

## HISTORY

# The Xinhai Revolution, the End of the Imperial China

The Xinhai Revolution is named for the Chinese year of Xinhai (1911). It overthrew the ruling of Qing Dynasty (the Manchu Dynasty), and the establishment of the Republic of China. Pu-yi became the last emperor of China.

The revolution began with the armed Wuchang Uprising and the spread of republican insurrection through the southern provinces, and culminated in the abdication of the Xuantong Emperor after lengthy negotiations between rival Imperial and Republican regimes based in Beijing and Nanjing respectively, in 1900, the ruling Qing Dynasty decided to create a modernized army, called the "New Army".

At the time, the city of Wuchang, on the Yangtze River in the province of Hubei, had the most modernized military industry, so it became the site where weapons and other military equipment for the New Army were manufactured.



The revolutionary ideas of Sun Yat-sen extensively influenced officers and soldiers of the New Army in Wuchang, and many participated in revolutionary organizations.



*Sun Yat-sen*

The uprising itself broke out largely by accident. Revolutionaries who intended on overthrowing the Qing dynasty had built bombs and one accidentally exploded. This led police investigation, and the lists of revolutionaries were discovered.

At this point, parts of the New Army led by Huangxin didn't want face arrest and revolted which made the provincial government panick and flee.

The revolt might just be one of the latest in a series of mutinies that had occurred in southern China; but the Qing goverment failed to respond for a crucial few weeks, allowing time for the provincial assemblies in many southern provinces to declare independence from the Qing and allegiance to the rebellion. Within a month,

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representatives of the seceding provinces met to declare a Republic of China.

Sun Yat-sen, a unifying figure in post-Imperial China, was travelling in the United States at that time in an effort to recruit more support from the overseas Chinese. He found out

about the uprising by reading a newspaper report and immediately returned to China.

Inside China, a sense of the Qing Dynasty having lost the mandate of heaven was spreading. Evidence of the loss of the mandate of heaven in China often constitutes of natural disasters, such as fires and floods.

The Yangtze overflowed its banks with 100,000 fatalities in 1911, and the revolting troops were situated near that river. The flood would have had a profound psychological impact on any government officials, rebels, peasants, and other Chinese in the vicinity.

On 29 December, Sun was elected as the provisional President of the Republic of China and 1 January 1912 was set as the first day of the First Year of the Republic. This republic calendar system is still used in Taiwan today.

The Xinhai Revolution is a great political action that waved the first democracy flag in China, rushed China into a new era.

# The Wuchang Uprising

## Leading the Collapse of the Qing Dynasty and the Establishment of the Republic of China

The Wuchang Uprising of October 10, 1911 started the Xinhai Revolution, which led to the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China

### Background

In 1900, the ruling Qing Dynasty created a modernized army called the "New Army". At the time, the city of Wuchang, on the Yangtze River in the province of Hubei, had the most modern military industry. It began manufacturing weapons and other military equipment for the New Army. Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary ideas extensively influenced the officers and soldiers of the New Army in Wuchang; many joined revolutionary organizations.

### The uprising

The uprising itself broke out by accident. Revolutionaries in the Russian concession of the city had been building bombs, one of which accidentally exploded. This led police to investigate, and they discovered lists of Literary Society members within the New Army. Facing arrest, and certain execution, they staged a coup. The local officials panicked and fled, and the army took over the city in less than a day. The revolutionaries then telegraphed the other provinces asking them to declare their independence. Within six weeks, fifteen provinces had seceded.

The revolt was still considered merely the latest in a series of mutinies that had occurred in southern China. It was widely expected to be put down quickly, and ended up having much larger implications only because the Qing dynasty delayed action against the rebellion, allowing provincial assemblies in many southern



provinces to declare independence from the Qing and declare allegiance to the rebellion.

Sun Yat-sen himself played no direct part in the uprising. He was traveling in the United States, trying to drum up support from overseas Chinese. He found out about the uprising by reading a newspaper report in Denver, Colorado. Within the Revolutionary Alliance, Sun had favored an uprising in his native Guangdong, citing local anti-Manchu sentiment. Sun's rival within the Alliance, Huang Xing, had favored an uprising in central China and had been planning an uprising for late October. The revolutionary leaders were thus caught off guard, leaving the mutineers without a leader. Li Yuanhong was dragged from under his bed and forced at gunpoint to become the leader of the Rebellion, and went on to become the only man to ever serve twice as president of the republican government of Beijing.

Many Chinese had felt that the Qing dynasty had lost the mandate of heaven, and this may have contributed to the revolt. Natural disasters, such as fires and floods, are often considered portents, and the Yangtze had overflowed its banks in 1911; the revolting troops were situated near that river. Such a flood would have had a profound psychological impact on government officials, rebels, peasants, and other Chinese in the vicinity[citation needed]. The flood had killed 100,000 people.

The Qing government, led by the regent 2nd Prince Chun, failed to respond for a crucial few weeks. This gave the revolutionaries time to declare a provisional government. They were joined by other provincial assemblies. Within a

month, representatives from the seceding provinces had met and declared a Republic of China. Sun returned to China on December 25, and though he was elected provisional president of the Republic of China by the representatives of the sixteen provisional assemblies (an act that angered Yuan Shikai), Sun Yat-sen was aware of Yuan Shikai's military power and so he supported an earlier deal that left Yuan in charge.