

Georgia State University

ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

History Theses

Department of History

12-14-2021

From Political Centralism to Constitutional Monarchy: The Quest of Yuan Shikai and His Advisors, 1912-1916

Jun Fang

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/history_theses

Recommended Citation

Fang, Jun, "From Political Centralism to Constitutional Monarchy: The Quest of Yuan Shikai and His Advisors, 1912-1916." Thesis, Georgia State University, 2021.

doi: <https://doi.org/10.57709/26537023>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of History at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

FROM POLITICAL CENTRALISM TO CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY:
THE QUEST OF YUAN SHIKAI AND HIS ADVISORS, 1912–1916

by

Jun Fang

Under the Direction of Jared Poley, PhD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2021

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the intellectual background to Yuan Shikai's four and a half years presidency and his ill-fated decision to restore a constitutional monarchy. Utilizing the influential treatises of Yuan's advisors Yang Du, Liang Qichao, and Frank Goodnow, which published in 1915, and investigating other materials on Yuan's presidency, this thesis finds that the quest of Yuan and his advisors, ending liberalism and provincialism in the early Republic—replacing the National Assembly with the Political Conference and depriving the provincial military-civilian governors of their authority—and centralizing authority were derived from their common belief that there was only one right path for China: a constitutional system under political centralism. The study of Yuan's conviction and his actions to establish constitutionalism through political centralism also shows that the modern transformation of China, from autocratic system to constitutional system, required a strong central government that could guarantee national unity and stability.

INDEX WORDS: Constitutional Monarchy, Constitutionalism, Political Centralism, Yuan Shikai, Yang Du, Liang Qichao

Copyright by
Jun Fang
2021

FROM POLITICAL CENTRALISM TO CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY:
THE QUEST OF YUAN SHIKAI AND HIS ADVISORS, 1912–1916

by

Jun Fang

Committee Chair: Jared Poley

Committee: Hanchao Lu

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Services

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

December 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank Professor Douglas R. Reynolds (1944-2020). Without his sincerity and encouragement, I can't imagine that I could start my MA study in Department of History GSU in my 50 years old. In Spring Semester 2019, when I originally made a draft about Yuan Shikai's restoration and Yang-Liang's papers, as my former advisor, he encouraged me to develop this idea to a thesis and inspired me to achieve the first title of this paper, "Yuan Shikai's Failed Attempt to Restore Constitutional Monarchy in 1915-16: Key Roles of Writings by Yang Du and Liang Qichao."

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor, Professor Jared Poley, whose wealth of knowledge and meticulous editing I will never forget. In 2020-21, although he was super busy as the Chair of the Department of History, Professor Poley spent plenty of time on my thesis. Under his patience and constant guidance, pursuing in the direction of the intellectual background of Yuan's restoration, I eventually developed the final version of this thesis, "From Political Centralism to Constitutional Monarchy: The Quest of Yuan Shikai and His Advisors, 1912-1916."

This thesis would not have been possible without Hanchao Lu, Professor and Chair of School of History and Sociology Georgia Tech, for his invaluable insights leading to the writing of this thesis. With his guidance I started to pay more attention to "political centralism" in Chinese history, the core idea of this thesis. My sincere thank also goes to Richard Gunde, with his help I found many important primary sources on Frank Goodnow, improved an important section, and finally developed the whole structure of this thesis.

I also owe my deep gratitude to Robin M. Jackson, who was always ready to help me with any questions that I had. Thanks to everyone provided support for me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		IV
1 INTRODUCTION		1
2 YUAN’S EXPERIENCE: CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERIMENTS IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC		6
2.1 China’s Sole Indispensable Man in the 1911 Revolution		6
2.2 China’s First Elected President and the Early Republic		8
2.3 Political Centralism and the Abrupt Failure of the Restoration		10
3 YUAN’S ADVISORS: THE INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND TO THE RESTORATION		12
3.1 Yang Du: Political Centralism through Constitutional Monarchy		12
3.1.1 <i>The Chief Force Behind the Restoration of Monarchy</i>		12
3.1.2 “<i>National Salvation through Constitutional Monarchy</i>”		15
3.1.3 <i>Yang’s Persistence: Establishing Constitutionalism through Political Centralism</i>		25
3.2 Liang Qichao: Political Centralism through a Presidential Republic		26
3.2.1 <i>The Chief Force Behind the Opposition to Restoration of Monarchy</i>		26
3.2.2 “<i>Another View on the So-called State Structure Question</i>”		28
3.2.3 <i>The Yang-Liang Disagreement: Constitutional Monarchy or Presidential Republic?</i>		34
3.3 Frank Goodnow: Political Centralism and Constitutionalism		37

3.3.1	<i>Frank Goodnow and His Memorandum “Monarchy or Republic?”</i>	37
3.3.2	<i>Goodnow’s Understanding and Contribution to China’s Constitutionalism</i>	41
	<i>Yuan’s Three Advisors: Their Common Objective and Disagreements</i>	45
4	YUAN’S QUEST: FROM POLITICAL CENTRALISM TO CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY	46
4.1	Political Centralism at the National Level: Creating a New Representative System	48
4.1.1	<i>Dissolving the National Assembly and Establishing the Political Conference</i> ...	48
4.1.2	<i>Dissolving the Provincial Assemblies and Reconstructing a New Centralized System</i>	50
4.2	Political Centralism and the Provinces: Yuan’s Response to Provincialism	52
4.2.1	<i>The Ideology of Provincialism and Yuan’s Position on Provincialism</i>	52
4.2.2	<i>Centralism and Provincialism: A Tug of War</i>	56
4.2.3	<i>Extending the Center’s Authority to the Provinces via the Beiyang Army</i>	58
4.2.4	<i>“Military-Civilian Division” in the Provinces: The Results and Later Appraisal</i>	60
4.3	The Failed Bid for Constitutional Monarchy	64
4.3.1	<i>Faulty Judgments Led to Opposite Ends</i>	65
4.3.2	<i>Losing the Support of the Gentry and the Beiyang Generals</i>	69
5	CONCLUSION	73
6	BIBLIOGRAPHY	78

1 INTRODUCTION

The 1911 Revolution and the transformation of China from empire to republic were the most significant issues facing early twentieth-century Chinese leaders. Following the 1911 Revolution, Yuan Shikai (1859–1916) was elected by the Provisional Senate as the provisional president of China. This election was later ratified by an imperial decree of the Qing court, and on March 10, 1912, Yuan assumed the post of provisional president in Beijing.¹ In February of the following year, democratic elections were held for the newly founded National Assembly of China. And in October of that year, in the first formal presidential election in China's history, the National Assembly elected Yuan as president of the Republic. However, in December 1915, he proclaimed himself hereditary emperor of a constitutional monarchy. This plot abruptly failed, and on June 6, 1916, Yuan died in humiliation. In fact, Yuan Shikai's plot did not come out of the blue. In the early twentieth century most of China's ruling elites engaged in plans to build a constitutional monarchy under the Qing. However, Yuan's failure to carry out his version of constitutional monarchy in 1915-1916 marked the end of this effort. Yuan's attempt to establish a constitutional monarchy, and its subsequent failure, remains a rich topic for historical analysis. This thesis argues that the belief that China's unity was only be preserved by centralizing authority through a constitutional monarchy and the influential thinking of Yang Du (1875-1931), a monarchist and advisor to Yuan, spelled out in his April 1915 treatise "National

¹ In fact, Yuan was the second provisional president of the Republic. On December 29, 1911, representatives from the provinces of China met in Nanjing and elected Sun Yat-sen (who became publicly acclaimed as "the father of the Republic") as the first provisional president. Yuan arranged for the abdication of the Qing emperor, Xuantong (aka Puyi), on February 12, 1912, supposedly in return for the understanding that Yuan would be made president of the Republic. Then, Sun stepped down as the provisional president, and, as discussed later in the thesis, Yuan became the new provisional president on March 10, 1912.

Salvation through Constitutional Monarchy,”² were the most important factors in Yuan Shikai’s decision to restore the monarchy.

The thesis explores why Yuan Shikai persisted in his support for constitutional monarchy in 1915, a decision that led to the abrupt failure of his presidency and the tragic ending of his political career and, indeed, his life. This study focuses on the key actors of the failed restoration—Yuan and his advisor Yang Du—their ideas and actions, and the internal dynamics of the failed attempt at restoration. Yang Du’s thought on constitutional monarchy was not without opposition. The liberal intellectual Liang Qichao (1873–1929) published a paper to refute Yang’s arguments in August 1915, warning that Yang’s notions could mislead the president and bring China to disaster.³ The two opposing views were clearly and forcefully expressed to Yuan Shikai and the Chinese people through two widely noted essays at that time. Although they disagreed over whether a presidential republic or a constitutional monarchy was the best path for China, both Yang Du and Liang Qichao insisted that China’s historical tradition of centralized authority should be maintained and the developing trend toward provincialism following the 1911 Revolution should be stopped. After four and a half years of the republican experiment, Yuan Shikai came to believe that only a strong, constitutional central government could unify China. Therefore, he took the risky path of centralizing authority in China through a constitutional monarchy, a requirement for adopting constitutionalism in his perspective.

Yuan Shikai, a leading figure in China’s transition from a monarchy to a republic, and the historical events that swirled around him, have always been key issues in the study of modern Chinese history. With the evolution of the two keynotes of modern Chinese history—revolution

² Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun” (National salvation through constitutional monarchy), *HGWX*, vol. 2: 1018.

³ Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suowei guoti wenti zhe” (Another view on the so-called state structure question) 1915, *HGWX*, vol. 1: 258–272.

and reform—the reappraisal and analysis of Yuan Shikai and his role in modern Chinese history have also undergone sweeping change. The 1911 Revolution overthrew the Qing dynasty and transformed China from an empire to a republic, after which Yuan attempted to turn the country into a constitutional monarchy with himself as hereditary emperor. This action was opposed not only by revolutionaries and constitutionalists, but also by the Beiyang clique,⁴ a powerful military group that Yuan had fostered, and which served as his power base. After Yuan’s death in 1916, the Beiyang clique lost its center and gradually became internally divided, which eventually led to the civil wars between the warlords that plagued China during the first decades of the Republic.⁵ As a result, revolutionary forces that opposed the Beiyang warlords gradually developed and stepped onto the center of the historical stage. Therefore, as a target of the revolutionary struggle after 1919, Yuan Shikai was portrayed as dictator, the father of the warlords, and the destroyer of the nascent republican system.⁶ As a reflection of this situation, during most of the twentieth century, many historians evaluated Yuan Shikai as a figure who, driven by personal ambition, “turned back the historical clock” (*kai li shi dao che*).⁷

⁴ The Beiyang clique, also known as the “Beiyang warlord group,” was composed of the main generals of the Beiyang New Army, which had been trained by Yuan Shikai, serving as the commander of the military training base at Xiaozhan, in the city of Tianjin, North China, in the late Qing dynasty. This “Xiaozhan troop training,” as it came to be called, was intended to lay the basis for a thoroughly modern officer corp. On the Xiaozhan troop training, see Hong Zhang, “Yuan Shikai and the Significance of His Troop Training at Xiaozhan, Tianjin, 1895–1899,” *Chinese Historical Review* 26, no. 1 (January 2019): 37–54, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1547402X.2019.1583920>.

⁵ The warlord era in China, is usually dated 1916–1928, that is beginning with the death of Yuan Shikai and ending with establishment of the Guomindang Nationalist government in 1928 (although warlords continued to plague China after 1928). For more on the warlord era, see the review essay by Diana Lary, “Warlord Studies,” *Modern China* vol. 6, no. 4 (October 1980): 439–470, https://www.jstor.org/stable/189036?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

⁶ See, for example, Chen Boda, *Jieshao qie guo da dao Yuan Shikai* (An introduction to the national usurper Yuan Shikai), (Zhangjiakou: Jinchaji ribaoshe, 1946), 52–63.

⁷ Su Quanyou and He Kewei, *Yuan Shikai zhuan* (Biography of Yuan Shikai), (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2013), 412.

Since the 1980s, however, Yuan Shikai and his life have been subject to reinterpretation as Chinese historians began to work through the primary source material created by Yuan and his Beiyang clique.⁸ Historians have begun to seek a more comprehensive explanation for Yuan Shikai's actions, shifting from simple political judgment to objective historical analysis. Indeed, the field has gradually come to recognize Yuan Shikai's contributions to and positive influence on the course of modern Chinese history.⁹ The emerging consensus among scholars is that Yuan's restoration was driven not solely by his personal ambition but also by important external factors, like aggressive Japan.¹⁰ Many historians agree that the restoration of the monarchy was a fundamental failure for which Yuan Shikai bears responsibility.¹¹ And many historians recognize that his failure not only led to a national disaster but also amounted to a tragic end of his otherwise celebrated career.¹² Nevertheless, Yuan's restoration is still stigmatized in China, both in academia and among the general public.

Although most scholars in China have broken free from the past revolutionary dogma, they still have been cautious in expressing their views on this topic.¹³ The time is ripe for a forthright and comprehensive analysis of Yuan and his decision to restore the monarchy. Utilizing the influential treatises of Yuan's advisors Yang Du (1875–1931), Liang Qichao (1873–1929), and Frank Johnson Goodnow (1859–1939), which published in 1915 and other, mostly primary, materials on Yuan Shikai's presidency, this thesis investigates Yuan Shikai's decision to

⁸ Luo Baoshan, *Luo Baoshan pingdian Yuan Shikai handu* (Luo Baoshan's comments on Yuan Shikai's correspondence), (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2005), 228.

⁹ Luo Baoshan and Liu Lusheng, "Yuan Shikai yu Xinhai geming" (Yuan Shikai and the 1911 Revolution), *Shixue yue kan* (History Monthly) 3, (2012): 77–83.

¹⁰ Su Quanyou, *Yuan Shikai chengdi yuanyin shixi* (An analysis of the reasons why Yuan Shikai proclaimed himself emperor), (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2015), 37–38.

¹¹ Li Zongyi, *Yuan Shikai zhuan* (Biography of Yuan Shikai), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 260, 266, 277, 278.

¹² Patrick Fuliang Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018), 210.

¹³ *Ibid.*

entrench centralized authority by establishing a constitutional monarchy. In response to the same conditions, centralism and constitutionalism had become the common objective of Yuan and his three important advisors. This thesis, in short, explores the intellectual background to Yuan Shikai's four and a half years presidency and his ill-fated decision to proclaim a constitutional monarchy.

2 YUAN'S EXPERIENCE: CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERIMENTS IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC

Yuan Shikai's presidency was an experiment in reforming the country's political system under the first wave of Chinese nationalism. After the 1911 Revolution and four and a half years *China: A New History* of the early republic, Yuan eventually made his decision, based on his experiences and his strategy, to end the liberal republic and establish a constitutional monarchy.¹⁴ To understand why Yuan insisted on political centralism and chose to establish a constitutional monarchy requires understanding his experiences in the first years of republican period.

2.1 China's Sole Indispensable Man in the 1911 Revolution

The 1911 Revolution was a watershed of titanic proportions in Chinese history. It not only brought to an end the nearly three-century-old Qing dynasty, but also more than two millennia of imperial rule. As the empire died, a new republic was born, the first in Asia. In the wake of this cataclysmic event, there was no consensus among the Chinese people about what the nature and policies of the new republican regime should be. Yet, there was agreement on one crucial point: the Chinese nation faced an existential threat. Fear for the survival of the Chinese nation was born from a widely shared understanding of the final decades of the empire: since the middle of the nineteenth century, China had fallen prey to foreign imperialism; its dignity and sovereignty assaulted; its economy backward and uncompetitive on the world stage; and its people and

¹⁴ John K. Fairbank, *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 12 *Republican China, 1912–1949*, Part 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), see Chapter 4, “Yuan Shikai on the Issues,” 225–228.

institutions were weak—perhaps fatally so. What was needed was a national rejuvenation, a way of infusing the nation with strength and determination and creating a basis for stability and prosperity. But on the question of how this could be achieved there was no agreement.

From this point of view, the 1911 revolution was a consequence of the Qing's failure to resist invasion and its seeming incapacity to foster constitutionalism.¹⁵ And the revolution succeeded not because of a bloody uprising but because of a developing sense of consensus and spirit of compromise for which Yuan Shikai was the main motive force. Through political compromise, all political forces, including revolutionaries, constitutionalists, and the Qing royal household, had finally found new positions in the new era of the Republic of China. Historian John Fairbank argues that, in the 1911 Revolution,

There was general agreement that China must have a parliament to represent the provinces, that unity was necessary to forestall foreign intervention, and that the reform-minded Yuan Shikai, Li Hongzhang's successor and chief trainer of China's new army, was the one man with the capacity to head the government. Though a noteworthy series of compromises, China avoided both prolonged civil war and peasant risings as well as foreign intervention."¹⁶

At that time, no one rebuked Yuan Shikai as a "national usurper."¹⁷ On the contrary, Yuan Shikai had solved China's immediate political conflict through negotiations between the Qing court and the republican revolutionaries. Patrick Shan concludes in his book that,

...most scholars now agree that the collapse of the Qing was the result of the diverse political forces, including the actions of the revolutionaries, the Constitutionalists, the Beiyang troops, and others. It was those combined forces (*heli*) working together that

¹⁵ Constitutionalism was the mainstream in political thought in China in the final years of the Qing and the initial years of the Republic. As the historian Peter Zarrow puts it, "constitutionalism was a marginal notion in the 1880s, became a focus of radical attention in the 1890s, and finally turned into the mainstream in the course of the Qing's 'new policy' reforms ... beginning in 1902." Peter Zarrow, "Constitutionalism and the Imagination of the State: Official Views of Political Reform in the Late Qing," in Peter Zarrow (ed.), *Creating Chinese Modernity: Knowledge and Everyday Life, 1900–1940* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 51–82, here 51.]]

¹⁶ John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1991), 250.

¹⁷ Chen Boda, *Jieshao qie guo da dao Yuan Shikai*, 62.

brought about imperial abdication. It must be noted that all of those forces had chosen Yuan as the national leader, believing that he could stabilize the nation, for he had experience in running a state. Thus, Yuan came to power through a political compromise.¹⁸

In other words, Yuan Shikai—“China’s sole indispensable man” (*fei Yuan mo shu*)—offered a path to stability that was, arguably, the consensus of the people of China at that time.¹⁹

2.2 China’s First Elected President and the Early Republic

As the provisional president elected by the Nanjing Provisional Senate on February 13, 1912, the day after the Qing emperor announced his abdication, Yuan Shikai declared that, “republicanism is the best state system, a fact that has already being recognized around the world,” and “From now on, we shall make great efforts to set republicanism on a secure footing and ensure that the monarchy will never come back to China again.”²⁰ On March 10, 1912, Yuan Shikai assumed his post as provisional president and publicly swore to “Promote the spirit of republicanism, clean up the flaws of autocracy, and abide by the constitution.”²¹ Although Yuan pledged allegiance to the constitution, the implementation of the Provisional Constitution in the early Republic ran into serious political difficulties. In this environment, Yuan Shikai and the reformist Progressive Party, which had been founded by Liang Qichao in 1913, criticized the Provisional Constitution for restricting the executive power of the president and hobbling

¹⁸ Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 163–164.

¹⁹ Zhang Huateng, “Wo kan Yuan Shikai” (My view on Yuan Shikai), *Yuan Shikai yu Qingmo minchu shehui biange yanjiu* (Yuan Shikai and social change in the late Qing and early Republic), (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2017), 13–30.

²⁰ Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 166–68.

²¹ Luo Baoshan and Liu Lusheng, “Linshi dangzong tong shici,” (The Oath of the Provisional President), *Yuan Shikai quanji* (The complete works of Yuan Shikai) (Zhengzhou: Henan daxue chubanshe, 2012), vol.19: 626.

administrative efficiency. The solution, in the eyes of Yuan and the Progressive Party, was to amend the constitution to strengthen the power of the president.²²

In the context of political upheaval and confusion over the role of the executive in a constitutional system, political philosophers in China began to weigh the various options. Some would come to embrace a strong and centralized authority; others promoted an executive whose powers would be divided. As the leader of the Progressive Party, Liang Qichao hoped that the constitution would be amended to strengthen the power of the president through an act by the National Assembly, establishing a presidential republicanism to replace the cabinet republican system. But the assassination of Song Jiaoren (1882–1913), a republican revolutionary and a founder of the Guomindang (Nationalist Party), in 1913 led to an immediate deterioration in the political atmosphere. Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), the leader of the Guomindang, launched a so-called Second Revolution (March–November 1913), an attempt to topple Yuan Shikai and the Beiyang clique. However, Yuan quickly suppressed the uprising, causing Sun Yat-sen to flee to Japan.²³ After the failure of the Second Revolution, with the support of Liang Qichao's Progressive Party, in October 1913 the National Assembly elected Yuan Shikai as the formal president. In March 1914, Yuan convened a meeting to formulate a constitution, which stipulated that the president was "responsible to the whole nation," and that the administration of the national government was to be headed by the president, assisted by the secretary of state. On May 1, 1914, with the support of Liang Qichao's Progressive Party, a new constitution, which enshrined a presidential republican system, was passed and promulgated.²⁴

²² Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 170–171.

²³ *Ibid.*, 174–175.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 190–191.

2.3 Political Centralism and the Abrupt Failure of the Restoration

With his election as the formal president and the promulgation of a new constitution, Yuan Shikai had already moved on from the first stage of the republican experiment: he had learned to manage power in the context of the republican system. The failure of the Second Revolution launched by Sun Yat-sen in 1913 and the subsequent weakening of the Guomindang allowed the Progressive Party headed by Liang Qichao to assume a leading position in the National Assembly. Furthermore, with the Beiyang forces (which were led by Yuan Shikai) replacing the leadership of the four provinces that had been previously dominated by Guomindang, the military and administrative powers of almost all the provinces fell into the hands of Yuan Shikai. The authority of the central government and a new financial system had been established, and the country's general situation turned from chaos to relatively effective governance by end of 1914.²⁵

This situation changed dramatically in 1915. The outbreak of the First World War gave Japan an opportunity to greatly expand its influence in China and led to an aggressive strategy against China. On January 18, 1915, Japan presented Yuan Shikai with its so-called Twenty-One Demands, which, if accepted, would greatly extend Japanese control of China.²⁶ The Chinese government attempted to negotiate and stall, but with Japanese troops in place and faced with a Japanese ultimatum on May 8, 1915, Yuan decided to accept the final form of the demands, excluding the most humiliating demand, that China surrender control over its finances.²⁷ It was

²⁵ Ibid., 177–178.

²⁶ The Twenty-One Demands called for, among other things, confirming Japan's recent seizure of Germany's concessions in the province of Shandong, extending Japan's sphere of influence in Manchuria, giving Japan control of a mining and metallurgical complex in central China, barring China from granting further concessions to European powers, and, most troubling, in effect surrendering control over China's finances and police to Japan.

²⁷ Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 197–199.

largely in reaction to the crisis created by Japan's demands that Yang Du wrote his famous treatise "National Salvation through Constitutional Monarchy" in April 1915 and submitted it to Yuan.²⁸ In this work, as we shall see in Chapter 3, Yuan Shikai found a way to legitimize his strategic plan to centralize authority. And then, in August 1915, Yang Du launched the Peace Planning Society (Chouanhui), which directly called for establishing a constitutional monarchy in China.²⁹ Yuan Shikai responded on December 12, 1915, by "accepting" the position of emperor of China. It is telling that the reign name Yuan chose reflected his intention not to become dictator but a constitutional monarch: Hongxian, literally meaning "Constitutional Abundance."³⁰ Yuan's attempted coup generated widespread opposition and ultimately was not accepted by the Chinese people. Although Yuan had not formally ascended the throne, on March 22, 1916, in the face of fierce and widespread opposition to his coup, he publicly declared the abolition of the monarchy. Yuan died in deep humiliation, sorrow, and regret on June 6, 1916. The farcical attempt to lay the ground for restoring the monarchy lasted nearly a year, from 1915 to 1916.³¹

²⁸ Ibid., 213.

²⁹ Ibid., 213–214.

³⁰ Ibid., 216.

³¹ Ibid., 238–239.

3 YUAN'S ADVISORS: THE INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND TO THE RESTORATION

Although the restoration was a complete failure, Yang Du maintained his belief in constitutional monarchy. In May 1916 he publicly declared, "I was mainly responsible for the bringing about of the movement, and ... I do not intend, neither have I any desire, to shirk my responsibility of so doing."³² His words did indeed reflect his role in the restoration, and in hindsight, one can say that Yang Du was the chief intellectual force behind the restoration of the monarchy.

3.1 Yang Du: Political Centralism through Constitutional Monarchy

3.1.1 *The Chief Force Behind the Restoration of Monarchy*

Yang Du, passed the *keju*, the highest imperial examination, in 1895 and earned second place in 1903 in the new special examinations on Western knowledge established by the Qing court. He went to Japan in 1902 to study constitutional politics and became an organizer of Chinese students in Japan, who at that time represented a wide variety of political persuasions. During his stay in Japan, he became convinced that the solution to the chaos in China in the early years of the twentieth century lay in adopting constitutional monarchy. In defense of his views, Yang debated with many well-known Chinese political figures. The most famous exchange was a

³² Ernest P. Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai: Liberalism and Dictatorship in Early Republican China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977), 223.

three-day and three-night debate in 1903 with Sun Yat-sen on whether China should adopt a democratic republican system or a constitutional monarchy.³³

In 1905, Empress Dowager Cixi (1836–1908) sent five ministers to visit Japan and twelve Western countries as part of the preparations for constitutional reform. The five ministers visited Yang Du and persuaded him to draft articles on constitutionalism. Yang Du wrote “An Outline of Constitutional Government of China: Absorbing the Strengths of the Eastern and Western Countries” and “Implementing Constitutional Procedures,” and asked his close friend Liang Qichao to write “A Comparison of Constitutional Governments in Eastern and Western Countries.”³⁴ The five ministers presented these texts to Cixi in the concluding report of their mission. Based on this report the Qing court officially promulgated an edict in 1906 mandating extensive reforms—known collectively as the Xinzheng (or New Policies) reforms—including initiating steps toward constitutionalism and a constitutional monarchy. In July 1907, Yang Du initiated the establishment of the Association for Constitutional Government, an organization to promote constitutionalism, which was later approved by the Qing court, and he directly wrote to the court asking that “a parliament be established,” which became a landmark event in China’s constitutional development. In April 1908, Yuan Shikai and Zhang Zhidong, the most influential of China’s governors-general at that time, jointly recommended Yang Du to the court as a “specialist in the constitution, [whose] ability can be of great use.”³⁵ The court thereafter appointed Yang as an official to preside over the Constitutional Compilation Office, essentially a

³³ Apparently, there is no adequate English-language biography of Yang Du aside from one on Wikipedia: <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki>.

³⁴ See “杨度” (Yang Du), Baidu Baike, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%9D%A8%E5%BA%A6>.

³⁵ Ibid. Also see <https://zh.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E6%9D%A8%E5%BA%A6>. Throughout the thesis all translations from Chinese language sources are mine unless indicated otherwise.

think tank. Yang Du drafted most of the Qing government's constitutional documents and was recognized as the chief spokesman and designer of the late Qing constitution.

Yang Du was an opponent of the republican system, and as such he rejected Yuan Shikai's invitation to serve in the republican government after the 1911 Revolution. Upon the death of Yuan Shikai, without expressing any regret for his own behavior, Yang Du blamed Yuan Shikai for so quickly giving up the attempt to establish a constitutional monarchy: "Is it the constitutional monarchy that needs to say sorry to Ming Gong [a wise leader, here referring to Yuan Shikai], or is it Ming Gong who needs to say he is sorry to the constitutional monarchy? Even if you [Yuan Shikai] are dead, you should ask yourself this question again and again. Is the Republic wrong for China, or is China wrong for the Republic? Only after a hundred years it will become clear."³⁶ In Yang's view, Yuan and his associates had failed China by not implementing constitutional monarchy, the only path to national salvation. Even though Yuan had already paid the price of his life for the restoration, as the leader, he should have felt guilty for not fulfilling his responsibility. As for the liberal republican system, Yang further stressed his understanding that, regardless of whether the system was flawed or China lacked the necessary conditions, history would prove that it could not be realized in China. But it might take a hundred years for people to really recognize this truth.³⁷

³⁶ As Yang Du's original Chinese texts (君宪负明公, 明公负君宪, 九泉之下三复斯言; 共和误民国, 民国误共和, 百年而后再评是狱.) can be found in <https://www.baidu.com>. For further study can see Ma Yong, (青梅煮酒论英雄: 马勇评近代史人物. 马勇, Publisher: Beijing Book Co. Inc., 2014.) See <https://books.google.com/books?id=2s3UDwAAQBAJ&lpg=PT80&ots=QCTJN6ngv3&dq=%E5%90%9B%E5%AE%AA%E8%B4%9F%E6%98%8E%E5%85%AC%EF%BC%8C%E6%98%8E%E5%85%AC%E8%B4%9F%E5%90%9B%E5%AE%AA&pg=PT81#v=onepage&q=%E5%90%9B%E5%AE%AA%E8%B4%9F%E6%98%8E%E5%85%AC%EF%BC%8C%E6%98%8E%E5%85%AC%E8%B4%9F%E5%90%9B%E5%AE%AA&f=false>

³⁷ Ibid.

Following this criticism of Yuan Shikai, Yang fled to the mountains to study Buddhism, and he declined entreaties to return to public life. And yet, in the autumn of 1929, in what seemed to be a supreme irony, he applied for membership in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), during its most fragile period, and became a secret member. Yang Du died in July 1931 at the age of 57.³⁸ The eventual success of the Communist Party in 1949, and the “socialist path” blazed by the party thereafter amounted to a rejection of the sort of liberal republicanism of the early Republic in favor of political centralism. Thus, in a sense, the Communist Party was the agent that brought to culmination Yang Du’s and Yuan Shikai’s quest for political centralism in the early years of the Republic. To that extent, what transpired after 1949 demonstrated that there was a certain rationality inherent in Yang’s and Yuan’s position. Here, one might say that in Yang’s view, the current Chinese socialism could be an alternative to Yang’s constitutional monarchy, and could be a path to his final objective, achieving national salvation through establishing a strong centralized government.

3.1.2 “National Salvation through Constitutional Monarchy”

In his famous 1915 treatise “National Salvation through Constitutional Monarchy,”³⁹ Yang once again appealed to Yuan and Chinese people, explaining that the only way to save China was to take the road of constitutional monarchy. Yang, writing as “Mr. Tiger” in the essay,

³⁸ See <https://zh.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E6%9D%A8%E5%BA%A6>. Only can study the biography of Yang Du by Chinese version.

³⁹ For an English translation of “National Salvation through Constitutional Monarchy,” see Putnam Weale, *The Fight for the Republic in China*, (Good Press, 2019), Chapter VIII, “The Monarchy Plot: The Pamphlet of Yang,” 158–180. In Putnam Weale’s work, Yang’s essay is titled “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 123–142. All the quotations in this paragraph are from this source. The original of Yang’s essay, “Junxian jiu guo lun” (君宪救国论), can be found in the Chinese version of Putnam Weale’s book, 帕特南·威尔 (Putnam Weale), *Diguo mengyan: Luan shi Yuan Shikai* (帝国梦魇：乱世袁世凯) (Imperial nightmare: Yuan Shikai in troubled times), (Beijing: Zhongyang bianyi chubanshe, 2005), 113–129.

declared that if China adhered to the republican system, it had no hope of becoming strong and wealthy, nor of having a real constitutional government. “No! No! If China does not make any change in the form of government, there is no hope for her becoming strong and rich; there is even no hope for her having a constitutional government. I say that China [in that case] is doomed to perish.”⁴⁰ Then he went straight to his main theme, pointing out that it was a major mistake for the 1911 Revolution to embark on the road of republicanism: “The republican form of government is responsible [for China’s dire fate]. . . . No plan to save the country is possible. The formation of the Republic as a result of the first revolution has prevented that.”⁴¹ He started his essay with a question from an imaginary “Guest” (“Ke”) and explained his thinking concerning three points, to which we now turn.

3.1.2.1 The Republic: No Hope of China’s Becoming Strong or Rich

First, Yang Du points out that there was no hope of China becoming strong since “the people of a republic are accustomed to listening to talk of equality and freedom, which must affect the political and more especially the military administration.”⁴² Yang mentions that soldiers should observe strict discipline and obey the orders of their superiors, but the new republican ideas of “equality and freedom” would destroy the old customs of “discipline” and “obedience.”⁴³ Yang takes the troops in southern China, the stronghold of republicanism, as an example. When an important decision needed to be made, the republican soldiers always demanded a voice and a role in decision making. As a result, officers had to obey their subordinate officers and the subordinate officers had to obey their soldiers. Yang Du further points out that such troops could

⁴⁰ Yang Du, “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 124; Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 112.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

not protect China in the face of internal and external threats. Since China, a republican state, was situated between Japan and Russia, two monarchical states, China could not resist their aggression and was fated to be subjugated. Therefore, in Yang's view, if China followed the path of republicanism, it had no hope of becoming strong.⁴⁴

Second, Yang explains why there was also no hope of China's becoming rich. "If any nation wishes to become rich, it must depend upon industries for its wealth. Now, what industries most fear is disorder and civil war."⁴⁵ Yang emphasizes that the republican system would cause social instability, especially through frequent changes in the president. And this in turn would hamstring the sustained development of industry and commerce. In Yang's view, although the long-term stability of China required the development of industries, liberal republicanism undercut that goal by sowing social unrest. If the Republic continued, economic conditions would decline. Therefore, he explains, there was no hope of China's becoming rich.

Third, Yang Du suggests that there was also no hope for China having a constitutional government. He mentions the reality at that time that few Chinese people really knew what a republic was, what a constitution was, and what constituted the idea of "equality and freedom."⁴⁶ Yang Du further suggests that the demise of the monarchy led to the loss of central authority. He used the Second Revolution as an example to illustrate the negative influence on the country: "Having overthrown the empire and established in its place a republic they [the people] believe that from now on they are subservient to no one, and they think they can do as they please. Ambitious men hold that any person may be president and if they cannot get the presidency by

⁴⁴ Yang Du, "A Defence of the Monarchical Movement," 124–125; Yang Du, "Junxian jiu guo lun," 112–113.

⁴⁵ All the quotations in this paragraph are from Yang Du, "A Defence of the Monarchical Movement," 125. See also Yang Du, "Junxian jiu guo lun," 113.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

fair means through election, they are prepared to fight for it with the assistance of troops and thieves. The Second Revolution is an illustration of this point.”⁴⁷ Yang Du believed that no matter who was the head of state, only autocracy could ensure unified governance and internal security: “In short, China’s republic must be governed by a monarchy through a constitutional government. If the constitutional government cannot govern the republic, the latter cannot remain.”⁴⁸ That is to say, at the time Yang wrote, he believed China should be governed by a monarch acting through a constitutional government. At the same time, Yang Du emphasizes the importance of constitutionalism to the long-term development of the country, including in such fields as education, industry, and the military. He points out that the formation of a constitutional system inevitably will take decades of persistent effort. However, under a republican system, presidents often served only a short time and there were many disputes between different presidents and different parties, and thus national policies were always contradictory and changeable. Even a promising president could only have a short-term effect under a republican system. In short, as a devoted constitutionalist, establishing a constitutional government was Yang Du’s ultimate goal, while the actual situation he observed in the early Republic increasingly deviated from that direction. Therefore, in Yang’s view, there was no hope for China to establish a truly constitutional government.

3.1.2.2 Constitutional Monarchy: A Requirement for Adopting Constitutionalism

Yang Du also argues that national salvation involves two steps: “In short, the country cannot be saved except through the establishment of a constitutional form of government. No constitutional government can be formed except through the establishment of a monarchy. The

⁴⁷ Yang Du, “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 125–126; Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 113.

⁴⁸ Yang Du, “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 126; Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 114.

constitutional form of government has a set of fixed laws, and the monarchy has a definite head who cannot be changed, in which matters lies the source of national strength and wealth.”⁴⁹ Yang Du believed that in order to make the country wealthy and strong required the adoption of a constitutional government since long-term development can only be achieved on the basis of a stable legal system rather than relying on the individuals’ ability. To establish a constitutional government, China should first establish a monarchy, which would ensure stability since the head of the country would remain unchanged. In Yang’s view, the monarchical system, without the competition over the national leadership as in the republican system, was a prerequisite for constitutionalism.

Yang Du further points out the relationship between “wealth and strength” and the constitutional system, arguing that wealth and strength were the goals of the nation, whereas the constitutional system was the only means to achieve these goals.⁵⁰ To support his argument, Yang analyzes thousands of years of Chinese history, concluding that although there were many great and wise emperors, their achievements had never achieved permanence, thus making it difficult to sustain the stability of the country. Japan in particular drew his attention in this regard: “Japan was never known as a strong nation until she adopted a constitutional government. The reason is this: when there is no constitutional government, the country cannot continue to carry out a definite policy.”⁵¹ He concludes that the Japanese case, in contrast to China’s long monarchical history, showed that only by establishing a constitutional system could a country maintain consistent policies and thus develop in the long run. Thus, Yang believed that

⁴⁹ Yang Du, “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 129; Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 118.

⁵⁰ Yang Du, “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 128; Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 115.

⁵¹ Yang Du, “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 128; Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 115.

the establishment of a constitutional government was a fundamental requirement for ensuring the long-term “wealth and strength” of any country.

Yang Du also explains that the core element of a constitutional government is the rule of law. “It is a government with a set of fixed laws which guard the actions of both the people and the president none of whom can overstep the boundary as specified in the laws. No ruler, whether he be a good man or a bad man, can change one iota of the laws. The people reap the benefit of this in consequence.”⁵² Yang believed that it was easy to make a country strong and prosperous, but very difficult to establish a constitutional government. He predicts that after the establishment of a constitutional government, everything would take care of itself, and strength and prosperity would follow as a matter of course.

Yang repeatedly points out that the fundamental problem of a republican system lies in the fact that the method for selecting the head of state would inevitably lead to war in China at that time: “If the present system continues there will be intermittent trouble. At every change of the president there will be riot and civil war.”⁵³ In short, in Yang’s opinion, constitutionalism is source of long-term stability. But under a liberal republican system, stability cannot be achieved through constitutionalism alone because of presidential elections and the threat of possible civil war. Because of his fear of political instability and the division of the country, he proposed that the Republic should be transformed into a constitutional monarchy, and the head of the country should be a monarch instead of a president: “In order to avert the possibility of such awful times [,] place the president in a position which is permanent. It follows that the best thing is to make

⁵² Yang Du, “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 128 (translation amended); Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 116.

⁵³ All the quotations in this paragraph are from Yang Du, “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 128–129. See also Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 115.

him Emperor.”⁵⁴ Yang Du believed that if there was no room for competition over the head of state, China would be stable and the political ambitions of people would disappear: “When that bone of contention is removed, the people will settle down to business and feel peace in their hearts, and devote all their energy and time to the pursuit of their vocations. It is logical to assume that after the adoption of the monarchy they will concentrate on securing a constitutional government which they know is the only salvation for their country.”⁵⁵ Here Yang’s judgment is based not on evidence but only logical assumptions.

Since many people were concerned that if the president of the Republic was transformed into a permanent monarchal dictator, the resulting so-called constitutional monarchy might eventually deteriorate into an autocratic monarchy, Yang Du explains that because the monarch understood that he derived his position from the change from a Republic, in order to satisfy the people, he would respect the constitutional form of government. At the same time, for his own personal safety as well as that of future generations, and for the continuation of his policies during his reign, the monarch would also strive to establish a constitutional political system. Yang Du further illustrates this point by noting that Wilhelm I of Germany and Emperor Meiji of Japan both attempted to form a constitutional government and eventually led their countries to realize constitutionalism.⁵⁶ In this part of his essay, Yang does not present more evidence to support his arguments. Instead, he only comments that it is his hope that Yuan Shikai, who would soon move from being the president to a monarch, would follow the great emperors of Germany and Japan and lead the country to constitutionalism. Yang’s speculation can be understood as his

⁵⁴ Yang Du, “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 128; Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 117.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Yang Du, “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 129; Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 117.

judgment that, based on Yuan Shikai's own situation at that time, the restoration would doubtlessly set China on the road to constitutional monarchy rather than autocratic monarchy.

3.1.2.3 Correcting Past Mistakes and Building a Constitutional Monarchy

Even if one accepted the proposition that constitutional monarchy could save the country, in fact the efforts to achieve constitutionalism in the late Qing and the early Republic were unsuccessful. Yang Du further analyzes the reasons for the failure of the two stages of constitutional exploration in China—first, in the final years of the Qing dynasty, and then in the early republican period—emphasizing that Yuan's restoration of the monarchy could correct previous mistakes and achieve the goal of constitutionalism.

First, Yang Du explains that constitutionalism failed in the late Qing because the imperial family attempted to deceive the people and to foist a false constitutionalism on them. Yang points out, "In trying to deceive the people by means of a false constitutional government, the imperial family was responsible for its own destruction."⁵⁷ He reviews the direction of the constitutional movement and revolutionary trends in the final years of the Qing dynasty, concluding that the success or failure of constitutionalism depends entirely on the people and their attitudes. When Yuan Shikai was later in power and strove for real constitutionalism, the groundwork for constitutionalism had already been laid, and at the time few people followed the revolutionary trend. However, after Yuan was forced to retire in 1909, the constitutionalists lost their core supporter. And then the imperial family removed or sidelined reformist officials and attempted to grasp unfettered power, and in the end lost the trust of the Chinese people. All these factors contributed to a revitalization of the revolutionary movement. Yang also uses the words

⁵⁷ Yang Du, "A Defence of the Monarchical Movement," 138; Yang Du, "Junxian jiu guo lun," 125.

of Yuan Shikai to explain this point: “Once ... Yuan Shikai stated in a memorial to the throne that there were only two alternatives: to give the people a constitutional government or to have them revolt.”⁵⁸ Yang Du concludes that the failure of constitutionalism in the late Qing period was rooted in the fact that false constitutionalism resulted in a real revolution.

Second, Yang found that although constitutionalism had been put into practice in the preceding four years of the Republic—with the adoption of the Provisional Constitution, the formation of a cabinet and the National Assembly—most people believed the constitutional system in the Republic to be even worse than the system in the late Qing. Yang explains that this sentiment took hold because the constitutional government was destroyed by the revolutionaries, who, only by means of the constitutional system could achieve the purpose of revolution. He uses the Provisional Constitution as an example: “The Provisional Constitution made in Nanjing [in January 1912] was not so bad, but after the government was removed to Beijing [in March 1912], the Guomindang people tied the hands and feet of the government by means of the cabinet system and other restrictions with the intention of weakening the power of the central administration in order that they might be able to start another revolution.”⁵⁹ From Yang’s perspective, the constitutional system in the early Republic failed because republicanism led to disputes over the presidency. Yang concludes that the so-called constitutionalism of the revolutionaries was another form of false constitutionalism, wielded as a means of fomenting revolution.

As for how to realize a genuine constitutional system after establishing a constitutional monarchy, Yang Du puts forward two main points to correct what he considered to be the

⁵⁸ Yang Du, “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 138–139; Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 125.

⁵⁹ Yang Du, “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 139 (translation amended); Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 125–126.

mistakes in the past two stages of constitutional experiments. First, he argues that “the difference lies in proper procedures and in honesty of purpose, which are imperative if constitutional government expects to be successful.”⁶⁰ In Yang’s view, following “proper procedures” would remedy the disadvantages of the republican period, and, similarly, ensuring “honesty of purpose” would make sure that the disadvantages of the late Qing period would not be repeated.⁶¹ First Yang Du emphasizes the importance of adopting an appropriate constitution and following proper procedures in its implementation. He argues that the Provisional Constitution reflected the problematic intentions of the revolutionaries in the early republic, and therefore should be replaced by a constitution modeled on those of constitutional monarchies, such as Germany and Japan. Doing so would mean adopting an authentic constitution suitable for China’s current situation. At the same time, the most important aspect of a constitutional system, Yang notes, is adhering to the constitution to the letter, an imperative stemming from the principle of the “honesty.” Faithfully and honestly following the constitution would avoid the mistake of deceiving the people such as happened in the late Qing period.⁶² In short, in Yang’s opinion, with proper procedures and honesty of purpose, a constitutional monarchy would correct the errors of the late Qing and early republican period. And hence China could achieve the final objective of building a constitutional system and making the country wealthy and strong.

⁶⁰ Yang Du, “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 139(translation amended); Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 126.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Yang Du, “A Defense of the Monarchical Movement,” 141–142; Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 128–129.

3.1.3 *Yang's Persistence: Establishing Constitutionalism through Political Centralism*

Throughout Yang Du's life, he steadfastly insisted on what he believed to be the right path for China. In the late Qing, he was the initiator and designer of the Qing's plan for constitutionalism. In the early republic, he was the chief force behind the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. After the May Fourth Movement in 1919,⁶³ he came to believe that socialism was the only viable path for China, and as noted above, he became a secret member of the CCP. His beliefs, including his call for constitutional government in the late Qing and the restoration of the monarchy in the early Republic, and finally his embrace of socialism in 1920s, all deviated from the dominant ideology in Chinese society at the time and had no hope of being realized. Yet, judging by his writings and what we know of his activities, Yang Du was unwavering in his beliefs and convinced that eventually they would be vindicated.

At the heart of Yang Du's thesis is the notion of constitutional government as a centralized government. In Yang Du's view, only political centralism, regardless of whether it was a monarchical system or a socialist system, could ensure that China would sustain its unity and independence and eventually achieve constitutionalism. With a constitutional government, China would move up to the historical stage of long-term stability and prosperity. Yang's exposition was comprehensive and stirring, and it resonated strongly with Yuan Shikai and many other social elites at the time.

However, Yang Du's discussion in his celebrated treatise was more of an expression of his expectation that a great emperor would emerge who could lead China toward constitutionalism, rather than a presentation of evidence to support his arguments. His main point was that if a

⁶³ On the May Fourth Movement as a turning point in modern Chinese history, see the classic study in English (first published in 1960 and republished and reprinted several times since then), Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960).

constitutional monarchy could be realized, this would lead to a constitutional system, which in turn would make China prosperous and strong. In fact, he did not seriously address the question of whether there was a realistic prospect that the republic would be eliminated in favor of a monarchy, nor, if such a thing came to pass, how China might deal with the many challenges that would surely follow. Indeed, as we will see in the following section, Liang Qichao demonstrated in an essay published in 1915 that Yang's treatise could not withstand rigorous questioning.

3.2 Liang Qichao: Political Centralism through a Presidential Republic

3.2.1 *The Chief Force Behind the Opposition to Restoration of Monarchy*

Liang Qichao (1893–1929), a celebrated thinker, statesman, educator, historian, and writer—indeed, one of the most famous intellectual lights in China in the twentieth century—passed the *xiucai* (county civil service examination) at the age of eleven and then passed the *juven* (provincial examination) at the age of sixteen. In 1895, Liang went to the capital, Beijing, with Kang Youwei (1858–1927) and became a leader of the One Hundred Day Reform in 1898. When a conservative coup ended all reforms, Liang fled to Japan where he stayed for the next fourteen years.⁶⁴ After the 1911 Revolution Liang joined the Yuan Shikai government as the chief justice, and then, after the Yuan's death, he served in the cabinet of the government headed by Duan Qirui (1865–1936), a protégé of Yuan's.

⁶⁴ On Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei, see Peter Zarrow, *After Empire: The Conceptual Transformation of the Chinese State, 1885–1924* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 25–55, 56–88; Kung-chuan Hsiao, *A Modern China and a New World: K'ang Yu-wei, Reformer and Utopian, 1858–1927* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975); Xiaobing Tang, *Global Space and the Nationalist Discourse of Modernity: The Historical Thinking of Liang Qichao* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996).

When Yang Du founded the Peace Planning Society and publicly called for the restoration of the monarchy, Liang Qichao wrote a famous article in rebuttal, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,”⁶⁵ published in the journal *Greater China (Da Zhonghua)* on August 30, 1915, and then reprinted in various newspapers. When Yuan Shikai accepted the “invitation” to become a monarch in December, Liang immediately decided to start an armed uprising. On December 22, Liang went to Nanjing to meet with Feng Guozhang (1859–1919), a general and erstwhile subordinate of Yuan Shikai, to develop a coalition against the restoration. After that meeting Liang sent a telegram to his pupil Cai E (1882–1916), a warlord in the southern province of Yunnan, to urge him to launch an armed uprising. On December 25, Cai E declared the independence of Yunnan and raised the banner of armed opposition to the restoration of the monarchy. This sparked the National Protection movement, a campaign to undo the restoration, which culminated in a civil war (the National Protection War, 1915–1916), pitting several prominent militarists primarily in southern China against Yuan Shikai and his Beiyang clique in northern China. The Beiyang Army suffered several defeats, putting Yuan under great pressure and leading him to abdicate on March 22, 1916, thus bringing an end to the restoration.⁶⁶ In short, Liang and his article proved to be the main intellectual force that undid the restoration of the monarchy.

⁶⁵ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” in Putnam Weale, *The Fight for the Republic in China*, 159. The title of the article in this book is “From Republic to Monarchy.” For the original, see Liang Qichao, “Yi zai suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” in Putnam Weale, *Diguo mengyan: Luan shi Yuan Shikai*, 145–160.

⁶⁶ See Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 218–219.

3.2.2 “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question”

At the beginning of his famous “Another View” article, Liang Qichao declares that both political critics and politicians should abide by the principle that, “We should be concerned only about *zhengti* [the form of the government] and not about *guoti* [the form of the state].”⁶⁷ To clarify his meaning, Liang states that “If the administration (government) is constitutional, then it matters not whether the country is a republic or a monarchy. If the government is not constitutional, then neither a republic nor a monarchy will avail. . . . It is an absurd idea to say that in order to improve the administration (*zhengti*) we must change the *guoti*—the status or form of the country.”⁶⁸ If one looks at Liang’s article through the lens of political theory, it becomes clear that his key concern is whether, in practice, the institutions of the state operate in a way that is despotic or in a way that is constitutional.

In Liang’s perspective, to change the *guoti* or “national entity”—i.e., the national political system, such as a republic or a monarchy—was virtually beyond what any political power at that time could accomplish, let alone something that could be determined by political commentators or politicians. Liang directly appealed to the political critic Yang Du and the politician Yuan Shikai to recognize their duty and abide by a crucial rule, “to seek for the improvement and progress of the administration of the existing foundation of government.”⁶⁹ In short, the objective of Liang’s article was to refute Yang Du’s theory of “national salvation through the

⁶⁷ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 160 (translation amended); Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 146. In Liang’s perspective, *guoti* refers to the national political system—in Liang Qichao’s time, that would be the republic or the monarchy. *Zhengti* refers to the system of national administration, such as the cabinet and presidential system under the Republic.

⁶⁸ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 164; Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 149.

⁶⁹ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 160; Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 146.

constitutional monarchy” and to persuade Yuan Shikai not to try to change the *guoti*. In other words, Liang argued in favor the republic and against restoration of the monarchy.

3.2.2.1 Restoration Would Amount to Another Revolution

Liang Qichao emphasizes that *guoti*, the national political system, should be rooted in existing realities, and that changing the national system must have its own logic and be based on long-term historical developments. “No form of government is ideal. Its reason of existence can only be judged by what it has achieved.”⁷⁰ Liang believes that it was absurd to artificially change the *guoti* based on a theoretically anticipated outcome, and that Yang Du and Yuan Shikai were making such a mistake. He further warns them that they would be repeating the mistake of the revolutionaries in the late Qing.

Unlike the revolutionaries, who believed that the 1911 Revolution was a major and historic step forward, both Yang and Liang believed it was a fundamental mistake for the “first transition of the state system” in the 1911 Revolution to be toward republicanism: “The reason I have decided not to boldly advocate a change in the form of the state is because for years my heart has been burdened with an unspeakable sorrow and pain, believing, as I do, that ever since the mistake made in 1911, hope for China’s future has dwindled to almost nothing.”⁷¹ Based on their shared belief in constitutionalism and gradual reform, Liang Qichao and Yang Du had more or less the same understanding of most issues confronting China. Liang fully understood Yang Du’s reasons for supporting monarchical constitutionalism and opposing republicanism, and for many years Liang himself also pondered over the necessary conditions for a restoration of the

⁷⁰ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 160; Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 146–147.

⁷¹ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 172 (translation amended); Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 154.

monarchy. “On one hand I have been troubled with our inability to make the Republic a success, and on the other I have been worrying over the fact that it would be impossible to restore the monarchy.”⁷² He concluded that only when China had achieved a genuine revival and had become a hegemonic power under the leadership of a president with outstanding abilities, might restoration have a chance to succeed.⁷³ However, eventually Liang came to believe that restoration was impossible at that time: “Ever since the days of monarchical government the people have looked on monarch with a sort of divine reverence, and never dared to question or criticize his position. After a period of republicanism, however, this attitude on the part of common people has been abruptly terminated with no possibility of resurrection.”⁷⁴

In Liang’s view, the revolution would only trigger another revolution and result in an unstable political situation that could not bring real social progress: “A change in the form of government is a manifestation of progress while a change in the status of the state is a sign of revolution. The path of progress leads to further progress, but the path of revolution leads to more revolution. This is a fact proven by theory as well as actual experience.”⁷⁵ Therefore, Liang believed that the restoration, since it would amount to “changing the state system twice,” was the same as the preceding revolution. It would be a repetition of the mistakes of the revolution and would cause the country to perish. “Therefore, a man who has any love for his country, is afraid to mention revolution; and, as for myself, I have always opposed revolution. I am now opposing your theory of monarchical revolution, just as I once opposed your theory of republican

⁷² Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 172; Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 154–155.

⁷³ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 174; Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 156.

⁷⁴ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 173; Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 155.

⁷⁵ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 179 (translation amended); Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 159.

revolution, in the same spirit, and I am carrying out the same duty.”⁷⁶ Liang reiterated his consistent position that he was opposed to overturning the state, no matter whether that involved the revolution in the late Qing or the restoration in the early Republic. Liang Qichao adhered to this belief throughout his life, consistently supporting gradual reform and opposing radical revolution.

3.2.2.2 *A Constitutional Monarchy: Who Would Really Govern?*

Yang Du stressed that no one could really unify the country and exercise effective, vigorous leadership except Yuan Shikai: “The answer is that there is not a single man whose qualifications are high enough to be the successor. . . . The vital question of the day, setting aside all paper talk, is whether or not China has a suitable man to succeed President Yuan Shikai.”⁷⁷ In Yang’s view, the republican system was not feasible in China especially because of the problem of the succession of the head of state. This systemic problem was not limited to republicanism but was simply a reality that China faced at that time.

Liang had little difference with Yang on this point, but he argued that it was absurd to change the *guoti* in the hope that this would solve the problem: “Therefore, the question of whether China will be left in peace or not depends entirely on the length of the Great President’s life and what he will be able to accomplish in his lifetime. Whether the country is ruled as a republic or a monarchy, the consequences will be the same.”⁷⁸ He points out that whether the state succumbs to chaos or not is determined by the nature of the government rather than by the national political

⁷⁶ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 179 (translation amended); Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 159.

⁷⁷ Yang Du, “A Defence of the Monarchical Movement,” 132 (translation amended); Yang Du, “Junxian jiu guo lun,” 120.

⁷⁸ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 168 (translation amended); Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 152.

system: “Soberly speaking, any form of state is capable of either ensuring a successful government or causing rebellion. And nine cases out of ten the cause of rebellion lies in the conditions of the administration and not in the form of state.”⁷⁹ Thus, from Liang’s perspective, at that time the security of the country rested solely on the shoulders of Yuan Shikai and was not related to *guoti*, the constitutional monarchy, or the republic.

In an attempt to reach a consensus with Yang Du, Liang Qichao first elaborates on the definition of constitutionalism and the principles of constitutional monarchy: “My opponents will agree with me that the main principle of a constitutional government is that the legislature should always balance the executive and that the exercise of administrative power is always limited to a certain extent. They will also agree that the most important point of a so-called constitutional monarchy is that the monarch should act as a figurehead, and that the establishment of a responsible cabinet is an indispensable accompaniment.”⁸⁰ After laying the ground for this argument, he directly points out that the most critical issue in realizing the monarchy at that time was identifying who should be the monarch. Liang understood that no one in China at that time had a greater reputation and or more ability to govern than Yuan Shikai, and thus a restoration would eventually lead to Yuan as the monarch. He further questioned, “Shall we then make the present president a monarch? ... Do we expect that he will become a mere figurehead?”⁸¹

Liang thus put his finger on the key question involved in restoration: Who would be ultimately responsible for governing? Liang further points out that because Yuan Shikai played

⁷⁹ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 172; Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 154.

⁸⁰ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 164 (translation amended); Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 149.

⁸¹ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 165; Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 150.

an irreplaceable role in managing the internal and external troubles at the time, there was a fundamental problem with the restoration: if a constitutional monarchy were implemented, Yuan Shikai would become the nominal monarch instead of the actual head of the government. There was no other person in China who could take on this responsibility: “My contention is that there is no one, within my knowledge, who commands respect enough and is capable of taking over of the responsibility of Yuan.”⁸² Therefore, despite agreeing with Yang Du that Yuan Shikai was irreplaceable, Liang Qichao was firmly opposed to changing the *guoti*, believing that Yuan Shikai could lead China to unification and stable development for the next ten years under the then current republican system.

3.2.2.3 *Exploring the Path of Constitutionalism under the Current Republican System*

After pointing out that a constitutional monarchy could not save the country, Liang Qichao tried to persuade the constitutionalists to bravely explore the path of constitutionalism under the current republican system: “If, on the other hand, the present critics are really in earnest for a constitution, then I am unable to understand why they believe that this cannot be secured under the Republic but must be obtained in a roundabout way by means of a monarchy.”⁸³

Writing in 1913, Liang Qichao further notes that in the preceding two years he led the Progressive Party in fully supporting Yuan’s election as the formal president, the abolition of the Provisional Constitution and adoption a new constitution, and the change from a cabinet system to a presidential system, which, in Liang’s eyes, was the best way to govern the country in accordance with the actual conditions of China at that time. Liang stressed that the current

⁸² Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 165; Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 150.

⁸³ Liang Qichao, “Another View on the So-called State Structure Question,” 167; Liang Qichao, “Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe,” 151.

republican system had already remedied the drawbacks of republicanism by adopting the presidential system and allowing Yuan Shikai to become a lifelong president. He was convinced that the new constitution met China's current needs and was sufficient to settle most political disputes.⁸⁴ As long as solid and persistent efforts were made, constitutionalism would eventually emerge under the current republican system.

3.2.3 The Yang-Liang Disagreement: Constitutional Monarchy or Presidential Republic?

Yang Du simply attributed the loss of centralized authority after the 1911 Revolution to the republican system, especially its competition for the presidency, which he believed would inevitably lead to chaos. In Yang's view, only by replacing the president with a monarch could this chaos be ended.⁸⁵ Yang also believed that if China adopted a Western-style democratic republican system—a political model entailing party competition, voting in parliament, and presidential elections—the result would inevitably be clashes between the various political parties and warfare among China's regional warlords, leading to the break-up of the country. To reiterate, in his view the only acceptable path for China was a constitutional monarchy, a model embraced by other ascendant countries such as Japan and Germany.⁸⁶ Yang Du believed constitutional monarchy was an ideal solution based on China's realities. Furthermore, he hoped to avoid the national trauma of incessant struggle for power among China's militarists. To a

⁸⁴ Liang Qichao, "Another View on the So-called State Structure Question," 167; Liang Qichao, "Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe," 152.

⁸⁵ Yang Du, "A Defence of the Monarchical Movement," 127; Yang Du, "Junxian jiu guo lun," 115.

⁸⁶ Yang Du, "A Defence of the Monarchical Movement," 128; Yang Du, "Junxian jiu guo lun," 115–116.

certain extent, the later history of China—with its dark era of warlordism—confirmed his far-sightedness.⁸⁷

In contrast to Yang Du, Liang Qichao accepted the established presidential republican system as a political reality, a view shared by most Chinese elites, and it could support Yuan Shikai's social and economic development strategy at that time. He also recognized that the nation's conditions were such that restoration of the monarchy, or even instituting a constitutional monarchy, something that most elites had long favored, could not but fail. Trying to change the *guoti*, thus, would make it impossible to achieve the goal of establishing a prosperous nation, and would also lead to other disastrous consequences for China.⁸⁸

Based on their shared belief in constitutionalism and gradual reform, Liang Qichao and Yang Du had the same understanding of most issues facing China. However, while Yang insisted on constitutional monarchy for the rest of his life, Liang Qichao's thinking evolved, moving from advocacy of constitutional monarchy in the late Qing to defense of republicanism in the early republic. Nonetheless, in Liang's perspective his position remained unchanged for his whole life: he consistently supported gradual reform and opposed radical revolution.⁸⁹ Here, Liang Qichao touched on a key issue of modern Chinese history—whether China's modernization required gradual reform or radical revolution. Yuan Shikai and the Beiyang clique, as well as Yang Du and Liang Qichao, were all constitutionalists who believed in gradual reform towards constitutional republic via a constitutional monarchy first. In contrast, Sun Yat-

⁸⁷ Here, Yang quotes from his imaginary interlocutor: "Mr Ko: I am very much frightened by what you have said. You have stated that the adoption of a constitutional monarchy can avert such terrible consequences." Yang Du, "A Defence of the Monarchical Movement," 132; Yang Du, "Junxian jiu guo lun," 121–122.

⁸⁸ Liang Qichao, "Another View on the So-called State Structure Question," 178; Liang Qichao, "Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe," 158.

⁸⁹ Liang Qichao, "Another View on the So-called State Structure Question," 179; Liang Qichao, "Yi zhe suo wei guoti wenti zhe," 159.

sen and the Guomindang believed in radical revolution to create a new republic right away. These two paths, which were very clearly encapsulated in the famous Yang-Sun debate in Japan in 1903 mentioned above, were discussed at length in China's newspapers. But by 1919 China arrived at a historic turning point: with Yuan Shikai gone from the scene and his Beiyang clique in decline, "revolution" in China became a positive expression which represented the progress of society. Only after 1979, with the adoption of the Reform and Opening Up movement, which set "reform" into motion, did nearly sixty years of "revolution" come to an end.⁹⁰ This seemed to mark a return to what Yuan, Yang, and Liang consistently believed, namely that only with continuing, long-term reform could China make real progress.

The difference between Yang and Liang, to reiterate, turned on the question of restoration. Yang argued that restoration was necessary for China to return to the path of the late Qing reforms, while Liang countered that restoration was equivalent to revolution, and thus would further draw China away from the track of gradual reform. The better choice in Liang's view was to pursue social and economic developing under the current presidential republican system. Compared to Yang Du's idealistic solution, Liang Qichao's thinking was based on the political reality that the republican system had been implemented after the fall of the Qing empire, and that the foundation of constitutional monarchy had already disappeared. The two opposing views were clearly and forcefully expressed to Yuan Shikai and the Chinese people through their two famous papers discussed here.

⁹⁰ On the Reform and Opening Up movement, see Jacques Delisle and Avery Goldstein, *To Get Rich Is Glorious: Challenges Facing China's Economic Reform and Opening at Forty* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2019), 1–26, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/9780815737254_ch1.pdf. Also see Klaus Mülhahn, *Making China Modern: From the Great Qing to Xi Jinping* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), 491–526, <https://chinachannel.org/2019/02/07/reform-opening/>.

3.3 Frank Goodnow: Political Centralism and Constitutionalism

3.3.1 Frank Goodnow and His Memorandum “Monarchy or Republic?”

Yuan’s strategy of political centralism and constitutional monarchy was influenced not only by his domestic advisors Yang Du and Liang Qichao, but also by his foreign advisors, especially the American political scientist and educator Frank Goodnow (1859–1939).⁹¹ Goodnow was best known to the Chinese for a memorandum, “Monarchy or Republic?,” which he composed in the summer of 1915.⁹² In this essay Goodnow criticizes the suddenness of China’s transformation into a liberal republican regime and asserts that any feasible political system must be compatible with reality on the ground and the people’s wishes. He further points out that under the current internal and external conditions, China should choose a new form of government to ensure its survival. Given conditions at the time, constitutional monarchy, he asserts, would be more appropriate for China than a democratic republic. Since Goodnow was a well-known Western expert on constitutionalism and a citizen of United States, the most successful republican country, Chinese tended to consider his argument fair and objective. The Chinese people in general found it convincing and it had a great impact across the country.

Goodnow’s insights quickly became the main theoretical support for the initiatives of the Peace Planning Society. Yang Du drafted the declaration of the establishment of the society, turning Goodnow’s conditional proposal into an authoritative and unconditional conclusion:

⁹¹ For background on Goodnow, see Jedidiah Kroncke, “An Early Tragedy of Comparative Constitutionalism: Frank Goodnow and the Chinese Republic,” *Pacific Rim Law and Policy Journal* 21, no. 3 (2012): 533–590.

⁹² Frank J. Goodnow, “Monarchy or Republic?” in Chargé MacMurray to the Secretary of State, File no. 893.01/35, Document 47, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, with the Address of the President to Congress, December 7, 1915, Office of the Historian, Historian of the U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1915/d47>.

“The United States of America is the oldest republic in the world. Yet its great expert in political theory, Dr. Goodnow, has declared that, as a political system, monarchism is actually better than republicanism, and that China should choose monarchism.”⁹³ Yang Du, a Chinese constitutional theorist, found an echo of his ideas from a Western constitutional authority, Goodnow. This further convinced him of the correctness of his own thinking and encouraged him to move from theorizing to practice. Yang also used Goodnow as an example to encourage Chinese elites to take responsibility for their own country: “Foreigners who wish us well loudly warn us [against drifting along as we have been doing], yet we ourselves give in to what is called fate instead of seeking a fundamental solution. ... We are citizens of China. The survival of our country is our own survival. How can we sit back, waiting for and watching her destruction? So, we gather together to form this society in order to plan for peace in our land.”⁹⁴ With the support of the theories of both Yang Du and Goodnow, the movement for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy thus formally stepped onto the stage of Chinese history.

However, when we carefully study the original terms and their meanings in Goodnow’s memorandum, we will find that Goodnow and Yang Du had different positions on the restoration. The memorandum has no sentence that clearly states, for example, “monarchism is actually better than republicanism, and that China should choose monarchism.” On the contrary, Goodnow’s advice seemed a little hesitant and reticent: “What ... should be the attitude of those

⁹³ Jerome Ch’ en, *Yuan Shih-k’ai*, 2nd ed. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972), 169. Goodnow’s proposal reflects thinking that is remarkable similar to that in Yang Du’s “National Salvation through Constitutional Monarchy.” After discussing the history of republics in general and the realities of China, Yang contends that a constitutional monarchy is a necessary condition for the realization of constitutionalism in China. Yang therefore ignored the requirements of the restoration of the monarchy that Goodnow emphasized, “foreign and domestic toleration, arrangements for the succession, and plans for a constitution.” Yang expressed the same idea in his “National Salvation through Constitutional Monarchy”: “Monarchy is actually better than a republic; China must choose the monarchy.”

⁹⁴ Ch’ en, *Yuan Shih-k’ai*, 170; for the original, see Yang Du, “Chouanhui xuan yan” (Declaration of the Peace Planning Society), August 14, 1915, *HGWX*, vol. 2: 1032.

who have the welfare of China at heart? Should they advocate the continuance of the republic, or should they propose the establishment of a monarchy? These are difficult questions to answer.”⁹⁵ Indeed, his circumspect answer to this question could be interpreted as either encouragement or warning: “It is of course not susceptible of doubt that a monarchy is better suited than a republic to China. China’s history and traditions, her social and economic conditions, her relations with foreign powers all make it probable that the country would develop that constitutional government which it must develop if it is to preserve its independence as a State, more easily as a monarchy than as a republic.”⁹⁶ Perhaps out of fear of being misunderstood, Goodnow stresses that a change from a republic to a monarchy could only be successful under three conditions:

1st.

That the change does not meet with such opposition either on the part of the Chinese people or of foreign Powers as will lead to the recurrence of the disorders which the present republican government has successfully put down. ...

2d.

The change from republic to monarchy would be of little avail if the law of succession is not so fixed that there will be no doubt as to the successor. The succession should not be left to the crown to determine. ... It is probably of course true that the authority of an emperor would be more respected than the authority of a president. The people have been accustomed to an emperor. They hardly know what a president is. At the same time, it would seem doubtful if the increase of authority resulting from the change from president to emperor would be sufficient to justify the change, if the question of the succession were not so securely fixed as to permit of no doubt. For this is the one greatest advantage of the monarchy over the republic.

3rd.

In the third place it is very doubtful whether the change from republic to monarchy would be of any lasting benefit to China if provision is not made for the development under the monarchy of the form of constitutional government. ... [China’s] people will never develop the necessary patriotism unless they are given greater participation in the government than they have had in the past. The government never will acquire the necessary strength unless it has the cordial support of the people.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Goodnow, “Monarchy or Republic?” 57–58.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

Although Goodnow's own words suggest he envisioned the same objective as Yang Du (i.e., that constitutional government must be adopted for national salvation), the path Goodnow marked out to realize this objective—"the country would develop that constitutional government ... more easily as a monarchy than as a republic"—was not as unalterable and unconditional as Yang's "China should choose the monarchism." Following Goodnow's line of thought, if China had already adopted a constitutional monarchy, then it would be easier to implement constitutional government than if it had a republican system. As for whether it was the right time to change the national system from a republic to a monarchy, as noted above he merely argued that three conditions had to be met. Regarding Yang Du's belief that the current republican system must be rejected and the monarchy must be restored, or Liang Qichao's understanding that changing the existing national system itself would not only fail to achieve constitutional monarchy but also lead the country to catastrophe, Goodnow did not take a clear position. Rather, he left it to the Chinese elites to exercise their judgment and make their choice.

In their studies of the history of Yuan Shikai's restoration of the monarchy, most later scholars mention the influence of Goodnow's memorandum, but they have a wide range of evaluations of Goodnow. Jerome Ch'en believes that Goodnow's advice was absurd and violated common sense: "Why such an eminent scholar should have come forward to speak so naively for Yuan Shikai on this difficult question still remains a mystery."⁹⁸ Patrick Shan, on the other hand, is sympatric to Goodnow but recognizes the negative impact of his words: "It is wrong to claim, as the traditional view does, that Goodnow was part of an enthusiastic vanguard for Yuan's monarchism, yet nobody should deny that his article played a unique role in promoting Yuan's monarchical movement."⁹⁹ Ernest Young suggests that Goodnow was the most prominent

⁹⁸ Ch'en, *Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 168.

⁹⁹ Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 213.

foreign advocate of Yuan's restoration project and cannot be absolved of responsibility even though the advice in his memorandum was conditional: "It is true that he soon regretted his temerity and began to emphasize the conditions (foreign and domestic toleration, arrangements for the succession, and plans for a constitution) that he had attached to his monarchical prescription. On the other hand, he believed that the conditions would be ready met."¹⁰⁰ Unlike most Chinese historians, who have only considered Goodnow's negative impact on Chinese society during Yuan's restoration,¹⁰¹ Young has a more balanced reading of his work: "There was more behind Goodnow's analysis than an adjustment of theory to his perception of Chinese realities, or a desire to justify Yuan's policies. One wonders whether he believed in his own scale for measuring the progress of societies. A general mistrust of democracy and liberalism is detectable."¹⁰² Young also finds that Goodnow's thinking was careful and consistent over time: "Generally, his monarchical advocacy was quite consistent with the approach toward Chinese problems that he had taken in supporting the dictatorship in 1913 and 1914."¹⁰³ In hindsight, one could say that Ernest Young's observation is more accurate and valuable than the viewpoints of other scholars.

3.3.2 *Goodnow's Understanding and Contribution to China's Constitutionalism*

In fact, as an advisor, Goodnow played an important role in Yuan's political centralism project beginning shortly after Goodnow arrived in Beijing in 1913. When the National

¹⁰⁰ Ernest P. Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai: Liberalism and Dictatorship in Early Republican China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977), 221.

¹⁰¹ See Zhang Huateng, *Hongxian dizhi* (The Hongxian monarchy), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 99–102. Zhang points out, "The Hongxian monarchy began with the Chouanhui organized by Yang Du, and the Chouanhui's project of changing the national system was derived from a paper of Goodnow, an American jurist. The paper provided a legal basis for the restoration of monarchy" (p. 99).

¹⁰² Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 297–298.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 221.

Assembly proposed a draft constitution that clearly tilted the balance of power between the legislative and executive branches in favor of the former, Yuan immediately banned the Guomindang from the assembly. Goodnow completely supported Yuan's position.¹⁰⁴ Even before this, Goodnow wrote an article criticizing the draft constitution proposed by the Guomindang. And after this ban, he published another article on the importance of securing the primacy of the president in the drafting of the constitution. Even though he had not given up his belief in some kind of representative government, he clearly stated that China's representative government should have a highly restrictive form. He also urged Yuan Shikai not to dissolve the National Assembly completely, but when he learned that the dissolution was unavoidable, he proposed an amendment suggesting that the new assembly could be composed in part by presidential appointees and in part by representatives elected from various social classes, such as intellectuals, merchants, and landlords.¹⁰⁵

In May 1914, Yuan's government issued a so-called Constitutional Compact.¹⁰⁶ Although Goodnow did not publicly claim he was the designer and the person actually responsible for this document, no one can deny that his imprint is visible throughout it.¹⁰⁷ In a report to the Carnegie Endowment, Goodnow commented on the Constitutional Compact: "Most of the ideas I recommended in the draft I made a year ago have been adopted, although they have given the president somewhat greater independence of the legislature than I had proposed. I must confess,

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 174.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ *The Constitutional Compact of the Chung-Hua-Min-Kuo*, translated by Sao-ke Alfred Sze and T. Y. Lo, translation revised by Prof. Frank J. Goodnow and Dr. N. Ariga, in Minister Reinsch to the Secretary of State, File no. 893.011/16, Document 51, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, with the Address of the President to Congress, December 8, 1914, Office of the Historian, Historian of the U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1914/d56>.

¹⁰⁷ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 175.

however, that on the whole I approved what has been done.”¹⁰⁸ We can also find a clue to Goodnow’s influence in the fact that, in the following weeks, he often met with the Yuan Shikai and his staff to discuss the next step in implementing this document.¹⁰⁹ In theory, the Constitutional Compact was an amendment to the Provisional Constitution, a counter to the Temple of Heaven Constitution proposed by the Guomindang as a permanent constitution to replace the Provisional Constitution, and a ratification of Yuan’s policy of centralized authority.

Goodnow’s views over time were remarkably consistent. The new constitution that Goodnow drafted for China was definitely not based on catering to politics in China or defending the policies of Yuan’s government but derived from Goodnow’s own unique understanding of constitutional politics. His theoretical basis was functionalism. As Young suggests, “By his approach to politics Goodnow was led continually to refashion his position. He believed that institutions, in their multifunctional complexities, must accord with the realities if they were to prosper. ... His functionalism became, in practice, an instrument for justifying a flight from liberalism.”¹¹⁰ Indeed, his approach was a denial of democratic republicanism based on individualism and liberalism. At the annual meeting of the American Political Association in Chicago, in December 1914, in an address entitled “Reform in China,” he further asserted that,

Representative government, certainly in forms in which we find it in the modern European states, may well be impossible for adoption in China until such time as greater capacity for social cooperation has developed. ... A form of government which has many of the earmarks of absolutism must continue until she [China] develops greater submission to political authority, great powers of social cooperation and great regard of private rights.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. See Goodnow to Butler, Peking, May 18, 1914 (“Miscellaneous Correspondence”), Goodnow Collection.

¹⁰⁹ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 175.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 174.

¹¹¹ Frank J. Goodnow, “Reform in China,” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 9, no. 2 (May 1915): 209–224.

Goodnow's insights and contributions to China's constitutionalism were significant not only for the early Republic, but also for the later history of modern China. Unlike the 1912 Provisional Constitution, which was hastily drafted by Song Jiaoren during the Revolution of 1911 and hurriedly proposed with the clear objective of restricting the power of the president, the constitution drafted by Goodnow was based on his observations of politics in China for a period combined with his own understanding of the requirements for a constitution that could be successful in China. In his view, in its history and realities a huge Asian country like China was fundamentally different from Western countries, and hence instead of offering a standard prescription calling for freedom and democracy, Goodnow proposed a plan he designed especially for China that might create a theoretical framework for balancing political centralism and constitutionalism. Goodnow thus laid out a realistic path for China to implement constitutionalism while respecting the country's tradition of political centralism. Unfortunately, there was not enough time to test the feasibility of Goodnow's design during Yuan's presidency.

However, in the later history of modern China, especially in the institutions of the Political Consultative Conference and the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, Goodnow influence can be detected. Therefore, when discussing the origins of the current Chinese political system, it is necessary to re-examine Goodnow's proposal and the discussions between Goodnow and the Yuan Shikai government. In hindsight, the later history of modern China has proved the value of Goodnow's insights. Since the 1890s, various Western models have been tried in China. It was obvious that no Western model could completely solve the problems faced by this huge Asian country. While absorbing various foreign experiences, China had to explore and find in its own way. After repeated reforms and revolutions, and constant experiments and corrections, China would eventually develop a unique model, a new republican

system that could lead to constitutional political centralism.¹¹²

Yuan's Three Advisors: Their Common Objective and Disagreements

It should be noted that Yuan's strategy of political centralism was based a realistic view of the political conditions and the various problems arising from China's experiments with a liberal republican system in 1912–1913. Although they started from different standpoints, they all reach the same conclusion: national salvation could only be secured through political centralism and constitutionalism. They all disapproved of the liberalism and provincialism of the early Republic and espoused a strong, constitutional central government. And they all agreed that China's liberal assemblies should be abolished and replaced with new representative institutions. Finally, they each promoted a common understanding that the Chinese government should be politically centralized and constitutional.

They disagreed, however, on how to achieve these objectives. In Yang Du's view, national salvation could only be secured through constitutional monarchy; Liang Qichao believed that promoting political centralism through the current presidential republican system was the only feasible path for China; and Frank Goodnow focused on drafting a realistic constitution and evaluating the respective preconditions for and advantages and disadvantages of monarchism and republicanism. Nevertheless, whatever their agreements and disagreements were, they only emerged from an intellectual background in 1915 and would be tested by the decisions and actions of Yuan Shikai.

¹¹² As John Fairbank concluded in the preface to his last monograph, *China, A New History*, "Once the modern revolution in Chinese thought got under way in the 1890s, it became evident that no foreign model could fit Chinese situation, that many models would be used but none would be adequate, and that the creative Chinese people would have to work out their salvation in their own way. Having had a unique past, they would have their own unique future" (p. xix).

4 YUAN'S QUEST: FROM POLITICAL CENTRALISM TO CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

Even though Yuan Shikai was influenced by his advisors, the decision to restore the monarchy was made by Yuan himself. As the leader of the constitutional reform movement and the most eminent statesman in the late Qing period, Yuan was very clear about China's realities, its internal problems, and external challenges. As early as November 1911, Yuan pointed out that there were two fundamental questions facing China at that time: first, whether the government should be a monarchy or a republic; and second, whether the state should be organized as a federal system or a centralized system.¹¹³ The results of the 1911 Revolution seemed such that a republic might be a compromise on which all parties could agree. Their experience with the experiment in the early Republic led Yuan and his advisors, as discussed in this chapter, to develop their respective judgments on the first issue. As for the second question—political centralism or its opposite, provincialism—it had been discussed, debated, and struggled over for a long time in the early Republic.

Since the founding of the first dynasty of imperial China in 221 BCE, the country has had a long tradition of political centralism, with politically unified times seen as normal and administratively centralized regimes as legitimate. In contrast, medieval feudalism, such as that in Europe and Japan, was regarded as abnormal and chaotic. Although the 1911 Revolution ended China's centralized monarchical system, the idea of centralism lived on. So it is that this idea, based on a very long history of a strong central government and the Confucian civil official

¹¹³ Fairbank, *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 12 *Republican China, 1912–1949*, Part 1, 227.

system, made good sense for the Chinese. Throughout Chinese history this tradition brought unity and stability to the country. To understand why Yuan rushed his attempt to restore the monarchy, we need to start our examination with this issue, political centralism. Yuan's quest for political centralism both at the center and in the provinces emerged in the context of his restoration of the monarchy in 1915. It was the search for these two types of centralism that formed the rationale behind Yuan's political strategy and his decision to establish a constitutional monarchy.

In the early republic, Yuan Shikai face two main struggles. The first was the struggle for state power with the Guomindang, the majority party in the National Assembly; and the second was the struggle between the central government and the provinces, most of which enjoyed de facto autonomy.¹¹⁴ Once appointed president, Yuan Shikai started to put into action his belief in centralized authority both at the center and in the provinces. At the center, in November 1913 he banned the Guomindang and dissolved the National Assembly. And to bring the provinces under the control of the central government, Yuan's first step was to dispatch units of the Beiyang Army to occupy most provinces. He then ordered the suspension of all provincial assemblies as well as local autonomous organs, which were created as part of the Xinzheng reforms in the first decade of the twentieth century and strongly promoted by Yuan himself as well as by Liang Qichao and other reformers.¹¹⁵ As a consequence, the power of official appointments in the province reverted to the central government.

¹¹⁴ See Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 89.

¹¹⁵ On local self-government and autonomous organs in the late Qing, see Theresa Man Ling Lee, "Local Self-Government in Late Qing: Political Discourse and Moral Reform," *Review of Politics* 60, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 31–53.

4.1 Political Centralism at the National Level: Creating a New Representative System

4.1.1 *Dissolving the National Assembly and Establishing the Political Conference*

After a year of experience with the early Republic, Yuan Shikai came to believe that China's liberal republican representative system was a barrier to administrative efficiency and economic development.¹¹⁶ Around that time, many other people, including Liang Qichao and Cai E, also felt that the president should be given more power and the representative assembly system should be abolished.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, Yuan's dissolution of the National Assembly was the result of the gradual unfolding of his power struggle with the Guomindang. Initially, Yuan needed the National Assembly since he wanted it to elect him as the official president and to formulate a constitution that supported the presidential system. With the support of the Progressive Party headed by Liang Qichao, on October 6, 1913, Yuan was indeed made the official president. He hoped that the National Assembly would go further and replace the Provisional Constitution and with a new constitution. But, as we have noted, his hope was not fulfilled. In the years 1912–1913, the Guomindang was the majority party in the National Assembly, and it too favored a new constitution, but one that would further restrict the power of the president. Despite Yuan's opposition, the Guomindang-controlled National Assembly sought to pass the so-called Temple of Heaven Constitution. As Yuan saw it, this was an attempt “to impose by committees and votes what Guomindang revolutionaries had failed to achieve with arms.”¹¹⁸ At this point, Yuan Shikai had no room to retreat, and he expelled the Guomindang members on November 4 and suspended National Assembly.

¹¹⁶ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 148.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 149.

A pragmatic politician, Yuan Shikai had gradually developed the idea that the National Assembly should be replaced with a new representative institution, the Political Conference. His thinking was likely influenced by Goodnow's observations and advice—beginning soon after Goodnow arrived in China in 1913—on the feasibility of constitutionalism in China. In a 1914 article published in the *American Political Science Review*, Goodnow concluded that “for quite a time to come the function of a Chinese representative body should in large measure be consultative and advisory.”¹¹⁹ In late 1913, Yuan advanced the idea of creating the Political Conference as a new legislature to replace the National Assembly. He expressed his hope that “the council could guide the people into the right orbit of republicanism and reach the goal of national salvation.”¹²⁰ The Political Conference was formally established on November 26, 1913. Its representatives, “appointed by the provincial governments, by the president, the prime minister, and the various departments of the central government,” were responsible for discussing the country's development and reform policies and tasks.¹²¹

Yuan's strategy of creating a new representative institution was supported by many influential social elites. A few months after the Political Conference was convened, Liang Qichao pointed out, “Although we highly value the National Assembly, our esteem for it cannot compare to our regard for the nation.”¹²² As a leading member of the cabinet and the leader of the Progressive Party, Liang generally supported Yuan. Although Liang did not agree with the dissolution of the National Assembly at that time, he nonetheless hoped that the new Political Conference might better fit China's situation and promote the country's development and its

¹¹⁹ F. J. Goodnow, “The Parliament of the Republic of China,” *American Political Science Review* 8, no. 4 (November 1914): 560.

¹²⁰ Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 190.

¹²¹ See Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 149.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 150.

quest for wealth and power. Liang declared that if the National Assembly could not lead the country to peace and prosperity, then it ought to be dissolved.¹²³ Leveling specific charges against the National Assembly—that it was overwhelmed by party struggle based on private interests, that it obstructed administrative efficiency, and that it had produced no significant legislation—on January 9, 1914, the Political Conference recommended that all remaining members of the National Assembly be evicted, which Yuan accepted and then dissolved the National Assembly.¹²⁴

4.1.2 Dissolving the Provincial Assemblies and Reconstructing a New Centralized System

Yuan's order that provincial assemblies and local autonomous organs be suspended was based on two rationales. First, local self-government agencies had taken over the powers that rightfully belonged to higher-level governments, thus hindering administration, and reducing revenue. Second, many local autonomous institutions angered the ordinary people, which incited dissatisfaction and rebellion.¹²⁵ Yuan's response was to overthrow the entire structure of elective councils and assemblies that had grown up with his indispensable contribution since the late Qing period. Even though he promised that he would construct a new republican system, by the time of his death, Yuan had still not convened an effective national parliament, nor had he reinvigorated local autonomy. What people saw was that he established a centralized government in which he was all-powerful. Therefore, Yuan's political centralism policy directly hurt the interests of the gentry class. As Young points out, "By abolishing the whole panoply of local assemblies and councils, however, Peking was touching the sensitive nerves of local elite

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 153.

interest.”¹²⁶ Throughout the late imperial period and into the Republic, the gentry were a very consequential force, enjoying prestige and social authority in their local communities and beyond.¹²⁷ It is little wonder that later scholars have usually criticized Yuan’s project as a dictatorship based on his own private ambitions.¹²⁸

In order to reconstruct a centralized administrative system, Yuan also abolished many republican organs and created new ones. As before, there would be a legislature and a state council, but now the members of both would be appointed by Yuan and serve at his pleasure. As Patrick Shan points out, “There would be a legislature (*Lifayuan*), but its members would be appointed by Yuan, who could also dissolve it. There would be a Political Participation Council (*Canzhengyuan*), but its members would be appointed by him.”¹²⁹ Yuan also established two new organs, a Political Supervision Board and a Political Correction Board, both intended to ensure corruption-free and efficient administration by supervising and disciplining officials.¹³⁰ To

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 153–154.

¹²⁷ The gentry class: although there has been much debate in the scholarly literature over who precisely qualified as a member of the gentry in the late imperial period, it might be safe to say that the gentry extended from candidates who had passed the lower-level civil service examination (perhaps half a million men)—which did not qualify them for a government position—all the way through those (a small number) who passed the higher-level examinations and were qualified for government posts (although not all of them were awarded a post). In short, the great bulk of the gentry never served in the imperial government. See Ho Ping-ti, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368–1911* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964). In modern Chinese history, the “gentry class” has often been termed “shenshi jiecheng” 绅士阶层 (or “the gentry social stratum”), which also could be understood in later history as “local elite” or “landlord class.” With the Western transformation, the gentry began to take on new roles in society as military officers, journalists, politicians, engineers, lawyers, etc. The gentry played a pivotal role in provincial assemblies and local autonomous organs. As Ernest Young points out, “The continuing dominance of the gentry well into the twentieth century despite the storms of rebellion, reform, and revolution underlines the peculiarity of change in modern China when measured against familiar Western models.” See Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k’ai*, 6–9. Also on the gentry, see Benjamin A. Elman, “Political, Social, and Cultural Reproduction via Civil Service Examinations in Late Imperial China,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 50, no. 1 (February 1991): 7–28; and Fairbank and Goldman, *China: A New History*, 102–105.

¹²⁸ Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 187–188.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 192. It needs to be emphasized here that the idea of having state organs to supervise and

eliminate checks on his authority as president, Yuan erected a state framework in which all the levers of power were in his hands. He blurred the lines between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and put them all under his control. He also abolished the cabinet and established in its place a Board of Political Affairs, headed by the secretary of state, charged with carrying out Yuan's policies and overseeing administration.¹³¹

4.2 Political Centralism and the Provinces: Yuan's Response to Provincialism

4.2.1 The Ideology of Provincialism and Yuan's Position on Provincialism

The liberal Republic of China in 1912–1913 was a federal, not a centralized, system, meaning that most provinces were under the control of provincial governors and provincial assemblies. The central government had virtually no power over such provinces.¹³² Yuan Shikai and centralists realized that the biggest challenge facing the central government came from the ideology of provincialism, which suggested that provincial autonomy was an important part of China's national strength. According to this view, the provinces could undertake national responsibilities within their own borders. The provincial self-governments, to continue this line of reasoning, would do better than the central government and, exercising their autonomy, would ultimately make a greater contribution to national strength. Linked with revolutionary enthusiasm, provincial autonomy had become a powerful support for provincial military leaders to consolidate their local authority and for the gentry class to gain power through elite-controlled

discipline officials is most definitely not something entirely new that Yuan Shikai came up with. On the contrary, throughout the history of imperial China, the empire had government organs to supervise and discipline officials (generally called in English "the Censorate").

¹³¹ See Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 191.

¹³² See Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 24.

self-government organizations. In 1912, radical newspapers in Shanghai expressed a common view: “The province, taken by itself, is a self-sufficient state. It is natural that the management of its affairs should best be left entirely to its people. Hence, we advocate popular election of its chief executive.”¹³³ If this trend of provincialism was allowed to continue, the consequences for national unity would become increasingly serious.

The emergence of provincialism was an expression of nationalism and a product of its time. In the early twentieth century, as China was facing the fate of being partitioned by foreign powers, the nationalistic enthusiasm of the gentry class was unprecedentedly high. Since the central government in Beijing repeatedly failed to stem foreign encroachment and invasion, most gentry who were not officials but were educated in Confucian ethics believed they had the responsibility of shouldering the task of national salvation.¹³⁴ They hoped to protect their own provinces and thereby defend the sovereignty of China. Beginning in the late Qing dynasty, the gentry began to organize within their own provinces to promote local reforms and various political movements. They expressed their patriotic enthusiasm and political views using their own provinces as their platform. This produced a phenomenon of “provincialism” unlike anything seen previously.¹³⁵

At the same time, with the influx of modern Western ideas, provincialism had also found new support in the concepts of autonomous government and federalism. As early as 1897–1898, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao had provided the theoretical basis for provincial autonomy. In 1901, Liang Qichao borrowed from Rousseau’s advocacy of federalism in small countries to

¹³³ See *ibid.*, 91.

¹³⁴ About the role of gentry class in traditional Chinese political structure, see Chung-li Chang’s two books, *Studies on Their Role in Nineteenth-Century Chinese Society* (1955) and *The Income of the Chinese Gentry: A Sequel to The Chinese Gentry: Studies on their Role in Nineteenth-Century Chinese Society* (1962).

¹³⁵ See *ibid.*, 20–21.

propose that China could tap into its own popular tradition of autonomy to build autonomous counties and provinces, and further proposed that the fundamental starting point of provincial autonomy should be not only the cultivation of democracy and individual freedom as specified in Western philosophy, but also the reform of the entire national system to release the maximum energy of the Chinese people. And this energy for development, Liang believed, could lead China to achieve the fundamental goal of national independence and prosperity.¹³⁶ As a provincial journal noted in 1903, “The spirit of self-government lies in taking the nation’s affairs as purposes of the locality’s existence and in using the strength of the locality to effect [this purpose].”¹³⁷

In fact, it was the Xinzheng reforms in the late Qing that set-in motion the growth and organization of provincial sentiment. As a high-ranking official and a main promoter of constitutional reform of in the late Qing, Yuan Shikai had gained a reputation as “the father of China’s constitutional reform.”¹³⁸ Like most reformers, who were drawn to Western constitutionalism, in a 1907 memorial to the throne, Yuan argued that constitutional rule would help consolidate imperial power, attract talented people to serve the country, forestall violent revolution, promote social harmony, and win the support of the gentry class. Yuan especially played a key role in the promotion and implementation of these reforms both in the center and in the hinterlands. In the center, in line with a proposal Yuan made in 1905, the Qing court, as noted earlier, sent five ministers to study the modern constitutions of Japan and the West and then officially promulgated an edict calling for steps toward constitutionalism and a

¹³⁶ Ibid., 22.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 114.

constitutional monarchy as state policy.¹³⁹ In the provinces, it was Yuan who pushed forward provincial constitutional reforms step by step, which provided the impetus for provincialism.

As the governor-general of the province of Zhili, in northern China, Yuan Shikai concentrated on promoting the autonomy of the city of Tianjin, the provincial capital. Yuan first “dispatched local elites to Japan to study regional autonomy,” and then “established a local autonomy research institute and built a local autonomy bureau” to prepare for the popular election in 1907 of the Tianjin Assembly, the first provincial assembly in China.¹⁴⁰ Yuan paid a great deal of attention to this election, including voter qualifications: at a minimum, voters had to be twenty-five years old, possess property valued at two thousand taels of silver (a very large sum of money),¹⁴¹ have a clean criminal record, have an elementary school education, and so on. Out of a total population of 418,215, two hundred thousand voters were registered, but only 12,461 men were qualified as voters, and 2,572 were legible to sit in the assembly.¹⁴² In July 1907, thirty men were elected to the assembly. Since the Tianjin Assembly was China’s first local assembly and it continued almost until the 1920s, this election and the local autonomy connected with it would have a long-term impact in modern Chinese history. After the election, Yuan congratulated those who had been elected and proclaimed that “the election process was a model for Zhili as a province and for China as a nation.” This newly created local autonomous

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ To put the figure of two thousand taels in perspective, the daily wage for unskilled laborers in Beijing in the year 1900 was equivalent 0.04 taels (see Sidney D. Gamble, “Daily Wages of Unskilled Chinese Laborers, 1807–1902,” *Far Eastern Quarterly* 3, no 1: 1943: 41–73, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2049809?origin=crossref&seq=1>). Thus, a laborer working 300 days a year would earn the equivalent of 12 taels.

¹⁴² Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 115.

institution represented a structural break with the traditional Chinese system. It was the first time in Chinese history that local gentry had been allowed to participate in formal governance.¹⁴³

4.2.2 Centralism and Provincialism: A Tug of War

In the first two years of the Republic (1912–1913), even though some important political leaders, including Yuan Shikai and Cai E, believe that centralizing administrative authority was essential for unifying China, their voice was overwhelmed by the supporters of local self-government in most provinces and was rejected by the National Assembly. In fact, in its first year the Republic was a federal system, or a liberal republican system with provincialism. Since the last few years of the Qing dynasty, many more elites had come to believe that a federal system was more conducive to China's overall development than a centralized system. After the 1911 Revolution, the gentry class had made two demands: that the country should be united and that the provinces should enjoy autonomy.¹⁴⁴ Most provinces had already become fully autonomous—they commanded their own provincial armies, retained tax revenue (including the land tax which had been the central government's largest source of revenue),¹⁴⁵ and selecting local and provincial officials. At the same time, local councils below the provincial level had further expanded and had become more and more arbitrary. Provincial autonomy, which imitated federalism as it was found in the United States and envisioned a similar political system, became the mainstream opinion at that time. Provincialists believed that the two principles of unity and autonomy could be combined in a federal system.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Fairbank, *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 12 *Republican China, 1912–1949*, Part 1, 212.

¹⁴⁵ Han J. Van de Ven, "Public Finance and the Rise of Wordlordism," *Modern Asian Studies* 40, no. 4 (1966): 830–832.

¹⁴⁶ Fairbank, *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 12 *Republican China, 1912–1949*, Part 1, 212.

As the president of China, Yuan Shikai paid special attention to two aspects of the basic administrative functions of the central government—the appointment of officials and state finance. In mid-1912, Yuan faced a dilemma: the National Assembly thwarted his government. Even in the provinces he controlled—Zhili, Henan, and Shandong—his power of appointment was uncertain. His old followers, such as Tang Shaoyi (1862–1938), who had been Yuan’s chief assistant late in the nineteenth century, were joining other political parties and would not follow his strategy. In short, Yuan’s authority was lessened, and the unification of China seemed to be unachievable.¹⁴⁷ As for state finances, most provinces resisted turning national taxes over to the central government. Based on a survey of British and American consular reporting, most provinces advocated that provincial autonomy should be a basic part of all policies. But from the point of view of the central government, provincial autonomy and unbalanced provincial budgets would stop the flow of tax revenue from the provinces.¹⁴⁸

As Ernest Young points out, “In this view, the aftermath of the revolution witnessed a testing in practice of the two competing ideas of self-government and administrative centralization, that had been winning adherents during the previous decade. It was a time of energetic political experimentation. Along with experiment went conflict, as the expansion of political participation collided with efforts to centralize authority.”¹⁴⁹ As a consequence, the gulf between provincialism and centralism gradually widened and ultimately became unbridgeable. With the ultimate objective of national independence, Yuan and the central bureaucrats had realized the most important issue was to gain greater centralized authority in order to achieve the goal of

¹⁴⁷ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 104.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 208.

national salvation. Therefore, provincialism had become the biggest challenge to the central government and Yuan Shikai.¹⁵⁰

4.2.3 Extending the Center's Authority to the Provinces via the Beiyang Army

Even though provincialism, an outgrowth of nationalism and constitutionalism, was derived from the late Qing reforms and was initiated by the constitutionalists like Yuan Shikai and Liang Qichao, in the early Republic more and more people realized that provincialism had become a serious problem since it undercut the authority of the central government. It is important to note that Liang, who provided a theoretical basis for local autonomy in China, deplored people's enthusiasm for provincial autonomy, emphasizing that even the idea of autonomous government was not limited to provincial units alone.¹⁵¹ Therefore, Yuan Shikai, as the leader of central government, eventually could not avoid responding to provincialism. The Second Revolution provided the opportunity for Yuan to carry out his policy of political centralism.

The most direct result of the Second Revolution was that the powerful Beiyang forces took over most of the provinces, making it possible for Yuan to expand central authority into most of the country. The Beijing government eventually was able to appoint administrative officials in the provinces and reverse the nationwide trend, albeit temporarily, toward provincialism.¹⁵² In contrast to 1912 or the thirty years after his death, after the Second Revolution the central government's control of China had reached an unprecedented level. By appointing its own officials to local posts, Yuan's government made significant progress toward administrative integration of the provinces across the country. The changes along the Yangtze River were most

¹⁵⁰ Fairbank, *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 12 *Republican China, 1912–1949*, Part 1, 227.

¹⁵¹ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 150.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 139.

obvious. By early 1914, two of Yuan's closed military associates were installed on strategic points along the lower Yangtze River: Duan Qirui in Wuhan, Hubei, and Feng Guozhang in Nanjing, Jiangsu.¹⁵³ And for the first half of 1915, Sichuan was also under the direct control of Beijing. In a sense, from the 1911 Revolution until this time, the whole of China had not been unified. But now, by mid-1915, Yuan's central government directly controlled twelve of the eighteen provinces in China proper (i.e., the historical core of China, excluding frontier regions), with a total population of about 300 million.¹⁵⁴ With this powerful base, after the summer of 1915, Yuan believed it was time to consider the next step in his political centralism project.

If Yuan Shikai considered himself as just the leader of the Beiyang officials and military officers, he might well have been content with his 1913 victory. With the suppression of his opposition, he eventually gained the power to appoint his subordinates to the provinces. If Yuan and his Beiyang clique had been satisfied with appointing his supporters to take over the original power structure in the provinces and mobilize a wider range of social forces by providing more opportunities for political participation, the foundation of his regime would have been further consolidated. But what Yuan pursued was a policy of bolstering central authority by tightening control over the provinces, which would inevitably affect the interests of the provincial governors and militarists. As the Beiyang generals who followed him in the Second Revolution had taken over almost all of China's provinces, Yuan's move to deprive provincial leaders of autonomy amounted to an assault not only on the revolutionaries, who opposed him, but on the Beiyang generals whom he had trained and led since the Xiaozhan troop training in the late Qing period.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 142.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 155.

4.2.4 “Military-Civilian Division” in the Provinces: The Results and Later Appraisal

In 1913, Kang Youwei proposed “abolishing the provinces.”¹⁵⁶ “Under the present threatening circumstances,” Kang wrote, “China’s great cause of concern lies particularly in the independence of the military governors.” He argued that “the provincial assemblies were pursuing independence under the guise of self-government,” and that this kind of provincialism would strip the central government of its *raison d’être*.¹⁵⁷ In a proposal from the cabinet in November 1913, Liang Qichao further advocated the abolition of the provincial system, arguing that the provincial level, standing between the central and local levels of government, should be removed, and that the orders from the central government should be sent directly to the cities and counties.¹⁵⁸ This undoubtedly was a fundamental solution proposed by the central bureaucracy as a response to the spread of provincialism.

However, as the leader of the Beiyang clique, Yuan could not support a policy without any consideration of his subordinates. In order to centralize authority, Yuan could directly challenge the interests of the gentry class, but he had to be much more circumspect regarding the Beiyang generals, the base of support for his regime. Also, in view of the widespread social support for provincialism in the early twentieth century, Yuan believed that the proposal to centralize authority was too radical and impossible to implement. The bureaucrats in charge of the central government represented by Liang Qichao and Premier Xiong Xiling (1870–1937),¹⁵⁹ expressed their strong disappointment and dissatisfaction with Yuan’s persistence in maintaining the provincial-level civilian and military authorities. Yuan’s disagreement later became the main

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 156; Kang Youwei, “Fei sheng lun” (废省论) (Abolishing the provinces), 1913, Chinese Intellectual and Cultural Figures Database, <http://www.cnthinkers.com/thinkerweb/literature/441693>.

¹⁵⁷ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 104.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 156.

¹⁵⁹ Xiong Xiling was appointed premier by Yuan Shikai in July 1913. On Xiong, see Zhou Qiuguang, *Xiong Xiling zhuan* (A biography of Xiong Xiling), (Beijing: Huawen chubanshe, 2014).

reason for the resignation of the Xiong-Liang cabinet in February 1914.¹⁶⁰ As the president of the country and as the leader of the Beiyang clique, Yuan faced a difficult decision. After weighing the options, he eventually chose a relatively moderate plan, a “military-civilian division” in provincial power, to implement his political centralism policy.¹⁶¹

Yuan launched his administrative reform plan for the provinces in early 1914, and by summer the plan was officially announced and began to be implemented step by step. First, official titles were changed. The provincial “Military Governor” (*Du du*) was renamed “General in Chief” (*Jiang jun*), while the civil governor, who had been known in most provinces as the “Head of the Civil Government” (*Min zhengzhang*) was renamed the “Pacification Commissioner” (*Xun Anshi*). Behind these name changes was a new division of provincial powers. All civil functions were transferred from the military governors to the pacification commissioners, i.e., the new civil governors. The generals who no longer served as the military governors were now responsible only for the modern national military within the province; even using the old-style troops needed the permission of the civil governor.¹⁶² At the same time, the provincial generals and their troops were to be incorporated into a national military system administered by a headquarters directly under the president in Beijing, where the periodic attendance of the generals would be required. This would weaken the military governors and reduce provincial autonomy, which, if it had been successful, might have forestalled the regional military autonomy of the warlord era. The aim of the “military-civilian division” plan was obvious: to separate the civil affairs functions of the

¹⁶⁰ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 159.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 157.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 157. Also see Ch'en, *Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 161-162; In the late Qing and early Republic, China had, in the words of Edward A. McCord, “a confusing hodgepodge of [military] forces, ranging from remnants of traditional armies to new Western-style units [i.e., the “New Armies,” and most notably the Beiyang Army].” See Edward A. McCord, *The Power of the Gun: The Emergence of Modern Chinese Warlordism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 18.

provinces from the former military governors, who previously exercised full administrative authority in both military and civil affairs.¹⁶³ Under the planned division, then, the new civil governors would take the leading position in the provinces.

As the president of the country and the leader of the Beiyang clique, Yuan eventually had to make a choice. Perhaps he thought that he had already chosen a relatively moderate plan, “military-civilian division,” which he thought would convince his subordinates to follow his centralization policy.¹⁶⁴ No relevant historical records show that Yuan fully communicated his intentions to the core members of his group before implementing this policy, nor that any consensus was reached. However, the Beiyang generals, who had followed Yuan for many years and had already taken over military and civil power in the provinces, felt they were betrayed by Yuan, their leader.¹⁶⁵ Thus it was Yuan himself who brought about the division of his Beiyang clique. Without the support of the Beiyang forces, Yuan’s regime would have no foundation for its existence. I suggest that the “military-civilian division” policy set in motion the ensuing sundering of the Beiyang clique and the failure of Yuan’s subsequent restoration.

The failure of Yuan’s attempt to restore the monarchy ended his centralization policy, and the restrictions on the provincial military’s influence thereafter never returned to the level before 1911. When Feng Guozhang and other generals had begun to turn against him in 1916, Yuan returned power over civil administration to his generals, thereby restoring the civil authority of governors to their pre-1914 levels. Thus, what Yuan had just taken from his subordinates he soon returned to them.¹⁶⁶ But even so, the generals did not serve Yuan in 1916 as they did in the 1911 Revolution and the Second Revolution. This, I argue, is the reason the powerful Beiyang Army

¹⁶³ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 157.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 158.

¹⁶⁵ Ch'en, *Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 161–162.

¹⁶⁶ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 158.

was helpless in the face of the National Protection Army and its battle to end Yuan's restoration. From a certain perspective, the main reason for Yuan's failed attempt to restore the monarchy was that Yuan himself first sold out his generals as part of his centralization policy in 1914, and, in 1915–1916, his attempt to restore the monarchy gave his generals the chance to act on their own interests and turn against him.¹⁶⁷

Some later historians agree with the view of the Xiong-Liang cabinet that Yuan should have adopted a more resolute plan such as “abolishing the provinces,” which might have eliminated the possibility of the warlords dominating China during the next period of modern Chinese history.¹⁶⁸ However, even Yuan's relatively moderate centralization plan, which retained the provinces as an administrative unit but divided military and civilian power, turned the Beiyang generals against him. If Yuan had adopted a harsher approach, the consequences may well have been even more disastrous. In fact, Yuan persisted in his political centralism policy. As Young concludes, “Yuan continued to pursue lesser versions of centralization and civilian supremacy in the administrative reorganization of 1914. The goal was a centralized bureaucratic state staffed by sober men of experience, knowledgeable about both the modern world and old established ways of Chinese officialdom.”¹⁶⁹ From his administrative action in 1914–1915, it can be concluded that Yuan's policy of political centralism and civilian supremacy in the provinces was a firm and long-term strategy.

¹⁶⁷ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 246.

¹⁶⁸ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 158.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 159–160.

4.3 The Failed Bid for Constitutional Monarchy

On December 11, 1915, despite repeated pleas by his closest friends and generals, and the public opposition by the British and Japanese powers, Yuan “accepted” the invitation of the National Assembly to become China’s emperor. Yuan’s decision, however, apparently did not come easily. One of his assistants observed that “he had never seen Yuan, who was given to making quick decisions, so uncertain and ‘torn with conflicting emotions’ as when he was deciding for the monarchy.”¹⁷⁰ In hindsight, Yuan’s strategic choices in the early republic—ending the provincial assemblies and provincial autonomy and resuscitating a centralized regime—were reasonable given China’s internal and external conditions at that time. If, as Liang Qichao argued, the restoration had been implemented steadily for the next ten years, Yuan Shikai’s failure would not appear so stark.¹⁷¹ Looking back at history, in any case, Yuan’s restoration of the monarchy left a difficult question for later historians: Why did Yuan risk changing the existing republican system to restore the monarchy in 1915–1916?

As to why Yuan made such a reckless choice, the answer remains uncertain. Perhaps Yuan Shikai himself could not give us a satisfactory answer. Thanks to media reports, Yuan’s words were widely known across the country. When Feng Guozhang and Liang Qichao went to Beijing in June 1915 to persuade Yuan not to risk restoration, Yuan definitely denied the rumors that he had decided to make himself emperor. Yuan said he would never make such a foolish decision. The only difference between a president and an emperor, he contended, was that the latter was an inherited position. Throughout Chinese history, it was usually the case that the descendants of most emperors would become victims when the throne changed. He did not want his descendants

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 212.

¹⁷¹ See 3.2.4.

to suffer such a fate. If someone forced him to restore the monarchy, his only choice would be to go to England and never return to China.¹⁷²

Before the 1980s, many people suggested that the main reason behind Yuan's decision to restore the monarchy was his personal ambition.¹⁷³ Others believed that Yuan was somehow manipulated into restoring the monarchy, or that his family life played a role, and so on. None of these suppositions, however, can explain why Yuan Shikai, a pragmatic and prudent politician, was willing to take such a large risk by restoring the monarchy. As Ernest Young suggests, "But those who were close to Yuan at the time and have recorded their impressions have not stressed his vainglory or preoccupation with personal fulfillment. ... I can only convey my sense that an infatuation with images of yellow robes and dynastic splendor was at most a minor factor in his decision."¹⁷⁴ Based on what this thesis has examined—Yuan's experience in the early Republic, his three influential advisors and their well-known essays, and his quest for political centralism at both the center and provinces at the time—I argue that it is mostly like that Yuan's misjudgment of the situation and his desire to increase support for his centralized policy were the two main factors that guided his final choice.

4.3.1 Faulty Judgments Led to Opposite Ends

Based on the sources and the fact that Yuan Shikai was an experienced statesman, it is likely that he accepted the risks of restoring the monarchy after fully considering the pros and cons. Although it is speculative, I believe his misjudgment of China's internal and external situation led him to make what turned out to be a disastrous decision: to restore the monarchy.

¹⁷² Ch'en, *Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 165. See *Shen pao*, July 6, 1915.

¹⁷³ Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 209–210.

¹⁷⁴ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 212.

First, after he accepted the final form of the Twenty-One Demands on May 9, 1915, Yuan repeatedly declared that this outcome was a “national humiliation,” “but let us all remember it and do our best to wipe out this disgrace.”¹⁷⁵ With his deep concern about the increasing danger of Japanese encroachments, Yuan hoped to find ways to alleviate the problem. To return to the monarchy might well have been one of these methods he pondered. Yuan believed that imitating Britain, Germany, and Japan by embarking on a constitutional monarchy was something that the foreign powers would recognize and accept, or even approve of.¹⁷⁶ Following the example of the Meiji Restoration, which won wide-ranging sympathy and support from the Japanese, it might well have been reasonable to assume that the Chinese people would similarly enthusiastically support a restoration in China. During the First World War, since the Western powers were unable to counterbalance Japan in China, Yuan wished to divert the attention of the Japanese and delay the pace of Japan’s aggressive policy.¹⁷⁷ To this point, Yuan was unquestionably naive in his understanding of Japan. With the Twenty-One Demands, Japan had already changed its policy on China and come to think of Yuan as the biggest obstacle to its aggressive strategy on China. After the Twenty-One Demands had been countered by Yuan’s government, Japanese policy makers believed that removing Yuan Shikai was the top priority in their China strategy. As Putnam Weale quoted from a Japanese strategic paper, “Yuan Shikai belongs to that school of politicians who are fond of employing craftiness and cunning. ... For Japan to ignore the general sentiment of the Chinese people and support Yuan Shikai with the hope that we can settle with

¹⁷⁵ Ch’en, *Yuan Shih-k’ai*, 157–158.

¹⁷⁶ On Britain’s support for Yuan, for example, Hirata Koji has argued that “British policy-makers were determined to support Yuan Shikai’s consolidation of power.” See Hirata Koji, “Britain’s Man on the Spot in China: John Jordan, Yuan Shikai, and the Reorganization Loan, 1912–1914,” *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 3 (2013): 895.

¹⁷⁷ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k’ai*, 220.

him the Chinese question is a blunder indeed.”¹⁷⁸ Japan wished to use Yuan’s own mistakes to remove him from the Chinese political arena, and Yuan’s monarchical attempt was a precisely an opportunity for Japan to overthrow Yuan and his government. Based on ample historical evidence that Japan’s planning and implementation played a key role in the process of Yuan’s failed restoration, some recent scholars’ research even points out that Japan’s influence was the decisive factor in Yuan’s final decision and his ultimate failure.¹⁷⁹

Second, after the establishment of the Peace Planning Society on August 14, 1915, Yuan’s intentions were clear for all to see. And then, agitation for restoration of the monarchy started. In particular, the writings of constitutional theorists Yang Du and Frank Goodnow might have led Yuan to mistakenly believe that establishing a constitutional monarchy was the common aspiration of elites and the public. As Ernest Young points out, “Yuan opted for monarchy as an accommodation to popular psychology and as a means of gaining public order and greater power for the central government.”¹⁸⁰ Yuan might well have thought that public opinion could be used to mobilize the public to support his centralization policy. After his government abandoned the gentry class, Yuan needed to find an alternative source of support, one that drew on a wider swath of society. Just as with the Boxer Movement in the late Qing and other movements in modern Chinese history, it was not uncommon for the highest authorities to respond to so-called public opinion by trying to fulfill what they thought was the public’s wishes. But the result was usually disastrous. Yuan’s restoration of the monarchy was one such case.

¹⁷⁸ Putnam Weale. *The Fight for the Republic in China*, 106–109 (quotation amended). See Chapter VII, “The Origin of the Twenty-One Demands,” especially Part II, “The Chinese Question and the Defensive Alliance.”

¹⁷⁹ Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 219–220.

¹⁸⁰ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k’ai*, 213.

Third, Yuan believed that after the Second Revolution, virtually all of China had come under the control of his Beiyang Army. This included even the remote province of Sichuan, where he appointed his trusted confidant Chen Yi (1870–1939) and his Beiyang troops to take over the provincial and local administration. “By July 1915, Sichuan was also integrated into China’s centralized administrative system.”¹⁸¹ I speculate that when Yuan formally launched his monarchical movement in August 1915, he was confident that the Beiyang generals, whom he had trained in the late Qing period, would support him unconditionally.¹⁸² But he ignored the fact that after his generals had become the military governors of most of the provinces, their own interests would be harmed by Yuan’s centralization policy. And this inevitably caused them to change their position and become opponents of Yuan’s strategy. Feng Guozhang, who had been a protégé of Yuan’s longer than anyone else, would be an obvious example.¹⁸³

The above three aspects that contributed to Yuan’s misjudgment of the situation, I argue, led Yuan to believe that circumstances were ripe for a restoration of the monarchy. And in Yuan’s view, if the Hongxian monarchy could completely reverse the chaos unleashed by the liberal republic, he could restart constitutional reform under a centralized government, similar to how the Xinzheng reform was launched in the late Qing. Unfortunately, the reality of these three aspects was completely opposite to what he observed. As Liang Qichao described the situation was at that time, “Internally, the rebels are accumulating strength against an opportune time to rise; externally, powerful neighbor countries are waiting for an opportunity to harass us.”¹⁸⁴ In short, it was not time to embark on the long road to social change. Yet, Yuan Shikai did not heed

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 217.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 226.

¹⁸⁴ Putnam Weale, *The Fight for the Republic in China*, 211. See Chapter XIII, Liang Qichao, “For the Kind Perusal of the Great President.”

the advice of his closest advisors, including Liang Qichao, and his monarchical attempt was doomed to defeat.

4.3.2 Losing the Support of the Gentry and the Beiyang Generals

The gentry class was the foundation of traditional Chinese society and provided the main body of supporters of constitutionalism. It played an important role in the national political arena for many decades. As we can see in the 1911 Revolution, the Second Revolution, and Yuan's monarchical restoration, it was the attitude of the gentry that dominated the specific course of history. Although Yuan Shikai originally considered his strategy from the perspective of centralizing power and promoting local administrative efficiency, his policy had in effect locked the gentry out of his regime and pushed them to oppose him.¹⁸⁵ As his attempts to centralized authority advanced, Yuan Shikai alienated most of his closest friends and erstwhile supporters, many of whom were members of the gentry.

Tang Shaoyi, a long-time comrade of Yuan's, was appointed as the first premier of the cabinet with the assent of the revolutionaries. Because of the power division written into the Provisional Constitution, Tang inevitably clashed with Yuan, the president, and resigned in less than six months. Despite their long-term and mutually beneficial relationship, the president and the premier could not agree on the division of power under the Provisional Constitution. The resignation of the Tang cabinet disappointed Yuan and caused him to ponder why it happened. In Yuan's view, the cabinet system caused these two long-term associates to split.¹⁸⁶ Liang Qichao, as the leader of the Progressive Party, was the most influential representative of the gentry class.

¹⁸⁵ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 206.

¹⁸⁶ Ch'en, *Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 149–150.

However, Yuan Shikai dissolved the National Assembly, thus depriving Liang and his Progressive Party of their political stage. While Liang Qichao tried his best to persuade Yuan Shikai not to restore the monarchy, he failed and soon became a firm opponent of the restoration and a champion of the armed anti-Yuan movement.

The loss of the support of the gentry was a blow that Yuan Shikai might have survived if he had not also alienated his associates and allies in the Beiyang clique. After Yuan took power in the early Republic, most important military and political figures of China were affiliated with the Beiyang clique. Aside from Yuan himself, the most influential members were Duan Qirui and Feng Guozhang. But in the eyes of these two powerful generals, Yuan's efforts to strengthen his centralized authority ran counter to their own interests. This conflict between Yuan and his generals was the real beginning of the division of the Beiyang clique, which had been the base of the Yuan regime. When the restoration began, both Duan Qirui and Feng Guozhang had publicly opposed it. On August 29, 1915, Yuan Shikai relieved Duan of his post as minister of war with the excuse that Duan was ill. Duan then went into temporary retirement.¹⁸⁷ On December 18, Yuan Shikai appointed Feng Guozhang the commander-in-chief of the army, but Feng, who was then in the province of Jiangsu, refused to travel to Beijing, claiming that he was ill.¹⁸⁸ On December 22, Liang Qichao met with Feng secretly in Nanjing and came to an agreement, which indirectly encouraged the military to oppose Yuan's monarchy. On December 25, instigated by Liang Qichao, Cai E declared the independence of Yunnan, thus publicly challenging Yuan, which resulted in the outbreak of the National Protection War.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 192.

¹⁸⁸ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 226–227.

¹⁸⁹ See Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 221.

When Yuan ordered the army to suppress the independence of Yunnan, both Duan Qirui and Feng Guozhang refused to serve as commander-in-chief.¹⁹⁰ Furthermore, the provinces of Guizhou, Guangxi, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Shaanxi, Sichuan, and Hunan declared their independence one after another. In March 1916, Feng Guozhang organized several other generals in the provinces—Li Chun in Jiangxi, Jin Yunpeng in Shandong, Zhu Rui in Zhejiang, and Zhang Xun in Changjiang—to send a secret telegram calling on Yuan Shikai to abolish the monarchy for the sake of peace in the country.¹⁹¹ Even after Yuan publicly announced his abdication, Duan, who was then the premier, further asked Yuan to surrender all administrative and military authority to Duan's cabinet. At the same time, Feng Guozhang organized peace talks in Nanjing and publicly demanded Yuan's resignation. Thus, I argue, the main factor behind Yuan's failed restoration was the division of the Beiyang clique.

By July 1915, Yuan was already aware of the crisis roiled around him. With the increasing threat of aggression from Japan, his domestic support was declining among the provincial governors and the Beiyang generals. The gentry, who originally supported him from the Xinzheng reform in the late Qing to the 1911 Revolution and the Second Revolution in the early republic, were dissatisfied with Yuan because their interests had been harmed by his centralization policy. Enjoying only superficial success, social forces supporting Yuan had gradually weakened, while the opposing force had gradually become stronger. One after the other, Yuan Shikai alienated himself from his close supporters and finally became isolated. As Ernest Young points out, "Yuan was wrong when he thought he could do without this source [i.e., the gentry] of political energy or some substitute. Indeed, in my view that gentry resentment at Yuan's policies after the Second Revolution created an environment where, with the

¹⁹⁰ Ch'en, *Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 183.

¹⁹¹ Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 222. Also, see Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 227.

precipitating event of Yuan's monarchical movement in 1915, disaffected leaders could successfully challenge Yuan."¹⁹² This was the context in which Yuan Shikai made his decision to ascend the throne.

¹⁹² Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 246.

5 CONCLUSION

As a representative of the reformers of late Qing, Yuan originally shared in the beliefs spelled out in Yang Du's "National Salvation through Constitutional Monarchy." In 1911 when the Qing called on Yuan to send the Beiyang Army to the city of Wuchang to suppress an uprising there—a rebellion that launched the 1911 Revolution—Yuan made his political position clear: "If one compares the system of a constitutional monarchy, which restricts the power of a king, with one or another of the various systems that our people want to try out in China, one must come to the conclusion that the former is the only lasting solution [of our problems]. ... I fully realize the weight of my duty, and my only objectives are to restore law and order and to see what plans beneficial to our country are put into practice without mishap. Personal fame and power are not my concern. ... However, my most important concern is the preservation of China." He added that political centralization was crucial to preserving the country: "For the sake of our country, we must establish a strong government at once, because the danger is mounting day by day."¹⁹³ After the founding of the Republic of China in Beijing in March 1912, Yuan expressed his full support for the Republic, and repeatedly denied the allegation that he was intent on making himself a monarch. At the very beginning of the Republic, Yuan hoped that China would bid farewell to the monarchy and, in order to achieve the goal of saving the country, would welcome the new republican system.¹⁹⁴ However, in March 1916, four years into his presidency, in his Mandate of the Cancellation of the Hongxian Monarchy, a declaration announcing the end of his 83-day-old reign, Yuan himself explained why his restoration failed:

¹⁹³ Ch'en, *Yuan Shih-k'ai*, 92–94. Also see his note on page 227: 2: *Shi pao* (The Times), Dec. 1 and 2, 1911.

¹⁹⁴ Shan, *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*, 167. See 2.2 of this paper.

“I cared for nothing, but the salvation of the country. A perusal of our history of several thousand years will reveal in vivid manner the sad fate of the descendants of ancient kings and emperors.

What then could have prompted me to aspire to the Throne?”¹⁹⁵

The preponderance of evidence confirms Yuan Shikai’s words: his restoration of the monarchy was driven by considerations beyond his personal interests. Yet, it is undeniable that Yuan’s leadership failed. As Ernest Young points out,

Yuan’s policies had a way of producing the opposite of their intended effect. . . . An elaborate campaign of administrative centralization led, though the hostilities it evoked and the interests it violated, to a greater degree of disunity than China had experienced for centuries. The monarchy, a device to bind the population to the government and to ward off Japanese designs on China, alienated Yuan from his country and provided an opening for Japanese machinations. The efforts to impose civilian supremacy gave way to a period of unparalleled military dominance. When one contemplates the human consequences, failure is too gentle a word for Yuan’s presidency.¹⁹⁶

Considering his original intent and the result, Yuan Shikai’s policy of political centralism and the establishing constitutionalism through the restoration of the monarchy can be understood not only as a failure of Yuan himself, but also of the country.

Admittedly, Yuan apparently did little strategic thinking and lacked long-term goals for the development of the country in the new era of the Republic. In the late Qing, he was just a bureaucrat working to implement the Qing reforms. Once the Republic was established, all he could imagine was to return to the original monarchical environment and political structure in order to implement constitutional reforms. However, in the view of Yuan Shikai and Yang Du, sustaining centralism and transforming the liberal Republic into a constitutional monarchy were not personal ambitions or a reactionary response to the march of history, but a necessary step to

¹⁹⁵ Yuan Shikai, “Decree Cancelling the Empire, 22D March,” in Putnam Weale, *The Fight for the Republic in China*, 230. Yuan also expressed the similar idea, see footnote 171, Ch’en, Yuan Shih-k’ai, 165.

¹⁹⁶ Young, *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k’ai*, 242–243.

implement their notion of constitutional for the sake of saving the country. In their view, establishing a strong central government was the only way that China could avoid being carved up by the foreign powers or being divided by internal provincial forces. However, this eventually led Yuan Shikai to make a strategic decision—to shift from political centralism to constitutional monarchy—based on abstract ideas rather than pragmatic realities.

Perhaps Yuan's plan to restore the monarchy have derived from his despair over the situation in China as well as his own personal situation. If so, the restoration of the monarchy was just a desperate gamble of a leader in a demoralized situation. Yuan might have understood that if he was unwilling to abandon his centralization policy, his ultimate opponents were precisely his erstwhile supporters—the Beiyang generals, who were provincial military-civilian governors, and the gentry class, who dominated all levels of representative institutions. What other social class or group might have supported Yuan's centralization policy as a response to the foreign challenges at that time? One can only imagine that Yuan had no answer, for without the generals and gentry as its foundation, Yuan's regime could do nothing. That is to say, the failure of his restoration was doomed before it started.

Yuan Shikai might well have been better served if he had been more sober, first bringing the situation under control and establishing solid support and then advanced step by step. Yuan's quest for centralized authority could not succeed without social support. That is to say, Yuan had to rely on the gentry class and his Beiyang generals and provincial elites. That required at least acknowledging their interests and not depriving them of the benefits that they had already secured. If Yuan had tried, he might have drawn the gentry together into a single powerful political party, one that could easily dominate the parliament and the government. If that had been accomplished, then Yuan could have ruled the country in a republican representative

fashion, pursued centralized authority, and implemented a constitutional transformation. In hindsight, if Yuan had paused to repair the cracks in his alliance with his Beiyang subordinates and with the gentry, the result could have been a strategy that ensured Yuan of success and brought peace and stability to the country.

With the objective of exploring the intellectual background of Yuan's ill-fated decision, this thesis has also examined the role of three of Yuan's influential advisors—Yang Du, Liang Qichao, and Frank Goodnow—and their well-known writings relevant to the history explored here. Faced with the interior challenges posed by local powers in China's provinces and the exterior pressure by an aggressive Japan, Yuan hastened to agree with Yang Du's and Goodnow's suggestion that the monarchy be restored, not heeding Liang Qichao's cautionary advice to advance steadily under the constitutional Republican system for the next ten years. Yuan Shikai gradually believed there was only one right path for China: a constitutional system under political centralism. That is to say, the modern transformation of China, from autocratic system to constitutional system, required a strong central government that could guarantee national unity and stability.¹⁹⁷

The thinking of Yuan's advisors reveals that the policy of ending liberalism and provincialism in the early Republic and centralizing authority as the basis for unifying China and promoting its prosperity, was not Yuan's idea alone. Based on the advice of Liang Qichao and Frank Goodnow, the presidential republican system and the 1914 new constitution were put into practice. The trend of a Western-style liberal representative system and provincial autonomy in

¹⁹⁷ Here is the main point of my conclusion of this thesis, which might be the idea of Yuan at that time. What Yuan's generation persisted was "national salvation through a constitutional system." As the history indicated, the liberal democratic Republic, as well as the constitutional monarchy in late Qing, failed to achieve the real constitutionalism. However, as Yuan realized through his presidential experience, the political centralism was the requirement to guarantee the path to achieve the real constitutionalism.

1912–1913 was halted by Yuan’s program in 1914–1915. Even though Yuan’s restoration was a disaster both personally and for China, his strategic program of political centralization and the other policies he implemented in 1913–1914—replacing the National Assembly with the Political Conference and depriving the provincial military-civilian governors (most of whom were his own Beiyang subordinates) of their authority—were significant and far-reaching. As Ernest Young concludes,

It is quite wrong, however, to suggest that the patterns of warlordism were an intended consequence of Yuan’s policies. . . . Yuan’s programs during his dictatorship were designed precisely to prevent this eventuality. He worked for the assertion of a civilian administration over regional military power, including that of his generals. . . . Yuan’s great contribution to the warlord period was his failure to complete his own programs.¹⁹⁸

Today, more than one hundred years have passed. Yuan Shikai’s failure to restore the monarchy belongs to the past. But as a case study, his failure to establish constitutionalism through the restoration of the monarchy might contain lessons for later leaders who are facing critical decisions. Although Yuan’s restoration of the monarchy was based on a misreading of the internal and external situation and quickly failed, his and Liang Qichao’s commitment to political centralism seems to have been reasonable, as is borne out by the history of China in more recent times. I contend that only through political centralism can China realize constitutionalism. That history also shows that both Yuan Shikai’s conviction that only through political centralism could China realize constitutionalism and his actions to establish constitutionalism, still have meaning for China today. One could go further and speculate that only with a constitutional government, China can complete its transformation from a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society into a modern state and embark on the historical stage of long-term stability and prosperity.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 242.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

The Constitutional Compact of the Chung-Hua-Min-Kuo, translated by Sao-ke Alfred Sze and T.

Y. Lo, translation revised by Prof. Frank J. Goodnow and Dr. N. Ariga, in Minister Reinsch to the Secretary of State, File no. 893.011/16, Document 51, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, with the Address of the President to Congress, December 8, 1914, Office of the Historian, Historian of the U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1914/d56>.

Gamble, Sidney D. "Daily Wages of Unskilled Chinese Laborers, 1807–1902." *Far Eastern Quarterly* 3, no 1: 1943: 41–73.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2049809?origin=crossref&seq=1>.

Goodnow, F. J. "The Parliament of the Republic of China." *American Political Science Review* 8, no. 4 (November 1914): 541–562.

Goodnow, Frank J. "Monarchy or Republic?" In Chargé MacMurray to the Secretary of State, File no. 893.01/35, Document 47, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, with the Address of the President to Congress, December 7, 1915, Office of the Historian, Historian of the U.S. Department of State.

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1915/d47>.

———. "Reform in China." *American Political Science Review* 9, no. 2 (May 1915): 209–224.

https://www.jstor.org/stable/1944611?refreqid=excelsior%3A0d18dea3b7b6031a71d9a22e58f68212&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

HGWX, Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences and Guizhou Academy of Social Sciences eds.

Huguo wenxian (护国文献) (Documents on the National Protection movement). 2

vols. Guizhou: Renmin chubanshe, 1985.

Kang Youwei 康有為. “Fei sheng lun” (废省论) (Abolishing the provinces), 1913. Chinese

Intellectual and Cultural Figures Database,

<http://www.cnthinkers.com/thinkerweb/literature/441693>

Liang Qichao 梁启超. “Yi zhe suowei guoti wenti zhe” (异哉所谓国体问题者) (Another view

on the so-called state structure question), 1915. *HGWX*, vol. 1: 258–272.

Yang Du 杨度. “Chouanhui xuan yan” (筹安会宣言) (Declaration of the Peace Planning

Society), August 14, 1915. *HGWX*, vol. 2: 1032.

———. “Junxian jiu guo lun” (君宪救国论) (National salvation through constitutional

monarchy). *HGWX*, vol. 2: 1018.

YSKQJ Luo Baoshan 骆宝善 and Lili Lusheng 刘路生, eds. *Yuan Shikai quanji* (袁世凯全集)

(The complete works of Yuan Shikai). 36 vols. Zhengzhou: Henan daxue chubanshe,

2012.

Yuan Shikai 袁世凯. “Da zongtong liren xuanyan bu gao” (大总统历任宣言布告) (Notice

concerning the presidential inauguration speech), October 10, 1913. *YSKQJ*, vol. 24: 43.

Secondary Sources

Ch'en, Jerome. *Yuan Shih-k'ai*. Second, revised ed. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press,

1972.

- Chen Boda 陈伯达. *Jieshao qie guo da dao Yuan Shikai* (窃国大盗袁世凯) (An introduction to the national usurper Yuan Shikai). Zhangjiakou: Jinchaji ribaoshe, 1946.
- Chow Tse-tsung. *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960.
- Delise, Jacques, and Avery Goldstein. *To Get Rich Is Glorious: Challenges Facing China's Economic Reform and Opening at Forty*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2019. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/9780815737254_ch1.pdf.
- Elman, Benjamin A. "Political, Social, and Cultural Reproduction via Civil Service Examinations in Late Imperial China." *Journal of Asian Studies* 50, no. 1 (February 1991): 7–28. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2057472?read-now=1&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.
- Fairbank, John K., *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 12 Republican China, 1912–1949, Part 1*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Fairbank, John K., and Merle Goldman. *China: A New History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Fairbank, John K., Edwin O. Reischauer, and Albert M. Craig. *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.
- Fu, Zhengyuan. *Autocratic Tradition and Chinese Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Hirata Koji. "Britain's Man on the Spot in China: John Jordan, Yuan Shikai, and the Reorganization Loan, 1912–1914." *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 3 (2013): 895–934. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24494170?read-now=1&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

Ho Ping-ti. *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368–1911*.

New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964.

<https://archive.org/details/ladderofsuccessi0000unse/>.

Hou Yijie 侯宜杰. *Yuan Shikai quanzhuan* (袁世凱全傳) (A complete biography of Yuan Shikai). Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe, 2013.

Hsiao, Kung-chuan. *A Modern China and a New World: K'ang Yu-wei, Reformer and Utopian, 1858–1927*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975.

Hsu, Immanuel C. Y. *The Rise of Modern China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Jing Dongsheng 景東升. “Xu Shichang dui Hongxian dizhi de jinshen dizhi” (徐世昌對洪憲帝制的謹慎抵制) (The prudent resistance of Xu Shichang to the Hongxian monarchy). *Anqing shifan xueyuan xuebao* (Journal of the Anqing Teacher’s College) 26, no. 2 (2007): 56–58.

Kroncke, Jedidiah. “An Early Tragedy of Comparative Constitutionalism: Frank Goodnow and the Chinese Republic.” *Pacific Rim Law and Policy Journal* 21, no. 3 (2012): 533–590.
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1997423.

Lary, Diana Lary. “Warlord Studies.” *Modern China* vol. 6, no. 4 (October 1980): 439–470.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/189036?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

Lee, Theresa Man Ling. “Local Self-Government in Late Qing: Political Discourse and Moral Reform.” *Review of Politics* 60, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 31–53.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/1408329?read-now=1&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

Li, Huaiyin. *Reinventing Modern China: Imagination and Authenticity in Chinese Historical Writing*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2012.

- Li Zongyi 李宗一. *Yuan Shikai zhuan* (袁世凯传) (Biography of Yuan Shikai). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980.
- Luo Baoshan 骆宝善. *Luo Baoshan pingdian Yuan Shikai handu* (骆宝善评点袁世凯函牍) (Luo Baoshan's comments on Yuan Shikai's correspondence). Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2005.
- Luo Baoshan 骆宝善 and Liu Lusheng 刘路生. "Yuan Shikai yu Xinhai geming" (袁世凯与辛亥革命) (Yuan Shikai and the 1911 Revolution). *Shixue yue kan* (History Monthly) 3, (2012): 77–83.
- McCord, Edward A. *The Power of the Gun: The Emergence of Modern Chinese Warlordism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
<https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft167nb0p4;brand=ucpress>.
- Mülhahn, Klaus. *Making China Modern: From the Great Qing to Xi Jinping*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019.
- Putnam Weale, B. L. *The Fight for the Republic in China*. Kindle ed. (converted from its physical edition, published in June 1917). Published by Good Press, n.p.: 2019.
goodpress@okpublishing.info EAN4064066196042.
- 帕特南·威尔. *Diguo mengyan: Luan shi Yuan Shikai* (帝国梦魇：乱世袁世凯) (Imperial nightmare: Yuan Shikai in troubled times). A translation of *The Fight for the Republic in China*. (秦传安译) Qin Chuan'an, trans. Beijing: Zhongyang bianyi chubanshe, 2005.
- Shan, Patrick Fuliang. *Yuan Shikai: A Reappraisal*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018.

- Su Quanyou 苏全有. *Yuan Shikai chengdi yuanyin shixi* (袁世凯称帝原因试析) (An analysis of the reasons why Yuan Shikai proclaimed himself emperor). Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2015.
- Su Quanyou 苏全有 and He Kewei 贺科伟. *Yuan Shikai zhuan* (袁世凯传) (Biography of Yuan Shikai). Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2013.
- Tang, Xiaobing. *Global Space and the Nationalist Discourse of Modernity: The Historical Thinking of Liang Qichao*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Van de Ven, Hans J. "Public Finance and the Rise of Wordlordism." *Modern Asian Studies* 40, no. 4 (1966): 830–832. https://www.jstor.org/stable/312951?read-now=1&seq=2#page_scan_tab_contents.
- Young, Ernest P. *The Presidency of Yuan Shih-k'ai: Liberalism and Dictatorship in Early Republican China*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977.
- Zarrow, Peter. *After Empire: The Conceptual Transformation of the Chinese State, 1885–1924*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012.
- Zhang, Hong. "Yuan Shikai and the Significance of His Troop Training at Xiaozhan, Tianjin, 1895–1899." *Chinese Historical Review* 26, no. 1 (January 2019): 37–54. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1547402X.2019.1583920>.
- Zhang Huateng 张华腾. *Hongxian dizhi: Yuan Shi di meng pomie ji, 1915-1916* (洪宪帝制：袁氏帝梦破灭记，公元1915–1916年) (The Hongxian Monarchy: The shattering of Yuan's Dream of Monarchy, 1915–1916). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007.
- . "Wo kan Yuan Shikai" (My view on Yuan Shikai). Pp. 13–30 in *Yuan Shikai yu Qingmo minchu shehui biange yanjiu* (袁世凯与清末民初社会变革研究) (Yuan Shikai

and social change in the late Qing and early Republic). Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2017.

Zhang Xinwu 张新吾. “Wo suo zhidao de Yuan Shikai ji qi chengdi qian hou” (我所知道的袁世凯及其称帝前后) (The Yuan Shikai I knew before and after his monarchical movement). *Wenshi jinghua* (Essence of History and Literature) 137, no. 10 (2001): 51–57.

Zhou Qiuguang 周秋光. *Xiong Xiling zhuan* (熊希龄传) (A biography of Xiong Xiling). Beijing: Huawen chubanshe, 2014.