

# From President Obama to Dr. Sun Yat Sen on Political Philosophy

## Mainstream and Organic Views

Dr. Wordman

### Abstract

Dr. Sun Yat-sen and President Obama are alumni of the same high school in Hawaii. Obama has become the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the U.S. whereas Dr. Sun had devoted his entire life to the Chinese revolution. Being a unifier and loving person, he yielded his Presidency to other ambitious politician in order to prevent the infant Republic nation to be fractured. He had to lead a second revolution when the warlords tried to revert the Republic back to an imperial nation. He did not live to see a united China but his political philosophy and doctrine live on. The successes of modern Chinese governments in improving their citizens' economic welfare are largely due to practicing of his political teaching. With further adaptation of his political philosophy, China is expected to rise peacefully and is able to guide the world to 'Global Harmony'.

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Mr. Barack Obama as the first black American president carried a big halo over his head. He even won the Nobel Peace Prize on October 9, 2009, 'for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between people'. Now at the end of his second term, President Obama receives less respect as a leader though still a good orator. His election victories had a lot to do with his educated and devoted campaigner wife and his opponents' messy divorces. In 2004 Senate race, his primary opponent, Blair Hull (D) and Republican opponent, Jack Ryan, both failed their campaign by a scandalous divorce history. With George Bush's approval rating dropping owing to Middle East wars and a financial crisis percolating, Obama projecting as a 'change' candidate with powerful speeches emerged as the democratic nominee and beat the weak Republican McCain-Pellan ticket. Little accomplishment had been achieved in his senatorial career as well as few proud accomplishments had been made through his presidential campaign promise, "change". No coherent vision had been cast regarding global peace and prosperity. His signature program, "Obamacare", met with numerous technical problems and might be overturned when administration changes in 2017.

Obama's Middle East solution can hardly meet the expectation of the Nobel Peace Prize and his 'Pivot to Asia' foreign policy may go down in history as a 'kimono dress', pretty but impractical (only Japanese like it), rather than as an intended waterproof steel curtain (navy strategy) to contain China. All the maneuver of creating a Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), military exercises/alliances, and diplomatic initiatives regarding South China Sea seem to achieve no global objectives other than flexing the U.S. military muscle for restating her superpower status. Understandably, Obama has received a lukewarm reception at the 2016 G20 meeting and a declining approval rating at home from the American public. Never the less, Obama, being the 44th two-term American President, is still a distinguished alumnus (1979) of the first rate Punahou High School in Hawaii, renowned for its graduates becoming great achievers in many fields, arts, sciences, medicines,..... engineering, military, philosophy and humanities including numerous elected representatives and government officials with Obama topping the list.

This brings me to Dr. Sun Yat-sen (11/12/1866-3/12/1925) who had attended Punahou in 1883 for a year. So Dr. Sun is technically a 'quasi-alumnus' nearly 100 years senior of Obama. Dr. Sun might not have been ranked high on Punahou's list of achievers, might even be ignored by contemporary Punahou graduates perhaps more sadly by all American people, but Dr. Sun was a great political philosopher regardless. I said 'sadly', because, Dr. Sun, as a political statesman and a revolution leader, deserves more

respect than most outstanding political leaders, not only for what he had done, said and published in his time but more importantly for his profound political philosophy which will continue to impact the world, through the rise of China, on the account of the Chinese people and hopefully the entire global citizens following his political philosophy and teachings.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen studied medicine and was a great doctor. He gave up his profession and started and devoted his life to the Chinese revolutionary. He inspired many people to follow him and eventually overthrew the Qing Dynasty in 1911 and founded the Republic of China (ROC). He was appointed as its first Provisional President. To prevent a prolonged civil war and possible foreign intervention from undermining the infant republic, Sun yielded the President position to Yuan Shi-kai, a warlord in the North. Yuan attempted to revert the Republic back to an Imperial state. Sun had to lead a second revolution by founding the party, KMT. Sun was a uniting figure but he did not live to see the unification of China. He died in 1925. He was a unique selfless politician with high ideals, widely respected and referred as the "Father of the Nation" or "forerunner of democratic revolution" honoring him.

As a person, Dr. Sun was a charismatic gentleman, having many admirers and respectful patients. When he launched the revolution against Qing, he received funds and assistance from his teachers, colleagues, and friends including Americans, Chinese, Malaysians and Japanese. His high ideals, intelligence and charisma attracted many folks to his cause and some devoted their lives to his revolution. A lady, Ms. Chen Cui-feng (1873-1960), became Dr. Sun's revolution companion for two decades (1892-1912) knowing that he had an parental-arranged marriage (1885) with Ms. Lu Mu-zhen (1867-1952) who had bound feet unable to follow him in his revolution endeavors. When Dr. Sun failed in his initial attempt (1898) and escaped to Japan, a young Japanese girl, Kaoru Otsuki (1888-1970) had madly fallen in love with him. This brief romance (1903-1906) allegedly took place despite of the initial objection of Kaoru's parents but ended when Dr. Sun returned to China for his revolution work. Otsuki later married twice hence she did not receive any recognition by Chinese historians. When Dr. Sun succeeded in his first revolution, Ms. Soong Ching-ling (One of the famous Soong sisters, 1893-1981, elder sister of Soong Mei-ling, wife of Chiang Kai-Chek) 27 years younger than Dr. Sun insisted in marrying him (1915) despite of her parents objection. As Christians, Dr. Sun had to divorce his first wife in order to marry Ching-ling in a church. Ms Chen, his devoted companion, never sought formal marriage, left and remained as friends with Ms Lu. The three women in Dr. Sun's life all devoted their lives to him in different ways.

Although Sun is regarded as one of the greatest leaders of modern world, his political life was not so smooth compared to George Washington who succeeded in fighting for US Independence and became the first President of the United States. Dr. Sun's life was in constant struggle and frequent exile, to Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia and the United States. The Chinese revolution he led was extremely treacherous, partly due to ambitious warlords fragmenting the country and partly due to foreign interference, especially Japan and Russia with intentions to carve up China. Japan's victory in the Japan-Russia war emboldened her ambition to conquer the entire China, leading cause to WW II in Asia. The current status of China is the direct result of the incomplete revolution, interfered and interrupted by foreign powers through WW II and Cold War till today.

Dr. Sun was exceptional in his political philosophy. He integrated both Western and Chinese political theories and amalgamated Confucianism and Christianity, which can be summarily represented by 博愛 (fraternity, worldly fraternal love), 天下為公 (the world belongs to everyone) and 世界大同 (global harmony). These concepts may be ahead of Dr. Sun's time but they are certainly the desired political philosophies today. Based on these concepts, he developed a political doctrine known as The Three Principles of People: Nationalism, Democracy, and Social Welfare, prescribing the priorities and foci for people to build and maintain a peaceful and prosperous Republic nation. According to this doctrine, the

ROC developed a constitution prescribing a government of five branches, Executive, Legislative, Judicial, Qualification and Surveillance, which absorbed the three-branch government system practiced in the U.S. but added with an independent qualification branch responsible for qualifying and grading personnel of all government and professional positions to assure people with right skills matching the right positions and an independent surveillance branch responsible for monitoring key public officials to be free of corruption and cronyism. Judging from rampant corruptions and disastrous economic crises happening in governments today, it would be wise for people to study Dr. Sun's political philosophies and teachings and urge Chinese governments to fully implement Dr. Sun's doctrine to reach 'Global Harmony'.

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