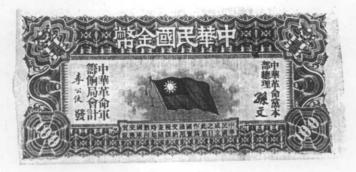


FIG. 5. Gold dollar banknotes of the Republic of China. One side of each banknote was printed in English, the other in Chinese. The notes carry the signatures of Sun Wen, premier of the Chinese Revolutionary Army, and Lee Gnong Hap, treasurer of the Chinese Revolutionary Army Fund-Raising Bureau. (Lum Chee collection)

the revolution would soon succeed, and he was confident enough to issue the banknotes in the name of the Republic that would be formed. Printed on the banknotes was the phrase "Promises to pay the Bearer on its formation at the State Treasury or its Agents abroad." On the banknote were the signatures (in Chinese) of Sun Wen, premier of the Chinese Revolutionary Party, and Lee Gnong Hap, treasurer of the Chinese Revolutionary Army Fund-Raising Bureau. From June to September 1911, a total of \$144,130.41 was collected.¹8 In Hilo alone, \$5,000 worth of gold dollar banknotes were sold.¹9

After the founding of the Fund-Raising Bureau, all donations were consolidated in this institution. For example, in Lum Chee's collection, there was a letter (Fig. 6) written by Sun to comrades in Hilo asking that all donations be sent to this bureau in San Francisco. The letter reads (in translation):

There are so many Hilo members who enthusiastically support the revolution. I sincerely appreciate it. As to sending over the money, it is advisable to consolidate and send the money to San Francisco, the Fund Raising Bureau. There might be some losses due to exchange rate. However, it is easier to manage this way. Please explain to the comrades. Sun Wen. September 13.

FUND-RAISING AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REPUBLIC

After the establishment of the Republic of China, Sun continued to solicit financial assistance from the overseas Chinese to continue on with the revolution to set up a unified China and a democratic government. During the second revolution, against Yuan Shih-kai, and the third revolution, when Sun had to leave the country and went to Japan to reorganize the Kuomintang into the Chinese Revolutionary Party, Chinese in Hawai'i continued to donate more money.

Weng Phong-fei told the story that after October 10, 1911, the Chinese in Honolulu were so concerned with what happened in China that many of them swarmed to the *Tzu You Sun Bo* office every day to ask about news. Once in a while, the newspaper received newsletters from Hong Kong telling about the latest developments, and there were so much conflicting news that the Tung Meng Hui members decided to send Wen Phong-fai back to China to find out what the

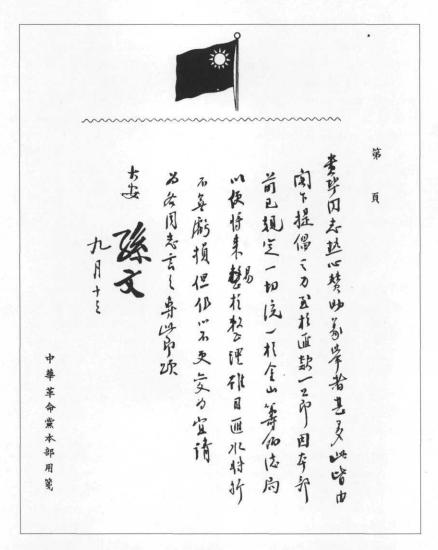


FIG. 6. Letter of September 13. The letter, signed by Sun Yat-sen but not in his handwriting, doesn't specify the year in which it was written. (Lum Chee collection)

situation was. They gave him one thousand dollars for travel expenses. Wen arrived in China by the end of 1911 and found out that the revolutionary army was fighting against the warlords and was short of funds. He reported to the comrades in Honolulu, and in no time, he received a sum of \$20,000, which he forwarded to the Revolutionary Army Headquarters in Nanking.²⁰

In 1912, a National Fund-Raising Bureau was established in Honolulu. The chairman was Young Kwong-tat; the vice-chairman was Lee Dat-yip; the treasurer was Young Ahin; the secretary was Young Fookyong; and the auditors were C. K. Ai and Yan Sen.²¹ In Lum Chee's collection there were two receipts for his donations to this national fund. One is shown in Fig. 7. In 1915, Sun issued Chinese Revolutionary Party bonds (Fig. 8), which the Chinese in Hawai'i bought enthusiastically.²²



FIG. 7. Receipt for donations to the National Fund-Raising Bureau in Hawai'i. The text acknowledges receipt of \$150 in donations to the national fund by Lum Wai-cheng (Lum Chee) and is dated November 21, 1912. (Lum Chee collection)

ACCOUNTING FOR THE FUNDS RAISED

Were the funds Sun raised accounted for? The answer is a definite yes. As early as 1919, a man named Tao Cheng-chang spread rumors that Sun was "pocketing the money he raised." Such slanderous statements became very detrimental to Sun's fund-raising efforts, and he was obliged to write a letter in October 1909 addressed to a friend, Wu Zhi-hui, and published a detailed account of the expenses of the uprisings against the funds he raised from the overseas Chinese all over the world.



FIG. 8. Chinese Revolutionary Party bond issued in 1915. The text on the certificate reads: "Ten Yen: Bond issued in Japanese currency. Interest 100 percent. To be repaid within three years after the establishment of the new government." The bond is signed by Sun Wen, premier of the Chinese Revolutionary Party. (Lum Chee collection)

This letter was published in the French magazine *The New Century* as well as in the Chinese newspapers in San Francisco and Vancouver and in the *Tzu You Sun Bo* of Honolulu.²³ Sun fought back with facts and shattered his enemies' slander. Sun's enemies viciously tried to sabotage Sun's fund-raising efforts, but they inadvertently helped historians because Sun's letter became a precious document for researchers studying the fund-raising aspects of the uprisings. Very detailed accounts of fund-raising were kept, as is shown in Jiang Yunjing's article, "Study of the Funding of the Ten Uprisings Before the Hsin Hai Revolution."²⁴

During his seventeen years of exile, Sun relied on his friends' financial support, and he said in an interview with the Australian monthly *Progress* in 1912, after he resigned his presidency:

Friends who knew Sun told stories of how frugal he was in his lifestyle. There was, for example, a story about his life in New York's Chinatown. For his meals, he used to go to a restaurant owned by a woman named Mrs. Wong. She was a staunch supporter of the revolution. When Sun had a meal in her restaurant, she never charged him. Sun always ate only one bowl of noodles, and Mrs. Wong would invite him to have some more, but he refused, saying he had enough. Mrs. Wong changed her restaurant's name to Yat Go Mien, which means a bowl of noodles. This restaurant was in existence for more than eighty years and closed a few years ago.

Sun also admitted in his interview with the Australian magazine that "At other times, I have had difficulty in refusing the large sums placed at my disposal for some of my countrymen in America are very rich, generous and patriotic." But he never squandered the money on his own personal use. His friends also helped to support his family. For example, Ching Chow, a vice-president of the Liberty Bank in Honolulu, used to fund part of the educational expenses of Sun Yatsen's son, Sun Fo, when the latter was studying at St. Louis High School in Honolulu. ²⁶

REPAYMENT OF THE BONDS

After the establishment of the Republic of China, did Sun and his government honor their promises to redeem the bonds? During 1935-1936, the Kuomintang headquarters in Nanking set up an Investigation Committee of Debts of Hsin Hai Revolution. The person in charge was Lee Gnong Hap, the person whose signature was on the gold dollar banknotes.²⁷ On the bonds in Lum Chee's collection, there were stamps reading "Registered, dated June 18, 1936, by the Hawaiian Branch of the Chinese Kuomintang." This is proof that the bonds sold were registered and the government intended to repay the buyers. But Lum Chee never cashed his bonds. He kept the originals of all the bonds he bought and receipts for his donations. However, C. K. Ai claimed that the Republic paid him \$1,000 for each of the \$50 revolutionary bonds he purchased.²⁸ Many people who bought the bonds had destroyed them either because they meant to donate the money and did not expect to be paid back, or they did not want to keep these documents that might be incriminating.

Monetary repayment was not the only thing that mattered. There were other ways to acknowledge appreciation for those who rendered support to the revolution. Shortly after Sun was sworn in as the first president of the Republic of China in January 1912, he expressed his thanks to those who supported the revolution by awarding them citations or medals. For example, he sent three citations to people in Hawai'i in 1912: one to Leong Hoy, the first president of the Tung Meng Hui; one to Zane Cheong-fook, who donated to the *Tzu You Sun Bo* and the Wah Mun School; and another to the newspaper *Tzu You Sun Bo*.²⁹

In the following years, Sun awarded silver medals of the second and third class to the following people on Maui to thank them for their support: Chock Cheong, Lau Pang, Dang Ming-san, Dang Siang, Tam Chi, Luke Chin, Tam Cheong, Dang Fook, and Yap Chau.³⁰ Chang Wing, a merchant in Honolulu, also received a silver medal from the Generalissimo (Sun assumed this title after 1917) as a token of thanks for his fund-raising efforts.³¹ These were only a small fraction of the awards presented.

Sun Yat-sen always remembered those who had helped him. One example was Francis W. Damon (1852–1915), a writer, missionary, and builder of public-service institutions. Damon had been to Can-

ton in China and distinguished himself as a missionary to the Chinese in Hawai'i. He was a superintendent of Chinese mission work for the Hawaiian Evangelical Association from 1881 and was known as a friend of the Chinese community in Hawai'i. He was also a lifelong friend and supporter of Sun and the Chinese revolution.

On February 8, 1912, Sun wrote a letter of thanks to Damon. In the letter, he wrote: "[Y]ou have all along cheered and assisted me in my efforts to bring this great movement to a success. To you I reiterate my thanks and for the many kindnesses you have shown me and members of my party." 32

Notes

This essay is drawn from the authors' forthcoming book, Sun Yat-sen in Hawaii: Activities and Supporters, to be published by the Hawaii Chinese History Center and the University of Hawai'i Press.

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