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| Chinese Revolution of 1911 |
| Xinhai Revolution |
| The Chinese Revolution of 1911, also known as the Xinhai Revolution (辛亥革命, Xinhai Geming), ended China’s centuries-old traditions of imperialism and feudalism, led to the abdication of Puyi (溥仪) (1906-1967) – China’s ‘Last Emperor’ – on February 12, 1912. By ushering in the Republic of China, the Revolution initiated a process that would eventually, by the mid-twentieth century, bring about the modernization and unification of China. The revolution began in earnest in October 1911 when rebels ousted the Qing dynasty in the so-called Wuchang Uprising (武昌起义) and was propelled by the decline of the Qing (Manchu) government, which exerted a political monopoly, brutally suppressing domestic rebellion. Already weakened by increasing pressures from foreign powers, as evidenced by a series of ‘unequal treaties’ between China and western nations and the adoption of reforms encouraged by the West, the Qing government was vulnerable to rebel attacks. Among the key leaders in the revolution were Sun Yat-sen (孙中山) (1866-1925), Huang Xing (黄兴) (1874-1916) and Song Jiaoren (宋教仁) (1882-1913) who organized revolutionary alliances, bringing together smaller anti-Qing factions. |
| The Chinese Revolution of 1911, also known as the Xinhai Revolution (辛亥革命, Xinhai Geming), ended China’s centuries-old traditions of imperialism and feudalism, led to the abdication of Puyi (溥仪) (1906-1967) – China’s ‘Last Emperor’ – on February 12, 1912. By ushering in the Republic of China, the Revolution initiated a process that would eventually, by the mid-twentieth century, bring about the modernization and unification of China. The revolution began in earnest in October 1911 when rebels ousted the Qing dynasty in the so-called Wuchang Uprising (武昌起义) and was propelled by the decline of the Qing (Manchu) government, which exerted a political monopoly, brutally suppressing domestic rebellion. Already weakened by increasing pressures from foreign powers, as evidenced by a series of ‘unequal treaties’ between China and western nations and the adoption of reforms encouraged by the West, the Qing government was vulnerable to rebel attacks. Among the key leaders in the revolution were Sun Yat-sen (孙中山) (1866-1925), Huang Xing (黄兴) (1874-1916) and Song Jiaoren (宋教仁) (1882-1913) who organized revolutionary alliances, bringing together smaller anti-Qing factions. Thus the revolution was triggered by the agitation of underground groups who worked to overthrow the Qing government (Manchu) and to establish a new republic. Chief among these groups was Tongmenghui (同盟会), an alliance of revolutionaries assembled by Sun Yat-sen in 1905 through the unification of several smaller factions.  Successful in eliminating the dynastic feudal government, the Xinhai Revolution did not bring stability. The newly established government was soon monopolized by Yuan Shikai (袁世凯), resulting in the instability of the new government and violence amongst China’s warlords, who jockeyed for power after Puyi’s abdication. The new government failed to reconstruct the social order or to improve the standard of living. The decline of Qing culture and language was salient after the revolution, resulting in the production of anti-Manchu literature in response to the collapse of Qing government. In addition, the traditional Chinese cultural values and identities were rejected along with the ousted Qing dynasty, as new intellectual movements adopted western political, ideological and scientific trends. These social changes went hand in glove with the emergence of the New Culture Movement during the 1910s, which devalued traditional Chinese culture and promoted western modernity. |
| Further reading:  (Chang and Owen) (Dingle) (Fenby) (Hsieh) (Rhoads) |