

A Forum to celebrate the Republic of China (ROC) 's centennial was held on Saturday, September 24 2011, 2-5 pm at San Diego Chinese Bilingual Preschool, 5075 Ruffin Road, S. D., CA 92131. Around 200 people attended including students from three local Chinese school AP class students. This Forum presents four speeches, each describes significant historic events in a particular period of the Republic of China including important figures and their influence in each of the four periods. Reception to follow.

1. "The birth of the first republic in Asia as seen from the diplomatic documents" (從美國外交文件看民國誕生) by Ms. Judy S. Lu (盧雪鄉女士), Chief, Asian Division, Library of Congress (ret)
2. "Chiang Kai-Shek in Historical Perspective" (百年歷史中的蔣介石) by Professor Paul H. Tai (戴鴻超教授), Professor of International Political Economy, Emeritus, University of Detroit Mercy
3. "The Sino-Japanese War of last generation" by Dr. James K.K. Tung (董克康博士), a "lifetime follower of Dr. Sun Yet-Sen"
4. "The economic and democratic developments of Republic of China in Taiwan" by Mr. Jack H. Meng, (孟憲嘉先生), VP of APHAFIC

Therefore, the forum will consist of four important periods of the Republic of China's history, which are: "緬懷先烈, 創建民國", "北伐成功, 全國統一", "軍民一心, 抗戰禦敵", "建設臺灣, 民主自由"

Ms. Judy Lu's presentation is based on the research finding from the Library of Congress collections resulted in her book on "The Birth of the First Republic in Asia as Seen from American Diplomatic Documents". The idea of democracy of Dr. Sun Yet-sen to establish a democratic country was much influenced by U.S. democratic structure. The spirit of democracy is similar between ROC and USA: Broad love (博愛) and serve the world (天下為公) (note Alex may have better English translation for this).

In her research in the General Collections of the Library of Congress, she found documents that written in Feb. 1840 can vividly depict the weak status of Qing Dynasty in the global political arena and therefore the obvious need for major political reform in China. During that period, thousands of pounds of opium were sent to China by British merchants for profit each year. The Chinese population was non-functional due to drug addiction. Foreigners called Chinese "The sick men in Asia." This painful history had planted the seeds in Dr. Sun Yat-sen that fueled his determination for revolution at a later time.

A letter written by the Viceroy of the two Kwang provinces Lin Zexu to the Queen of England in 1840 on plea for stop the import of opium to China was never delivered to the Queen of England. Then, the British-China Opium War began. China was defeated and an unfair treaty was signed in 1841. Forty years later in 1881, the Chinese population had shrunk to 369 million, among which 120 million smoked opium, almost one-third of its population.

Dr. Sun Yet-san travelled to the U.S. four times, the first time was in 1896. The 4<sup>th</sup> time was in 1911, he crisscrossed US several times, when 武昌起義 (Wu Zhung Uprising) succeeded on Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>, 1911, he

was in Denver fundraising. With millions of Chinese people excited for the new democratic country (民國), Dr. Sun Yat-sen finally arrived to China on December 25, 1911!

On October 7, 1913 during the term of president Wilson, the American Charge d'Affaires received formal recognition to the Republic of China from Sweden, Spain again, Belgium, Russia, Denmark, France, Portugal, Japan, The Netherlands again, Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, Italy and Germany. On Oct. 8, Switzerland announced the formal recognition to the ROC as well.

So, the Republic of China was officially welcomed to the family of nations at last!

Professor Tai's talk on Chiang Kai-shek included highlights of his career, his failure and the current reassessment;

### Career highlights

1. Participant of the Revolution, Suicidal attack on Zhejiang governor Zeng Yun
2. Whampoa Commandant, 1924; Eastern Expedition, 1925; Northern Expedition, 1926-1928
3. Chairman of the National government, 1928
4. Victory in the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945
5. Defeat in the Civil War, 1947-1949
6. Ruling Taiwan, 1949-1975

His failures-self evaluation: Diplomatic mishaps; military defeats; factional split and organizational disarray; economic and financial collapses; introduction of constitutional rule during the war; Chiang's haughty mannerism; and lack of an effective propaganda program (CKSD, March 31, 1949; 6/1-7/70)

And movement of reassessments:

1. USA: Harvard University-sponsored conferences, 2004-2009; Hoover Institution Archive (Stanford): CKSD 2006-; Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo* (2009)
2. United Kingdom: Hans J. Van de Ven: *War and Nationalism in China* (2003)
3. Mainland China: Two major conferences—CASS, 2008; Fudan University, 2011
4. Other places: Taiwan, Japan, and Canada.

Dr. James Tong on Sino-Japanese war compared the weapons between China and Japanese, countries that were invaded by Japan in Asia: China, Singapore, Dutch East Indies, Burma and Phillipine, The Sino-Japanese war was introduced in four periods

1. Lighting attack by Japanese, 7/7/1937 – 12/1938
2. Stalemate, 1/1939 – 3/1944
3. Japanese Ichigo Campaign, 4/1944 – 4/1945
4. Counter attack, 4/1945 – 8/1945

During the war, Thirty million Chinese migrated as a person, as a family, as a group, as a school and as a factory to Chungking, most time on foot. Flying Tigers led by Claire L. Chennault fought against Japanese while one of the most brave Chinese Airforce pilot 高志航 fought for China and sacrificed for his country. China closed 95 out of 107 colleges and moved most of professors and students to Szuchan

and Yunnan. Thirty million Chinese perished in the war. The astronomical cost of war resulted in incredible inflation in China. Soviet declared the war on August 9, 1945 against Japan and Chinese communists declared the war on August 14<sup>th</sup>, shortly before the surrender of Japan on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1945

Jack Meng followed with his presentation on Republic of China in Taiwan from 1949- present.

During the early years from 1945 when Taiwan was returned to China by Japan after WWII to 1949 when the mainland China was completely occupied by the PROC, one incident was the February 28 event (228 incident) in 1947. The economical reform started in 1956 including one of gigantic project of east-west high way by veterans in 1956-1960 when US stopped aid in 1965. ROC went through difficult times including withdrawn from the UN in 1971, three years prior to the passing of Chiang K. S in 1975 and ending the diplomatic relationship with US in 1978. Despite of the difficulties, ROC started to grow including building nuclear power plants. More than 12 economic developments projects were implemented by Chiang Ching-Kuo, head of KMT, later was elected as president in 1978. In the mid-1980, foreign trade boomed. After Lee Teng Hui became the president in 1988, constitution was revised. Despite of the political changes since the democratic progressive party (DDP) established in 1986, the economy still booms. Vagarious political revisions continue including Taiwan provincial government was dismantled and central governments re-organized in 1998. In 2000, Chen Shui-Bian of DDP became the President and relationship with mainland China continued to be strained. However ROC did join WTO in 2002. In 2008, Ma Ying-Jeou of KMT was elected as president and the communication between ROC and PROC was resumed including mail, sail, air transportation, travel, trades etc. With all mishaps and defeats, ROC always overcome. Maintaing a peaceful, harmonious society will depend on the coming elections in 2012.



The Republic of China Centennial celebration at the San Diego Bilingual Chinese Preschool (in picture is John Ferguson, long time volunteer of APHAFIC, husband of Nancy Lo)



Judy Lu gave her speech



Nancy Lo presented certificate of appreciation to each of four speakers third from the left: James Tung, Jack Meng, Judy Lu and Paul Tai. David Hu, the Master of Ceremony, far left.



Centennial Cake



APHAFIC board members with speaker and guests